

DELIVERABLE

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D2.1 Specification of Selection Criteria and Thematic Sub collections applied in the project

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Basis for the definition of selection criteria from DoW.....	5
3. Specification of Selection Criteria.....	6
3.1 Masterpiece Definition and categories of sources.....	6
3.2 Selection criteria: Provenance	7
3.3 Selection criteria: Copyright.....	7
3.4 Selection criteria: Balancedness.....	7
3.5 Selection criteria: Complementarities between the single collections.....	8
3.6 Selection criteria: Time period	8
4. Conclusion	9
Annexe I: Guidelines to support the curators in their selection of items for Europeana Collections 1914-1918	

1. Executive Summary

The project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 aims to make available in Europeana more than 400.000 items coming from the collections of ten European national libraries and two technical partners.

Work Package 2 (WP2) of this project is focused on the coordination of content, because general guidelines are very important to harmonize the selection process between the libraries.

As leader of WP2, the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) has coached a reflection about the criteria to follow for constituting a significant corpus of documents regarding WW1 which should also enable some interesting thematic sub collections regarding this period.

At the beginning of the project, all partners had already identified some collections and estimated an approximate number of relevant documents they could digitise during the project. They also announced substantiated projections of figures for each category of documents.

To get a more precise idea of the concrete perspectives of digitization, the WP2 coordinator sent a **questionnaire in the form of table sheets (June 2011)**. The completed table sheets indicated more precisely the level of knowledge that the institutions have about their collections regarding WW1. These documents were very helpful for the specification of the criteria for selection.

The KBR prepared then a list of possible criteria for selection of single items within the collections. This draft was distributed to the consortium and discussed before the summer break during a **SKYPE workshop** with all the participating libraries. Comments and remarks were integrated into the draft and a final draft version was presented in Vienna at the beginning of the WP3 Kick-Off Meeting (2011, September 8-9th). After the implementation of slight additions the document has been approved by the consortium in Vienna.

2. Basis for the definition of selection criteria from DoW

Because some principles of selection are already predefined in the DoW, the target of this Deliverable is to transform general principles into effective criteria for selection.

In the project summary, the consortium announced that Europeana Collections 1914-1918 project aims to digitise **relevant items** which **span the full range of national library collections** and which are made accessible **online for the first time**.

The consortium also presumed that the selection aimed to **reflect the different experiences of individuals and groups and all sides of the conflict**, including **ethnic, linguistic, political, social** and **religious** communities and those opposed to the war (p. 2).

At third, a special focus would be given to **rare and fragile documents** and to **special collections** (rare and fragile printed books, manuscripts, photographs, music sheets, pamphlets and leaflets, maps, posters, medals and coins, original art) (p.2).

Finally, the DoW announces that more than 96% of the selected content would constitute masterpieces or outstanding pieces.

These general principles of selection had to be transformed into criteria helpful to decide if a single object from one of the partner's collections should be digitised within the project or not. To give guidance on this question is the main target of this deliverable. The document is intended to support the curators in their daily selection of items. Besides this Deliverable a handout containing guidelines how to select items from the specific collections has been produced (Annexe I). This handout will be given to the persons in charge of the selection within the libraries.

3. Specification of Selection Criteria

3.1 Masterpiece Definition and categories of sources

The project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 will provide “masterpieces” regarding the WW1. The content providers will consider as masterpiece each document of extraordinary importance due to its **historical** or **cultural** relevance, its **rareness** or even **uniqueness**. (DoW, p. 2, 5).

a. As *historical sources*, the project perceives all kind of documents (printed, manuscripts, images) connected to WW1 and published before, during and after the wartime.

Curators will give special focus on all kind of documents **created during** the wartime, like soldiers' diaries, trenches journals, posters, maps, photographs, postcards, manuscripts, letters, official documents, propaganda, etc.

Originals will be preferred to copies. For example, if an original photograph taken during the wartime will be accepted, reproduction of photographs published in the 1950's in an exhibition catalogue or book about WW1 cannot be accepted in this project.

b. As *cultural sources*, the project perceives:

1. The cultural production during the wartime, focusing especially on documents describing daily life (e.g. philosophical books, essays, leaflets, posters) will be taken into account in the selection process with priority;
2. The artistic production during the wartime (e.g. a painting realized in 1917; a music sheet created during the wartime; drawings, caricatures, etc.) will also be a priority;
3. The selection will have to reflect the spiritual life during the wartime (e.g. Cardinal Mercier's pastoral letters and discourses, in Belgium);
4. The selection will reflect the linguistic diversity of the areas concerned by the war. Documents reflecting the individual experience of the war will of course cover different languages including less-spoken languages or dialects (e.g. books and brochures from the department of planned languages at ONB).

c. *Rareness*: To classify a document to be rare, the curators can take into account the following criteria:

1. Documents which are not unique but with only a very few examples in the world;
2. Well disseminated documents (e.g. printed books) with relevant annotations and/or interesting signatures regarding the wartime;
3. Documents with restricted access to a few people (specialists) because of their fragility;
4. Documents in auto-destruction because of the quality of the paper (e.g. newspapers, periodicals, leaflets, etc.).

d. *Uniqueness*: to classify a document to be unique, the following criteria can be taken into account by curators during their selection process:

1. Non-printed documents (manuscript materials, letters, personal notebooks);
2. All kind of documents with manuscript annotations and/or signatures.

3.2 Selection criteria: Provenance

The selection of content to be digitized during the project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 will respect the principle of provenance.

Each library will primarily digitize material that **originated in the provider's historic territory** thereby ensuring that the digitization of materials within the project is in line with the national strategies for the digitization of cultural heritage.

But most of the libraries are also conserving in their collections very interesting documents which were **originated or published in a foreign country**, sometime for historical reasons. These kinds of documents may be included in the selection after bilateral contacts between providers and foreign libraries, to avoid duplicates i.e. to make sure that the documents in question are not already selected by another library.

3.3 Selection criteria: Copyright

Because all the selected objects will be accessible via Europeana without any problem of copyright (DoW, p. 9-10), the selection has to follow the three following criteria:

- a. Documents in the public domain will constitute a priority;
- b. In-copyrighted documents can only be selected in case the provider can identify the right holders and acquire the necessary permissions from the right holders;
- c. Orphan works: The partners will try to include orphan works according to the applicable national protocol. In exceptional cases it can be tried to obtain permissions from the right holders.

Given the fact the question of the copyright stays on the provider level, each library has to follow its own policy. Each content provider stays responsible of the legal status of the content he provides.

3.4 Selection criteria: Balancedness

The selection will create a balanced influx of representative European documents (DoW, p. 10).

The general selection will cover all the aspects of the conflict, with a special focus on:

- a. the different countries involved in the war, colonies and neutral countries included;
- b. the different geographic areas involved in the conflict;
- c. the variety of languages spoken in the involved areas;
- d. the religious diversity in Europe during the wartime.

All these aspects have to be taken into account by curators during their process of selection.

3.5 Selection criteria: Complementarities between the single collections

The project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 aims to show the complementarities of the collections conserved at the different national libraries (DoW, p. 10-11).

Many criteria can be followed for that:

- a. The completeness can be researched between the collections approached by type of document;
- b. The diversity of special collections will enrich the set. One category will enrich another. Pictures, movies, posters, maps, archives, postcards... Each kind of document is giving its own approach about a same date, a same place, a same event, which can be complementary;
- c. A focus can be given on a cultural and linguistic scope. The selection will take into account the less-spoken languages;
- d. The completeness can be considered as the research of a global relevance. The selection has to document not only the Western front but also the Eastern, Middle Eastern and African theatres of war, as well as the involvement of overseas countries such as Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA (also with content provided by further partners/network partners)

3.6 Selection criteria: Time period

The project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 focuses on a limited time period in history: the wartime of the First World War. That is why date is a very important notion in this project. Some criteria to select the documents are thus very useful.

- a. By priority, the selection will concentrate on items published and/or created during the wartime, its direct prehistory or its direct aftermath from 1914 till 1919 (e.g. like the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of the "Nation's Society", but not the November Revolution, in Germany);
- b. Needs of contextualisation will extend the accepted dates to immediate prior and post history of the war.

Due to the difficulties to fix some coherent strict deadlines before or after the conflict, it is proposed to stay the selection open to a larger period than the wartime, from the beginning of the 20th century to the middle of the 1920's.

Documents beyond the delimited period between 1914 and 1918 can be suggested to the consortium, who will discuss those. For that reason, curators will have to submit their proposals to the responsible of the project within their library.

4. Conclusion

The ambition of the Project Europeana Collections 1914-1918 is to constitute a corpus of documents regarding the First World War with a minimum of 400,000 documents.

WP2 coordinator had proposed a list of criteria for the selection of these documents with a very large acceptance of them. This choice will enable the content providers to realize their quantitative targets. The curators keep a real individual approach in the definitive selection of the items.

The role of WP2 coordination is also to promote the constitution of a coherent and balanced set of documents which can be representative of all the aspects of the conflict. The respect of the principle of provenance and the quest of the balance in the selection process are both very important elements which should limit the risks of duplicates and unbalances between the content providers,

The focus on out-of-copyright documents is a crucial criteria for the selection of the items. The rights issues are indeed paramount in this project because of its historical roots in the early years of the 20th century. Because many documents are still protected by the copyright law today, their online setting cannot be considered without the permission of the rightholders. This criteria will be very binding for the curators.

The last objective of the WP2 coordination is to be active in the selection process to allow a general uniformed approach of the selection. The fact that the consortium accepted to discuss together the acceptance of some special cases is a positive element.