20.03.2024

Policy recommendations addressing artificial intelligence and museums

1. **A political vision for museums and cultural heritage in an AI-driven society**
Recognising the unique position of museums and cultural heritage as pillars of trust within society, it is imperative to integrate them into a regulatory framework. Artificial intelligence in museums needs to be addressed and shaped so that technological developments do not simply reshape museums from the outside. Collaborative efforts between governments, regulatory bodies, and museum professionals can ensure that museums play a pivotal role in the development of ethical practices related to emerging technologies.

2. **Financial investments to apply AI successfully in the Public Cultural Domain**
Financial resources must be allocated for infrastructure, equipment and highly qualified human resources, enhancing museums' professional capacities.AI needs to source high-quality, interoperable data and properly described metadata. Copyright issues must be resolved. Museum professionals need adequate skills to perform these tasks, to keep pace with rapidly evolving AI capabilities and to address sector-specific concerns. Furthermore, standing commitments to support the cultural heritage sector should be expanded to ensure the quality and quantity of digitalisation required by Cultural Heritage Data Spaces and the European Collaborative Cultural Heritage Cloud.

3. **Establishment of a European AI innovation hub for cultural heritage**
To foster creativity, innovation and collaboration, to centralise expertise and knowledge and to face challenges for the sector associated with AI, there is a need for a dedicated competency centre in Europe. This space would serve as a hub to bring together expertise and practices, knowledge and resources in a network of and for professionals, ensuring digital innovation and development across the diverse European Cultural heritage sector - in alignment with the values of human-centred design, privacy, and open-source practices.

NEMO – the Network of European Museum Organisations finds that a clear political vision is crucial for navigating the complexities of AI integration, prioritising collaboration, responsible data management, and innovation. Museums must uphold integrity in their AI interactions, recognising the importance of trust and transparency. Acknowledging the museum sector's potential as part of a public digital infrastructure, regulatory attention and financial investment are needed to address challenges such as environmental costs, diverse museum needs, and resource deficiencies. Leveraging their expertise in data collection and management, museums can play a role in co-creating ethical AI standards and countering the influence of powerful private interests.

The recommendations outlined here are addressed to policymakers at all levels to support museums in navigating AI, enabling them to drive innovation while maintaining integrity and relevance. They were first presented at the international conference: 'Innovation and Integrity: Museums paving the way in an AI-driven society' and are produced by NEMO in collaboration with FARO, ICOM Wallonie-Brussels, ICOM Flanders and the House of European History.