

LUISS



Department of Political Science

Chair of Comparative Public Policies in Europe

What kind of future for cultural heritage?

A comparison of cultural heritage digitalization plans in Italy and Spain

Prof. Mark Thatcher

Supervisor

Prof. Anna Pirri Valentini

Co-supervisor

Benedetta Fazio

Candidate

Academic Year 2023/2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 – From crises to solutions: COVID-19 and cultural heritage.....	5
1 – Cultural heritage in the time of COVID-19	5
1.1 – What is the digitalization of CH? Why should we digitalize?	7
1.2 – What are the tools of digitalization for CH?	8
2 – Policy landscape in EU’s digital cultural heritage.....	14
3 – Italy’s digital cultural heritage policy landscape	16
3.1 – Before COVID-19: from the Italian Digital Library to <i>CulturaItalia</i>	16
3.2 From COVID-19 onward: the <i>Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale</i> and the Ministerial Decree 161/2023	18
4 – Spain’s digital cultural heritage policy landscape	23
4.1 – Before COVID-19: a slow policy process.....	23
4.2 – COVID-19 and the future: from the <i>Plan España Digital 2025</i> to the Law on Patronage.....	24
5 – Digital transformation and cultural heritage: an assessment.....	28
CHAPTER 2 – Literature review and debates	31
1 – The relationship of trust: a delicate balance	31
1.1 – Crease’s models of expertise in relation to trust	33
1.2 – Other views on trust	35
2 – Italy and Spain: the relationship of trust and the local debates	39
2.1 – Italy: experts and decision-makers – a fluctuating relationship	39
2.2 – Spain: the other side of the coin	42
CHAPTER 3 – Italy and the <i>Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale</i>	44
1 – Italy’s solution in the face of crisis	44
2 – <i>Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale</i> : the structure	45
2.1 – The Vision.....	47
2.2 – The Strategy	48
2.3 – The Guidelines	50
3 – Analysis.....	51
4 – Projects	57
4.1 – <i>Oggetti Museali</i> : museums for everyone	58

4.2 – <i>Sistema Informativo Musei Arte Archeologia Architettura di Roma e Territorio: when the public meets the private</i>	59
4.3 – <i>The Egyptian Museum in Turin: a bridge between a crisis and new opportunities</i>	61
5 - <i>NRPP and the Ministerial Decree 161/2023: two sides of the same coin</i>	62
CHAPTER 4 – Spain and the <i>Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia</i>	
<i>Componente 24</i>	64
1 – <i>Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia: the Spanish alternative</i>	64
2 – <i>Digitalización e impulso de los grandes servicios culturales: a description</i>	66
2.1 – <i>Proyecto 1: Museo Nacional del Prado</i>	67
2.2 – <i>Proyecto 2: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía</i>	69
2.3 – <i>Proyecto 3: Biblioteca Nacional de España</i>	71
2.4 – <i>Proyectos 4,5 y 6: towards a greater digitalization</i>	73
3 – <i>Componente 24: not only digitalization</i>	75
4 – <i>Analysis</i>	77
5 - <i>Spain: a possible success?</i>	81
CONCLUSIONS	82
LIST OF REFERENCES	86
SUMMARY	101

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a standstill, with lockdowns being enforced and new work and education modalities being employed, all in order to safeguard people's health. All sectors faced the consequences. Among them, the cultural sector – and subsequently, cultural tourism as well – saw a harsh impact, as the restrictions also forced them to a close (Sacco and Travkina 2020).

Cultural organisations had to reinvent themselves, adopting new and creative ways to engage with the different audiences so as to adapt to the new and frightening situation, hoping to valorise cultural heritage and make it available to everyone in an inclusive and open manner (American Alliance of Museums 2019; Lupo 2020). Thus came podcasts, social media posts, TikTok videos using the artwork as if they were characters and digitalised reproductions on cultural institutions' websites to make them accessible to everyone. However, the pandemic also highlighted the need for the cultural sector to renew itself and meet the public's new demands. The push for a new framework that successfully integrates digitalization into cultural heritage is therefore necessary to adhere to new expectations and needs.

This new urgency has become an issue also for the governments, as they are in charge of determining the policies to support, encourage and finance the digital transition in every sector. In this regard, the European Union – due also to the cultural opulence present in some of its Member States – has proved to be a leader in this aspect by launching the NextGenerationEU (Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale 2021).

These funds have enabled the Member States to create Recovery and Resilience Plans aimed not only at recovering from the pandemic, but also at building a more sustainable, inclusive and digital future. The cultural sector has been included in the plans by using digital technology to enhance and preserve the cultural assets.

National governments are understanding more and more the importance of the digital transition in the cultural sector, and same goes for cultural institutions and

organizations. Two cases have resulted the most interesting for the purpose of this research, thanks to their similar touristic contexts and similar heritage history – Italy and Spain.

The two countries have adopted differing policies to support the digital transformation of cultural heritage. While Italy focused on a plan to give cultural institutions guidelines and visions on how to regulate digitalisation (Italian Digital Library 2022a), Spain used the funds disbursed by the NextGenerationEU to effectively launch digitalization projects in the country, both at central and local level (Gobierno de España 2022b).

Moreover, the two countries differ from each other in the approach chosen during the policy process, in particular in their collaboration – or lack of thereof – with experts. Italy, in fact, first sought out the help of experts in the elaboration of its cultural heritage policy during the Draghi government, only to do without them after the transition to the Meloni government. Spain, instead, opted for a complete lack of collaboration throughout the whole duration of the policy process. These choices brought out very different results in both countries, on one side unsuccessful and on the other successful.

The policy processes adopted in the two countries for smarter cultural heritage have brought forward a more general question regarding the approach of decision-makers to the policy process. The difference in outcome between the two countries' Plans can be explained by the relationship of trust between experts and politicians, and how that influences policy-making. Moreover, the element of continuity in government has played a fundamental role in the choices taken and the effects obtained as a result.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the policy process adopted by the countries regarding the digitalisation of cultural heritage and analyse how the lack of coordination among the two countries' decision-makers and expertise has impacted their digitalization efforts. The objective is to prove that collaboration between the two different actors is not always necessary to achieve successful policies. As such, a comparison between the two countries will be led in order to answer to the research question.

The selection of the cases in question is guided by theoretical considerations, that, as previously affirmed, focus on countries have similar touristic contexts and similar heritage history. As such, a collection of qualitative data will be held.

The study will therefore include the document analysis of the relevant policies and their policy process, but also the relevant considerations on them following the political and public debates, as well as the relevant academic literature on the matter.

The primary objective is to investigate the process of digitalization which has been adopted by the countries following their introduction in the respective national Recovery and Resilience Plans and analyse how the lack of coordination among the two countries' decision-makers and expertise has resulted in their digitalization efforts. The objective is to prove that collaboration between the two actors could not be necessary to achieve successful policies.

To do so, in the first chapter there will be a general explanation of the effects digitalization has on cultural heritage valorisation and availability, delineating the various modes of digitalization available to cultural institutions. It will then move onto brief review of the cultural heritage policy landscape in the European Union prior to COVID-19, with a specific focus on digitalization of cultural heritage policies in the two countries chosen as case study.

The second chapter will instead be characterised by the relevant literature on the concept of trust among politicians and expertise, a concept that will be used to analyse the possible reasons of a lack of collaboration among the countries' decision-makers and expertise. It will then move onto the more relevant policy debates on the matter in both countries, analysing the policy process around the regulations object of the debate and the approach adopted by the decision-making bodies during the realization of these policies.

The third and fourth chapter will include a detailed analysis of the two countries' digitalization Plans, so as to answer to the research question on how trust contributes to efficient policy-making. In the two chapters, it will be possible to find a detailed description of the Plans followed by an analysis of the main critiques raised during and after the policy process.

Lastly, the fifth chapter will focus on the conclusions of this work, with a brief overview of the analysis followed by the conclusory remarks.

CHAPTER 1 – From crises to solutions: COVID-19 and cultural heritage

1 – Cultural heritage in the time of COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the world came to a halt. People were forced to change their lifestyle and work experience, and tight travel restrictions were put in place all around the world in order to safeguard people's health. The tourism industry – among which cultural tourism resides – experienced a severe blow, as a result of the restrictions put in place by governments (Sacco and Travkina 2020). Since the lockdowns forced museums and galleries to lock their doors to their visitors in an attempt to avoid the transmission of the virus, cultural institutions had to face the difficulty of having no physical access to cultural heritage sites and artworks (Lupo 2020).

Nevertheless, in the midst of the crisis, the epidemic encouraged creativity in cultural organizations. When COVID-19 broke out, museums and other organizations came to the realization that they needed to adapt and engage their audiences in a new and diverse way in order to successfully adapt to the new situation, which brought them to swiftly embrace digital technology (American Alliance of Museums 2019). Cultural heritage institutions were thus able to experiment using new ways to share cultural experiences, supporting inclusivity and openness even in the case of physical lockdown being restricted (Lupo 2020).

However, even if the epidemic had granted a short-term solution to an urgent problem, it also made clear that, in the long run, digitalization would require a more planned and long-term approach. To meet the demands of a public that is always evolving, cultural heritage institutions and organisations must create a new framework that can integrate digitalization in cultural heritage in a period that is characterised by rapid technological advancements and everchanging audience expectations.

This situation poses as an issue not only for cultural institutions, but for governments as well, as they are the ones who determine legislation to support, encourage

and finance digital transformation. A promoter of digitalization is Europeana (European Commission 2010), which has contributed to the regulation of cultural heritage digitalization by generating a platform for innovation and collaboration available to all Member States (MSs) of the European Union (EU). The single nations must, however, also develop appropriate policies and guidelines that suit their distinct and varied institutional and cultural settings while at the same time pursuing the larger EU goals. In this regard, initiatives like the NextGenerationEU present an opportunity for countries to invest in technology and digitalization to support their cultural heritage sectors (Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale 2021).

In elaborating the necessary policies, though, governments had to delve deeper into the various sectors in order to understand their necessities and adapt their policies accordingly. To do so, the involvement of expertise would be necessary, as a large-scale plan such as the one envisaged by the NextGenerationEU needs evidence-based policy-making. Yet, this has not always been the choice, as has been the case in Italy and Spain, where sometimes expertise was ignored for a more opinion-based approach. Experts have criticised the choice, feeling left out of something that interested them greatly, while the general perception has become that, sometimes, experts are not necessary anymore. This has opened the door to a bigger question – that is, are decision-makers losing trust in experts?

In order to answer this more general question, this work delves deeper into the Italian and Spanish cultural landscapes, creating an analysis based on the comparison between the two countries' policies. In doing so, it will examine how the policy process for the *Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale* (Ministero della Cultura, 2022) and the *Componente 24* of the *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* (Ministerio de Cultura 2021) developed, and the results obtained.

This chapter will be dedicated to a general explanation of the digitalization of cultural heritage, in order to understand what it means for museums and cultural institutions to digitalize cultural heritage and why cultural institutions choose to do so, as well as highlighting all the digital tools available to cultural heritage institutions and organisations. It will then look at the policy landscape in EU's cultural heritage, with specific attention being placed on Italy and Spain's cultural policy landscapes.

1.1– What is the digitalization of CH? Why should we digitalize?

Digital cultural heritage is a concept that is relatively new, having emerged only with the advent of the digital age. It includes a widespread range of materials and information which are created using a diverse set of digital methods. Zidan (2024) affirms that digital heritage can be described as the coming together of cultural heritage with digital technologies, which goes beyond the conventional limit in favour of new opportunities for research, interpretation, preservation, documentation and distribution. Essentially, digital cultural heritage is the production, and the application of digital contents specifically designed to accommodate the needs of cultural heritage engagement and preservation, together with the more traditional components of cultural heritage, like collection administration and display (ibid.).

The digitalization of cultural heritage assets bears an extensive potential for various stakeholders within the cultural sector. Digitalization equips conservators with useful information on what restoration techniques better impact artifacts and how to safeguard them against the passing of time. With digital resources, curators can create immersive exhibitions and make cultural objects available to a worldwide audience, thus promoting public appreciation of art and history as well as scholarly research (Doulamis et al. 2017).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the employment of digitalization on cultural heritage was reserved only for preservation practices, putting an emphasis on the importance of making cultural items available to future generations. Yet, the pandemic brought upon a reconsideration of digital technologies in cultural heritage, highlighting the ability technology has of improving visitor experience and increase access to culture. An increasing number of institutions and people is realizing how crucial it is to engage with audiences and educate them through digital tools. This is especially true when using augmented reality and virtual reality technologies (Sanders 2007).

The rapid progresses in digital technologies, together with the recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI), have revolutionized communication channels

and knowledge dissemination practices (Zidan 2024). Ahmed (2023) has shown that digitalization has become a powerful instrument to augment visitor experiences, facilitating access to cultural resources, and increasing the attractiveness and cost-effectiveness of museums and historical sites. Cultural heritage institutions can lead a revolutionary experience if they adopt cutting-edge technology. These digital tools can grant online access to digital collections, boost research opportunities for both scholars and visitors and enhance in-person visits (ibid.).

The cultural heritage landscape has been improved by a series of digital initiatives, including self-guided audio tours, online exhibitions and interactive educational materials (ibid.). After COVID-19, these advancements have gained even more popularity after institutions worked to cater for more online participation and adapt to the everchanging needs of their visitors.

Yet, even if there are clear advantages to digitalization, it is necessary to regulate institutions and organisations in their approach to digitalization in order to guarantee compliance with the ethical and technological norms for the creation and sharing of digitalized heritage. To preserve cultural assets' authenticity and integrity using digital tools' potential for the benefit of next generations, it is fundamental to have regulatory frameworks that promote a responsible and sustainable approach to digital cultural heritage.

1.2 – What are the tools of digitalization for CH?

Cultural institutions are pushed to modernize themselves and change as a result to the progress technology brought in order to continue being relevant and responsive to the many demands of its audiences. Digital apps and collections, virtual reality experiences, social media platforms, even podcasts – cultural heritage institutions have been impacted by digital media in various ways. Other than enhancing visitors' experiences both online and offline, these digital platforms have inherently changed the way in which individuals access and utilize cultural resources (Economou 2015).

Heritage organisations have been studying the uses of technology to promote democratization and inclusivity in the cultural landscape even before the pandemic. In fact, there have been ongoing digital projects that include new perspectives and interpretations in order to make cultural heritage more accessible to a wider range of communities (ibid.).

Cultural heritage institutions employ various digitalization-related instruments to improve their interaction with online and offline communities. For instance, Virtual Reality (VR) has become a fundamental tool in cultural heritage, as it grants visitors to immerse themselves in experiences that take them to distant places and historical settings. According to Economou (2015), these applications are a good description of visitor's interactions via time and space, as they emulate situations which represent a different universe, all while employing the metaphor of travel.

Similarly, Augmented Reality (AR) technologies develop the physical world with digital overlays (Economou 2015), blurring the lines between what is real and what is simulated. An explicative illustration is the *Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Reggio Calabria* (MArRC), which has leveraged AR to showcase the Riace Bronzes in their original context, offering visitors an interactive and educational experience (Autellitano 2022; Furia 2022).



Figure 1. AR visualization of the Riace Bronzes in the Reggio Calabria Museum (Furia, 2022).

Another vital tool is Geographic Information Systems (GISs), which makes it possible to capture intricate socioeconomic data throughout time and place, thus making GISs essential for the documentation and analysis of cultural heritage sites (Economou 2015). GIS technology is fundamental to archaeology research because it makes it easier to understand historical socioeconomic systems and supports attempts to preserve cultural heritage in the face of population growth and the challenges posed by climate change (Harris and Lock, 1994; Reeder, Rick and Elandson 2012).

Sometimes, GIS works with 3D technology to help heritage sites in recording and study (Economou 2015). Cultural heritage organizations can digitally preserve already existing artifacts, recreate historical settings, and communicate research findings in a way that is accessible and understandable thanks to the use of 3D modelling (Pavlidis et al. 2007; Manferdini and Remondino 2012).

An example is the Venus de Milo, which visitors can see in the Louvre – albeit, not at its original splendour, but only what archaeologists have find of its remains. Through 3D technology, researchers and designers have tried to recreate the original art piece various times, reaching various solutions to what the original piece represented (Jones 2015; Postrel 2015).

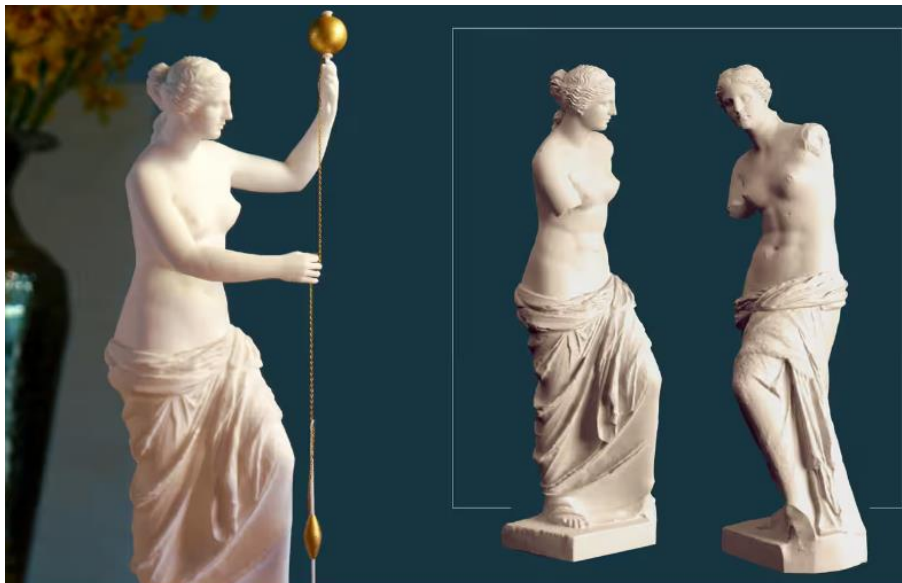


Figure 2. Model of the Venus de Milo with arms, depicting her spinning, alongside images of the broken statue. (Jones, 2015).

3D technology certainly grant different possibilities of model creation in cultural heritage, but also in general cultural heritage documentation, visualization and analysis, as it grants the institutions to collect very heterogeneous types of data for a single cultural site (Economou 2015). Web-based solutions aid large heritage sites to allow users to all relevant data through 3D models used as an intuitive graphical user interface (Auer et al. 2014).

The benefits of GIS and 3D technology can be found in its attitude to centralize different data sources and visualize information in an approachable way, making it easier for tourism applications to gain data on natural and cultural assets (Ruoss 2013). However, there are obstacles as well, such as issues with data interpretation and accuracy, which highlight the necessity of open rules to ensure validity and dependability of heritage visualization projects (Economou 2015).

Together with institutional initiatives, the increasing use of mobile technology has culminated in an increase in the number of digital tools available to visitors. The audience can have individualized experiences with mobile apps that include cultural information, thus increasing engagement and learning opportunities (ibid.). For instance, the EU-funded *Archeoguide IST* project offers AR reconstructions of the archaeological site of Olympia in Greece in order to enhance the visitors' experience (Vlahakis et al. 2001).



Figure 3 AR-site reconstruction of ancient Olympia, Greece (Stricker et al. 2001).

Apart from this, especially during COVID-19, cultural heritage institutions have explored the use of virtual exhibitions by bringing together digital multimedia objects linked by a common theme or some shared characteristic (Economou 2015).

Another advancement has been achieved thanks to the world of gaming. The meeting between gaming and heritage has led to the development of interactive games in museum settings, providing tourists with engaging and intuitive learning experiences (ibid.).

Mortara et al. (2014) have identified two main factors that make this game logic effective: not only the environment becomes attractive and meaningful, but it also creates an intuitive and appropriate interaction paradigm. The ability of a game to create empathy – be it for an affection to a certain character or an attractive storyline – can be helpful for understanding the historical events and the culture of a place, as well as other people’s feelings, problems and behaviours, but also the beauty and value of nature, architecture, art and heritage. This approach, combined with a rigorous scientific method, can become successful to a great learning experience (ibid.).

Lastly, the easy use of social networking via mobile devices allows to create a community and network that is diverse (ibid.). As affirmed by Graham Fairclough (2012), social media offers a way to widen the audience and reach newer constituencies everyday more. This has granted various opportunities – both successful and unsuccessful – to heritage institutions and organisations, with the most blatant example being the “#ItaliaOpenToMeraviglia”, a cultural heritage advertising campaign launched on social media by the Italian Ministry of Tourism. By creating an AI Botticelli’s Venus who travels throughout the beauties of the southern European country, the Ministry of Culture has managed to create an advertising campaign completely led on Instagram where the “virtual content creator” posts her travel (Strada 2023).



Figure 4. AI image of the Venus in Piazza San Marco in Venice for the initiative #ItaliaOpendoMeraviglia (Strada 2023).

All these tools have become especially useful during COVID-19, as it was argued that during the mass lockdowns, online access to cultural heritage could reduce social isolation and loneliness as well as sustaining the educational and creative needs of diverse communities (Samaroudi, Echavarria and Perry 2020). Gretzel et al. (2020) report that COVID-19 simply served to connect the dots of e-tourism in many ways either via social media in which tourists escaped from their quarantines by spreading posts about past or future trips, or via virtual tours and online museum visits.

Recent studies have confirmed the effectiveness of social media and digital tools as a “first aid kit” to fight the COVID-19 “anthropause” (Agostino, Arnaboldi and Lampis 2020; Sigala 2020). As such, museums were able to prove their resilience across the world and have also expanded resilience to society by building bridges and travelling the world without actually being able to do so (Gretzel et al. 2020).

2 – Policy landscape in EU’s digital cultural heritage

The advantages of digitization for cultural heritage institutions are numerous, but it is also critical to recognize that legal frameworks have to be established in order to properly safeguard cultural institutions and their priceless artworks during the digitalization process.

2008 saw the launch of Europeana, a digital cultural initiative supported by the European Commission (EC), the most known EU’s cultural heritage digitalization portal. Since then, Europeana has received contributions from over 4000 cultural heritage institutions for a total of over 60 million digital components, making it one of the biggest aggregators of cultural heritage materials in Europe. These resources consist of museums, libraries, archives, and audio-visual elements (Europeana 2021). Significantly, Europeana has played a fundamental role in facilitating the digital transformation of European cultural heritage institutions (European Commission 2010).



Figure 5. Europeana Italian homepage (Europeana, 2024)

In 2014, the EC formally recognised *Europeana* as a strategic Digital Service Infrastructure (DSI) to develop the EU’s digital agenda (Capurro, Plets and Verheul

2023). By doing this, the EC coordinated the cultural and digital policies, while at the same time sanctioning the central role that was attributed to Europeana in digitising EU cultural sector (ibid.).

Before COVID-19, the EU passed more legislation to protect and reevaluate cultural heritage: the EU Directive 2019/790 (European Parliament and European Council 2019). This directive foresees a series of exception on the activities of protection, reuse and valorisation brought on by museums, archives and libraries, which includes the realization of digital copies of the artworks and pieces preserved in the aforementioned cultural institutions in order to protect them (art. 6, ibid.), as well as granting the exception to the cultural heritage institutions to publish online artworks protected by copyright and that result out of commerce (arts. 8-11, ibid.), which allows for an increase in digital availability for a great number of pieces preserved in cultural institutions. Lastly, according to art. 14 of the directive, the faithful replicas of a visual artwork that is in the public domain may no longer be protected by copyright or related rights (European Parliament and European Council 2019).

This new directive opened a new topic of discussion in the world of cultural heritage – that is, the reuse of digital replicas of public cultural goods (Modolo 2021). Yet, the directive quickly lost the importance that it should have been attributed, as with the advent of COVID-19, not a lot of countries were able to adapt and employ it in their national legislations, the most culminant example being Italy – which already shows a complicated situation regarding copyright for artworks casting it as a special case among EU countries. Yet, when COVID-19 erupted, the Directive – set to be adapted into national legislation by the 7th of June 2021 – soon was replaced by more important and necessary matters (Modolo 2021).

In fact, the EU acted quickly to help MS in their recovery efforts during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the cultural sector. Recognizing the potential of digitalization to support conservation, renovation, research and marketing of European cultural assets, the EC took charge and conducted the *Consultations on Opportunities provided by Digital Technologies for the Cultural Heritage Sector* (European Commission 2022). The pandemic's disruptive effects amplified the necessity for cultural heritage institutions to undergo digital transformation, which has sped up the transition

to digital services in order to preserve audience engagement and connectivity (Europeana Pro 2020).

The EU's *NextGenerationEU* recovery plan further exemplifies the Union's commitment to digitalization as a cornerstone for economic revitalisation and societal resilience. Through initiatives such as the *Recovery and Resilience Facility* (RRF) and the *National Recovery and Resilience Plans* (NRRPs), the EU earmarked substantial funds totalling €806.9 billion to address specific needs and spur innovation across MSs (European Union 2021).

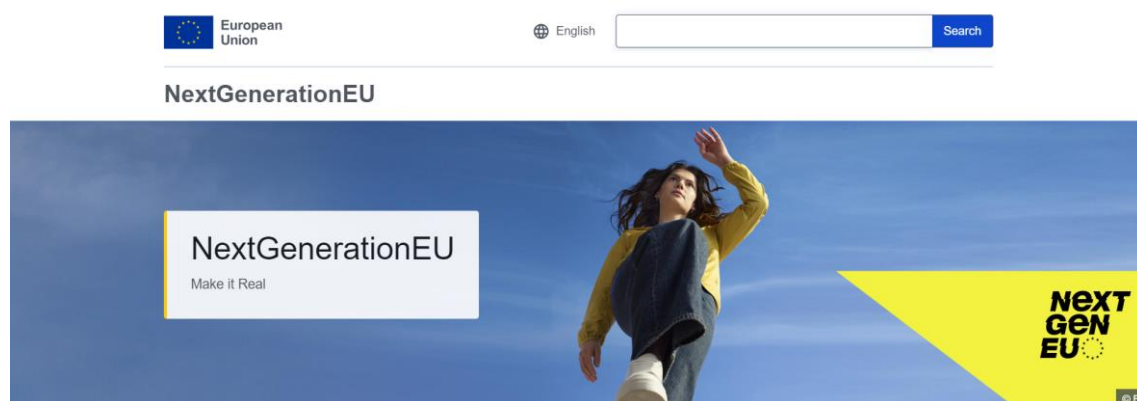


Figure 6. *NextGenerationEU Make it Real* (European Union, 2021).

As this thesis develops, it will shift its attention to Italy and Spain, providing an in-depth analysis on the nations' particular potential difficulties, and policies in the larger framework of the countries' agenda.

3 – Italy's digital cultural heritage policy landscape

3.1 – Before COVID-19: from the Italian Digital Library to *CulturaItalia*

The Italian Digital Library (IDL) was founded in the late 1990s, marking the beginning of the country's digitalization efforts in the cultural heritage sector. The *Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico* and the Italian Ministry of Culture (IMC) led a joint effort

of 40 cultural heritage and research institutions to create the IDL with the objective of digitizing and making available more than 50.000 documents of Italy's bibliographic heritage (Salarelli and Tammaro 2006). While initially being conceived as a national strategy to adjust Italian standards to its European counterparts in digitalizing heritage, it represented more of a preliminary endeavour rather than a fully-fledged policy implementation.

By 2015, Italy had emerged as a leader among EU MSs in cultural heritage digitalization, strengthened by initiatives such as the Ministerial NetwoRk for Valorising Activities in digitisation (Minerva) (Caffo and Lunghi 2004) and the Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe (MICHAEL) (Tallandini 2006), which respectively acted as a series of guidelines to digitalize and a cataloguing plan for the European cultural heritage used as a base for the aforementioned Europeana.

With the introduction of *CulturaItalia*, a national portal acting as an interface for European projects other than providing easier access to Italian cultural heritage, Italy made an enormous step forward in 2008. *CulturaItalia*, also known as the *Portale Italiano della Cultura On Line*, was founded as a result of cooperation between the IMC, the University *Normale Superiore* in Pisa, and other cultural heritage institutions and organizations. The portal offered integrated access to Italy's cultural heritage resources (CulturaItalia 2008a). By aggregating digital cultural resources from different archives, galleries, museums and libraries, the portal positioned itself as an example of usability and accessibility, demonstrating Italy's dedication to the preservation of cultural heritage.



Figure 7 Homepage *CulturaItalia* (CulturaItalia, 2008b).

3.2 From COVID-19 onward: the *Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale* and the Ministerial Decree 161/2023

As previously seen, before COVID-19, Italy prioritized preservation and access to documents for scholarly reasons, as evidenced by the projects conducted both independently and in cooperation with the EU. But the start of the pandemic caused a paradigm shift, which made clear that cultural tourism needs an innovative and sustainable strategy.

In this scenery, Italy's allocation of funds from the *NextGenerationEU* plan towards the *Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale* (NDP) stresses its commitment to digital transformation in the cultural sector (Ministero della Cultura 2022). The NDP, spanning the years 2022-2026, provides a comprehensive framework for cultural heritage institutions and organisations to formulate their digital strategies, emphasizing conscious, shared, sustainable and inclusive digital transformation aligned with the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations 2023).

The fundamentals of the 2022-2026 NDP are threefold: enhancing digital cultural heritage access, boosting digitalization practices, and promoting cooperation and data interoperability within the ecosystem. By promoting a collaborative and integrated approach to digital transformation, Italy aims to develop in a future that is centred on enhanced accessibility, efficiency and innovation for its cultural heritage institutions and organisations (Ministero della Cultura 2022).

In fact, the NDP was created by the Italian Digital Library (IDL), a team of experts in the cultural sector led by Laura Moro (DiCultHer 2023). This was a collaboration between expertise and decision-makers that did not stop only at the creation of the Plan but went further, including workers and experts in the sector through open consultations where they could express their opinions (ParteciPa 2022).

Yet, the same cannot be said for what came after in the cultural heritage policy landscape, as suddenly, when the Draghi government fell and the Meloni government

took over following the September 2022 elections, the collaboration between the two actors came to a halt.

The Ministerial Decree 161/2023 on the guidelines for determining the minimum amount of fees and charges for the concession of the use of assets transferred to state institutes and places of culture issued by the Ministry of Culture (Croce 2023; Ministero della Cultura 2023) – and which has recently been amended by the ministerial decree 108/2024 (Liverani 2024) – has in fact become object of debate in the Southern European country. This debate has actually existed for a long time in the world of cultural heritage, being initially linked to copyright and image rights in Italy, but was once again brought to the fore with the NDP.

According to the official bulletin of the parliamentary councils and committees on culture, science and education (2023), the debate has been developed following the rise of the usage of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and the problems connected to them, which are also linked to cultural fruition. This, in turn, has brought forward a series of auditions with the Ministry of Culture, especially after the results obtained by the latter following the issuing of such decree.

In fact, the ministerial decree 161/2023 received harsh critique from almost all relevant members of the cultural sector because of its complex procedure and the heavy payments for all publications and reproductions that use state-owned cultural heritage images (Liverani 2024). The main critique is that the valorisation of national cultural heritage should be regulated by public policies that do not employ income and financial discrimination among users, whether they are people or bodies, both public and private (Bertini 2023).

The *Giunta della Federazione delle Consulte Universitarie di Archeologia* (CUNSTA) even affirmed that the ministerial decree could pose as a threat to Art. 9 of the Italian Constitution on the liberty of research, expression and economic initiative in the cultural environment, as well as condemning a series of innovations which should be instead promoted by the ministry (Giaume 2023).

Furthermore, cultural institutions and organizations criticize both the ministerial decrees for not being coherent with the European directives and the international views

in terms of promotion of open access, the reuse of sources and the valorisation of cultural heritage (Pirrelli 2023).

The Italian Court of Auditors has deliberated in 2023 that EU law has always granted clear indications on how to employ and regulate Open Access even in commercial terms for digital reproductions created by public cultural institutions for greater accessibility (Corte dei Conti 2023). Open Access has proved to be a great advantage both in economic terms – whether for the cultural institutions or for the national GDP – but also for social and cultural ones (ibid.). The Court of Auditors (2023) believes that, by introducing tariffs, the Italian Ministry ignores these elements, and at the same time also ignores the peculiarities of the web and the potential threat to the community, which would in turn be deprived from greater access to culture.

Therefore, the Court of Auditors believes that the objective of the Ministry should be to develop the potential that digitalization has not only in scientific terms, but also as a fruitful hand to cultural development, as it would have numerous positive outcomes, such as an increase in tourism valorisation (ibid.).

The debate introduces both economic and jurisprudential aspects, as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan should grant the possibility to invest in digital resources and grant a true digital transformation of both the Ministry and the cultural heritage sector.

Italy is certainly a particular case compared to the majority of the other countries in EU, where the State cannot vindicate any right on the use of cultural goods reproductions that are in public dominion (Thatcher and Pirri Valentini 2023). The substantial difference resides in the impossibility of putting under control reproduction of artworks that are not protected by copyright – something that is common among the majority of cultural pieces preserved in the expositions of national museums, as they passed the 70-years mark which starts at the death of an author (ibid.).

The framework in action makes it so that the images of artworks are protected even after the expiry of copyright through a public right of protection which gives the museums the ability to authorize the reproductions of the goods in their custody, as well as determining their fees (ibid.).

As Manacorda and Modolo (2023) convene, the current legislation is the mere result of a system in which pressures for liberalization are continuously confronted with counter-pushes aimed at fuelling the proprietary demands of the State. The result, as the two authors have affirmed in their essay reporting the proceedings of a conference promoted by the *Aglaia* Foundation in Florence in June 2022, is a “patchwork” which threatens the coherence of the jurisprudence (ibid.).

The problem lies in the reasons posed against the liberalization of images and reproductions, which are unclear, but legitimate a sort of exclusive control by the State on the reproduction of cultural goods (ibid.).

On one hand, the commercialisation of images of State cultural property would offer opportunities to replenish the cultural institutions’ treasuries – even if in spite of what the Court of Auditors has pointed out – but could also give the State the power to decide who and how can reproduce their cultural heritage assessing the compatibility of the use with the purpose of the property (Caso 2024b). Manacorda and Modolo (2023) have denounced this “censoring power” – as defined by Manacorda (2023) – as this evaluation power would belong to the same State which passed the *Open to meraviglia* initiative mentioned in chapter 1 of this work, which would result as something hypocritical on the State side.

The contradiction is even more evident when looking at the cases brought in front of the State courts regarding the Michelangelo’s David and Leonardo’s Vitruvian Man (ibid.). In these two cases, the State went against the unauthorized reproduction of images for commercial use by well-known firms with strong commercial power (ibid.) still for unknown reasons, but scholars ponder on whether they have done so to “vindicate the incompatibility with the purpose of the cultural good or to obtain, once the violation had been committed, a conspicuous damage compensation from good payers” (Caso 2024a).

As Caso (2024b) theorizes, if enterprises with strong economical capacities interested in using cultural heritage reproductions decided to turn to other sources – such as museums abroad which practice Open Access freely – our State would be left with the so-called *poor clientele*, that largely belongs to the niche scientific publishing, such as that of university presses or specialized houses. The earning prospects would dramatically

fall and in a lot of cases the revenues would be reduced to what they earn nowadays through contributions (ibid.).

At the same time, according to the ministerial decree 161/2023, the fees apply only to cultural heritage owned by the State – and therefore only to national museums (Caso 2023). This means that other cultural public entities are still free to determine their own fees, or even allowing to reproduce and reuse them for free when regarded as such according to the *Codice dei Beni Culturali* Art. 108 (2004) and the EU Directive 2019/1024 (European Parliament and Council 2023), which on one side excludes from its application museum-owned cultural goods, but still specifies that the maximum limits for fees are without prejudice to the right of Member States who decide to impose lower charges or to not impose them at all (ibid.).

Therefore, museums could regularly introduce Open Access principles freely, as it has already happened in the case of the Egyptian Museum in Turin, which was the first in Italy to release online reproduction of State-owned cultural heritage elements for free reuse also in the case of commercial use (Caso 2023).

According to Caso (2023), what Italy needs to clearly define is the social and economic framework these sets of policies aim to employ, either a liberalist one or one in which cultural heritage is considered part of the Republic, and therefore firstly of its citizens, and as such make its reproductions an instrument of cultural and social promotion.

The decrees can be defined as a clear political sign by the Italian Ministry of Culture (Liandru 2024). In particular, the Ministry of Culture's guideline on the identification of political priorities to be implemented in the year 2023 and for the three-year period 2023-2025 states that the heritage represented by images, digital ones included, of our cultural heritage must be protected through an adequate remuneration (ibid.).

4 – Spain’s digital cultural heritage policy landscape

4.1 – Before COVID-19: a slow policy process

As reported by Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro (2024), Spain can be categorized as one of those countries which had a slow process of adaptation to the digital transformation. In fact, while the country started in the early 2000s to work on policies that implemented digitalization in the world of telecommunications and the information society, for cultural policy administration this was a concern that arose only later on (ibid.).

In 2007, the Ministry of Culture first launched the *Plan de Modernización de las Instituciones Culturales* (Ministerio de Cultura and Ministerio de Administración Pública 2007) tackling the issues of intellectual property and Internet piracy, which at the time were a concern also shared by the Secretary of State for Telecommunications and the Information society (Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro 2024).

In 2008, the General Directorate for Cultural Policy and Industries was created (ibid.). The aim of the directorate was to promote the cultural industries and develop actions related to the digital transformation process in the cultural sector. At the end of 2000s, the Ministry of Culture adopted other actions to democratize digitalization: in 2009, the *Museum Libraries Network* was established, granting online access to the directory of libraries from eighteen museums owned by the state (ibid.). In 2010, instead, the Spanish Ministry of Culture launched two other projects, *Hispanica* – similar to its EU counterpart *Europeana* – and *CERES*, that is the online catalogue of the *Digital Network for Spanish Museum Collections*, which for the first time allowed a unified access to the cultural assets of the Spanish museums (ibid.).

The real turn in digitalization policies started in late 2010s and progressed throughout the following years even after 2020. In 2017, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (2017) launched the *Plan Cultura 2020*, which further developed measures included in the *Digital Agenda for Spain* launched in 2013, all related to the digitalization of cultural heritage. Among these measures there was the launch of *Cultura Inteligente 2020*, which

aimed to facilitate the digital transition of cultural institutions, together with the standardization, interoperability and reutilization of digital cultural contents (ibid.). Among them, elements that certainly need to be highlighted are the tools for museum collection management *DOMUS* and the aforementioned *Digital Network for Spanish Museum Collections* (ibid.). As affirmed by Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro (2024), the purpose of the measures was to modernize the cultural sectors, which are conceived in the Spanish government view as linked to the full incorporation of modern digital technologies.

4.2 – COVID-19 and the future: from the *Plan España Digital 2025* to the Law on Patronage

At the beginning of 2020, when COVID-19 first broke out, the Spanish government was among the firsts in line to understand the need for a new era in the development of digital cultural policy. In fact, in July 2020 the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez drew up and presented a resourceful plan: the *Plan España Digital 2025* (Gobierno de España 2020). The plan affirms the necessity of deepening and advancing digitalisation.

This agenda was a launch platform for what came next also thanks to the *NextGenerationEU*, which was already introduced in EU and Italy's policy landscapes. Thanks to the *NextGenerationEU*, exceptional funding was provided to Spain through the *Plan Nacional de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* (RTRP) (Gobierno de España 2021a). The country increased the State investments in the *Plan España Digital 2025* (Gobierno de España 2020) thanks to the fundings received in the last years. In fact, the investments have multiplied in the years 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 by nearly nine and have strongly increased in the general State budget for 2023 (Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro 2024).

Among the missions of the RTRP, the one that will be most relevant to the analysis brought forward in this work is the Component 24, *Revaluación de la Industria Cultural* (Gobierno de España 2021b). An elevated number of investments of this plan are aimed

at digital transformation, aimed at promoting the competitiveness of cultural industries and digitizing the major cultural institutions (ibid.).

It seems clear that the great support given by the EU to the country has helped improving digital cultural policies in Spain (Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro 2024), but it also needs to be recognized that Spain has recognized the importance of digitalization long before COVID-19 (ibid.), albeit there is still work to do.

While Spain was working on policies to improve its digitalization efforts for cultural heritage, they were also working on another policy which could also greatly aid the cultural sector: the Law on Patronage, a policy debate that has been going on since 2002 and was only partially closed in 2024.

In Spain, the promotion of private contributions to activities of general interest materialises through fiscal incentives for donations and a special taxation regime for non-profit organizations (Rubio Arostegui and Villaroya Planas 2019). More precisely, the Law 49/2002 on the fiscal regimes for non-profit organizations and tax incentives for patronage in its Title III regulates the fiscal benefits applicable to donators, donations and contributions made in favour of beneficiary entities (Jefatura del Estado 2002).

With the economic crisis, it became necessary to issue a new law for patronage designed to promote a larger participation of both individuals and companies in the financing and promotion of culture (Rubio Arostegui and Villaroya Planas 2019). Beyond the social debate, the following governments of the *Partido Popular* included the approval of a new law, firstly in the *Plan Estratégico General 2012-2015* of the State Secretary of Culture and, later, in the *Plan Cultura 2020* (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2017), previously mentioned in Chapter 1 of this work.

At the end of 2014, the government approved a fiscal reform which included promotion measures for patronage and other incentives to culture (Rubio Arostegui and Villaroya Planas 2019). The reform favoured those donations of the same or a higher amount to the same beneficiary in the immediately preceding tax periods (ibid.).

In November 2018, the parliamentary group of the *Ciudadanos* and that of the *Partido Popular* presented in the Congress of Deputies two law proposals regarding

patronage (ibid.). Both parliamentary groups proposed the creation of a body with distinct denominations aimed to structure, promote and regulate cultural patronage, even if with some differences (ibid.).

For the *Ciudadanos*, the government should have nominated a *Consejo de Mecenazgo* which should regulate and advice privates, as well as outlining donations, including other forms of contributions expressly approved and authorised by the board (ibid.).

The *Partido Popular*, instead, proposed the creation of two bodies: on one side, the *Observatorio de Mecenazgo*, while on the other the *Comisión de Mecenazgo*, which would depend on the observatory and would not be part of the government's cultural policy, but would be an inter-ministerial commission with responsibility for culture, sport and science (ibid.). The observatory would have the function of analysis and investigation, of advising, elaborating studies and evaluating the patronage strategic pillars – that is the cultural pillar, the science and research pillar, the social pillar, the environmental and sustainability pillar and the sport one (ibid.).

Both proposals coincided with the necessity to create a new strategy for patronage at the state level, as well as the function of advising and elaborating studies and reports on patronage (ibid.).

Moreover, the *Partido Popular*'s proposal clearly mentioned the state-owned museums with the objective of increasing civil society's participation in the management of museums through the creation of advisory councils that would participate in the museums' governance (ibid.). It should be noted that the ownership of the General Administration of the State – in Spanish *Administración General del Estado* – refers to the 64 museums of the autonomous communities through collaboration agreements, in addition to the museums managed by the corresponding directorate general of the Ministry of Culture and Sport (ibid.).

In 2023, during the political debates before the national government elections, the Spanish parties *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE), *Vox*, *Sumar* and *Partido Popular* all proposed their ideas on how the Patronage Law should be modified, something that had already been approved in Congress in April of the same year with the

backing of all the political parties with the exception of *Vox*, which decided to abstain (Díaz de Quijano 2023). Among them, it is relevant to mention the position of *Sumar* and the PSOE, which focused on the object of analysis of this thesis.

Sumar considered it necessary to take up the modification of Law 49/2002 on tax incentives in order to encourage public-private cooperation as a factor in the generation of valuable resources for the industry – “as long as it does not lead to privatisation” (ibid.). The party also advocated for including individuals as possible beneficiaries of patronage (ibid.).

The PSOE, instead, proposed taking inspiration from the British system of patronage and subsidies, which is reviewed every four years, bringing stability to the sector, as well as promoting the creation of cultural investment funds with the aim of mobilising private investment (ibid.).

In December 2023, the royal decree-law 6/2023 was issued, approving urgent measures for the implementation of the *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* in various areas, among which that of patronage (Jefatura del Estado 2023). In its Title IV, the decree modified the Law 49/2002; in its Art. 17 the decree exempted from the Companies Tax – in Spanish *Impuesto sobre Sociedades* - granted deductions on donations or gifts of assets that form part of Spanish Historical Heritage, which are registered in the General Register of Assets of Cultural Interest or that are included in the General Inventory of Spanish Historical Heritage (ibid.).

Yet, this decree failed to answer to the questions posed by the political debate.

In fact, once again in 2024, the *Partido Popular* has reopened the political debate around the patronage laws, when the councillors of the autonomous communities governed by the party committed themselves to issue a new law on patronage in order to revitalise the cultural and creative industries in Spain and to develop smarter and more efficient public-private partnerships through new state regulations (Partido Popular 2024).

Throughout the duration of the policy process, the decision-makers did not seek out experts' aid. Still, the government was able to elaborate a policy that could potentially

prove successful. It is yet impossible to say that, even if the debate is still open, a solution has not been found. As will be further developed in Chapter 4 of this work, the Spanish government has passed during the third Sánchez government a new Law on Patronage on the 1st of January 2024 (Felipe 2024).

5 – Digital transformation and cultural heritage: an assessment

An overview of the various digitalization domains provided by digital innovation in heritage organizations has been given in this chapter. The vast array of digital technologies and the expansive domain of social media have brought attention upon the diverse range of opportunities available to cultural sites, such as libraries and museums.

A landmark is the pivotal role played by the EU in driving the digitalization of cultural heritage. *Europeana* and similar initiatives have established signature projects that enabled the consolidation of cultural heritage data and foster cooperation amongst different cultural institutions throughout Europe. The digital transformation of cultural heritage institutions within the EU has also been accelerated by the strategic alignment of these initiatives with digital policy frameworks.

The breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of digital transformation in the cultural sector. In response, the EU has launched consultations and allocated substantial funds to support cultural heritage institutions in their digital transition efforts. Through initiatives such as the *NextGenerationEU* recovery plan, the EU has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing its digital agenda, recognizing the transformative potential of advanced technologies in conserving, renovating, studying and promoting European cultural assets.

The RRF and the NRRPs stand as concrete manifestations of the EU's commitment to not only recover from the pandemic, but also build a more digitally resilient and inclusive future for European citizens. This coordinated effort highlights the EU's

dedication to harnessing digital technologies to preserve cultural heritage, foster innovation and ensure cultural sustainability for the generations to come.

Italy is one of the countries that has advanced in a significant manner in the process of making its cultural heritage digital. The country launched a number of digitalization programs starting from the late 1990s, including *CulturaItalia* and the *Italian Digital Library*. Collaborative initiatives like the *MICHAEL* and *Minerva* programs have cemented even more Italy's position in EU digital policy.

Italy's transition faced a turning point with the *National Cultural Heritage Digitalization Plan* (NCHDP). By aligning with the UN Agenda 2030 SDGs, Italy will surely boost its efforts in the cultural sector. If successful in pursuing the objectives of boosting cultural inclusion, improving efficiency, and contributing to worldwide advances in digital cultural heritage projects as set out in the NCHDP, Italian cultural institutions are well-positioned to become possible protagonists of cultural inclusion and shift to a more digitally empowered future.

On the other hand, Spain has also proved its strength in the world of digitalization thanks to digital cultural policies which have been implemented over the years, albeit later than Italy. Thanks to plans such as *Hispanica* (Rodríguez Morató and Guirao Soro 2024), the *Digital Network for Spanish Museum Collections* (ibid.), but also the *Plan Cultura 2020* (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2017), Spain was able to prep itself to a terrain that is still not completely covered, and gave itself ample way to improve thanks to the investments granted through the *NextGenerationEU* and the *Plan Nacional de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* (RTRP) (Gobierno de España 2021) through which the country enacted its component 24, *Revaluación de la Industria Cultural* (ibid.).

The two countries already show some differences in their landscape: even if Italy understood earlier the importance of digitalization, Spain proved to be able to catch up easily and employ strategies that employed both EU's plans and made them their own, creating an imitation game of sorts. Certain is that both countries were able to employ the *NextGenerationEU* funds in a useful manner in order to digitally innovate their cultural policies, which will be analysed further in the subsequent chapters.

Moreover, the two countries differ greatly in their approaches to experts: while Italy has a sort of fluctuating relationship with experts accordingly to the government changes, Spain seems to instead not have had any kind of relationship with expertise. As we will see in the next chapters, this has brought on clearly different results, as the lack of collaboration and the relationship of trust between the two actors has influenced the policy process.

CHAPTER 2 – Literature review and debates

As was shown in the previous chapter, Italy and Spain have adapted the NextGenerationEU to their needs, drawing up two national digitalization plans which include the digitalization of cultural heritage. These plans have both great ambitions but also some issues which have been raised.

Among the main issues of both the Plans, surely, we can find one that opens the way to a bigger concern of public policy – the lack of coordination between experts and politicians. In both countries, the lack of coordination between the political actors and the expertise has created an imbalance in the creation of the projects designed through their Recovery and Resilience Plans. Yet, while in Italy it has contributed to hinder the success of the projects launched by the State, for Spain it has proved that the lack of coordination did not necessarily affect the success of the Plan, which has instead brought forward successful projects and reforms.

The difference in outcome between the two countries' Plans can be explained by the relationship of trust between experts and politicians, and how that influences policy-making. I argue that, in relation to trust, a lack of coordination does not necessarily hinder the success of public policies if politicians are able to implement strategies that can effectively aid society or – as in the case of the policies analysed in this thesis – a sector and are able to monitor them so that they can be improved and use the resources in an efficient way, as has been the case of Spain.

1 – The relationship of trust: a delicate balance

When dealing with political questions, usually the common wonder is what should be done regarding a certain problem or state of things, which involves a normative approach to the issue (Cerovac 2016). Yet, there are issues – such as, for example, climate change, where it is necessary to involve experts in the decision-making in order to gain a more technical view on the problem. The presence of experts – and, in some case, the

deference to experts – is sometimes necessary to overcome those limitations of knowledge so to grant better policies (Kitcher 2001).

Still, especially in recent years marked by crises that have followed one another rapidly, it seems that there has been a change of faith in the effective experts' contribution to public problem-solving (Head 2023). While in the past the trend was to consolidate deliberation using evidence-based advice – and the common belief was that better knowledge could help solve numerous problems facing liberal democracies (Head 2015) – more recently this process has been dismantled by populist leaders (Daly 2019) who seek to weaken public trust and confidence in the advisory role of the experts and their so-called “elite” (Head 2023). Most notably, in 2016 the pro-Brexit UK government minister Michael Gove stated on the wake of the 2016 referendum that people “have had enough of experts” (Andrews 2017).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has proved that trust in experts – in this case, specifically in health ones – has facilitated the uptake of recommended public measures and policy by increasing the perceptions of the severity of the crisis at hand (Ahluwalia et al. 2021).

It seems that there is a discrepancy between who the public trusts and who the politicians trust. It is thus necessary to understand why politicians do not always place trust on experts for their decisions.

Certainly, trust is a tricky concept. According to scholars such as Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000), trust is an individual's belief in someone's words, actions and decisions and the willingness to act on them. It can be defined as something purely positive, considering how it is viewed as an essential prerequisite for a democratic society to function efficiently (Putnam 1995). Still, trust only keeps true to its value when it is placed on individuals or groups and organisations which can be deemed trustworthy, with the risk of being detrimental if placed in the wrong hands (Hosking 2014).

The double-edged sword represented by the nature of trust can be seen in the case of experts. One thing that is usually taken for granted is that – by nature – experts are trustworthy (Mihelj, Kondor, and Štětka 2022). Nonetheless, sometimes people – be it the citizens or politicians themselves – might trust individuals that they perceive as

experts, but who actually do not possess the relevant knowledge and therefore cannot be perceived as trustworthy (ibid.). The most poignant example is the contemporary information environment, where information and – most importantly – misinformation are quick to spread and easy to access (Hendriks, Kienhues, and Bromme 2015). With the advent of internet, in fact, it has become easier for misinformation to spread, with the downside of experts' voices being ignored.

1.1 – Crease's models of expertise in relation to trust

To explain the relationship of trust among politicians and experts, Crease (2023) proposes two models of expertise: the call-and-response and the acoustical model of expertise.

The call-and-response model of expertise involves a simple intentional relationship between, as the scholar defines them, a producer and a consumer of expertise (ibid.). When the consumer – namely, the politician – needs information which cannot be obtained by oneself, he/she will turn to the appropriate authority for such information – that is, the expert – who will respond by delivering that information; as a result, the consumer will act accordingly (ibid.).

This model is a dynamic portrayal of expertise, in which advice is sought by and delivered to someone who intends to consider it as authoritative and decides to act on it (ibid.). In this case, mistrust of expertise – as Crease (2023) defines it – can be due to the consumer being ignorant, dishonest, or having interests which supersede the desire to act according to the mainstream authoritative advice, but also to simple issues such as the consumer mishearing the information or perceiving that the expert is phony, deceitful or simply not the right kind of authority for that matter (ibid.).

This model is certainly intuitive for both experts and politicians, yet it presents limitations and weaknesses. Crease (2023) affirms that this model portrays expertise as something that goes from a stable, relatively reliable and context-free object to a welcoming, open-minded and responsive subject. In reality, for example, the politician

might not like the information given by an expert, instead choosing the contrarian one of another expert in that field or even that of an expert of another field.

Moreover, the model fails to recognize that experts can “shape” the information to devolve (ibid.). For example, an expert could be affiliated with the party the politician belongs to, raising the chances of giving the information the politicians wants to hear rather than the one he needs to.

Another failure of this model is that it overlooks the reaction of the consumers of expertise, which can range from a thoughtful evaluation with a subsequent reaction to a programmed embrace to denial (ibid.).

Furthermore, it fails to consider the influence of what Crease (2023) defines as “scientism”. Experts can assume that their expertise entitles them to give advice about how their knowledge and advice should be implemented and can do so even about fields that are outside of their specialty, something that can be accepted by consumers or can become ground for mistrust or even distrust (ibid.). This might be the case when a politician consults an expert not belonging to that field of expertise. Due to his/her position as an expert, he/she might feel empowered to give an opinion on something that does not concern his/her field or which concerns it partly, therefore giving either wrongful or incomplete advice.

Lastly, the call-and-response model ignores the phenomenology of political mistrust and denial of expertise (ibid.). In fact, while in some environments mainstream experts are not only heard but also regarded with authority, in others they are drowned out, or others are considered as more authoritative than them (ibid.). Yet, the call-and-response model does not acknowledge that there might be contrarian voices, just as it fails to acknowledge the fact that decision-makers might choose to ignore an expert’s voice in favour of that of a less experienced individual whose advice results more appealing, thus ignoring the possibility of mistrust to happen.

It can be said that this model is too simplistic and fails to picture the complexity of not only the policy process, but also of the human mind and the way in which trust develops as a human emotion, as well as the existence of changing environments in which experts have to have their voices be heard.

The second approach proposed by Crease (2023) is the acoustical model, defined by the scholar as more nuanced than the call-and-response. Once again, this model of expertise is introduced as a dynamic and ongoing process in which advice is sought and delivered to a person who intends to act upon it. However, in this case, expertise is seen as something happening in a space where information is interpreted in varied ways (ibid.). The main issue of the acoustical space, though, is that it is never neutral, to the point that some voices are more audible than others.

It is thus possible to define the call-and-response model a particular case of the acoustical model: in this case, the voice is clearly received by the decision-maker seeking it and he/she is both prepared and willing to act on it (ibid.).

The acoustical model is certainly more comprehensive than the call-and-response one and gives us an idea of the difficulties experts face in making their voices heard in the real world. In fact, in the public arena where multiple voices mix, the expert risks being trumped by the voices of people who do not possess the same level of expertise but might result as such simply because their voices are louder. The model also looks at the need for empirical research into questions of how consumers of information respond to specific kinds of advice or information (ibid.).

The acoustical model thus sees distrust and mistrust of experts and expertise as something different from ignorance or selfishness, but rather as a result of the development of media in the internet era. In fact, social media have made it so that, while it is easy for experts to divulge information about their field of expertise, they have to do so in a scenario where their voices can be suppressed by many others, with the risk of their information being manipulated and changed, or even not be heard at all, lost in the sea of media.

1.2– Other views on trust

While Crease (2023) applies clear-cut models of expertise to explain the possibilities of a lack of trust and thus collaboration between experts and politicians, scholars such as

Thunert (2021) attest that the waning of trust in expertise can be traced back to the emergence of the knowledge society in the late 1990s, which became a double-edged sword for trust in expertise.

On one hand, people in knowledge societies expect politicians and public institutions to act in a rational way and to rely on relevant knowledge, better explained by the notion of evidence-based decision-making (ibid.). On the other hand, in a knowledge society, experts and their capacities reach further in the lives of citizens than before, such as in issues of education or – as in the case of this thesis – culture and accessibility (ibid.). This arises the risk of discomfort with experts, since many of them seem to have differing opinions among each other, especially when looking at fields that do not regard natural science (ibid.) where the answer is given by factual evidence and cannot be manipulated.

The widespread idea among knowledge societies is that expertise can be democratized, not only meant as by producing more experts and possible areas of expertise, but by eradicating the previously existing boundary between expert knowledge detained by a determined individual and expertise intended as a common public good in a society that has much higher levels of education and new technologies, like the internet (ibid.).

With this development, it is easy to see why those who defended the technocratic expert rule could diagnose the “death of expertise” (Nichols 2017). At the same time, others recognized that there has been a diffusion of trust into different spheres of expertise (Thunert 2021). What changed therefore, is not trust in experts, but merely the experts one trusts: trust has in fact been devolved from large institutions to individuals existing on digital peer groups and on the internet (ibid.).

The traditional understanding of expertise as something that refers to natural sciences and in which everyone agrees that it is not possible to comment on certain things without expertise, though, still stands (ibid.). The new and broadened idea of expertise which concerns questions of morality and lifestyles, instead, is still perceived as something distant from society, and in it the idea of expert review can quickly become undemocratic (ibid.).

This is the sphere in which Nichols (2017) and Babones (2018) set their views on the waning of trust in expertise. Differently from Nichols' view on the death of expertise, Babones (2018) proposes the same aforementioned view suggested by Daly (2019), according to which populists are to blame for the backlash against expertise.

Andrews (2017), though, defines the rise in evidence-free decision-makers a myth that persists in nowadays public policy. As has been affirmed by Cairney (2016), “the policy process involves a number of influential actors and scientific evidence becomes only one of many sources of information, therefore policymakers make their decisions based on a mixture of emotions, knowledge and even shortcuts to gather relevant evidence”.

This last notion means that the policymakers rely solely on the evidence of who they trust (*ibid.*). There is no need to say that building a relationship of trust takes time – this holds true not only in political science literature but also in simple interpersonal relations. If we add the fact that policy solutions usually take long time to become adopted – except for emergency measures like in the case of COVID-19 – or to be seen as common sense, it makes sense that a politician would choose to accept the opinion of an expert he/she has known for a long time rather than the one of a stranger.

In fact, it would be easier to be persuaded by the convincing argument of a trusted individual rather than someone unknown – this happens in everyday life, so it is easy to understand how it happens also in the policy process, considering we are still dealing with human sentiment.

Head (2023), instead, theorizes that it is the diversification in sources of policy advice together with the highly partisan climate of policy debates that has created a challenge to the traditional role of expertise. According to the scholar, the ability of the expert advisory systems to anticipate and plan for the inter-related crises we are facing in this age is limited, not only because of possible partisan conflicts, but also because of knowledge uncertainties and the focus on rapid political decision-making that is required (*ibid.*), but that not always experts can grant, as providing evidence requires time.

In fact, as also proved by numerous studies, policy debates are mostly made of opinion-based ideological commentaries rather than factual evidence (Mazzoleni 2014).

Some might choose to do so for partisan reasons. Majone (1989) had already stated that policy debates and decision-making are never just about the facts, but regard competing narratives. In an environment like this, it is normal for distrust or scepticism to permeate the discourse.

That is why some, like Cerovac (2016), believe that in some cases expertise should be rejected. While it is true that not anyone possesses enough evidence to qualify experts' testimony as credible or not, Cerovac (2016) believes that this does not undermine the ability to assess an expert's reliability. In fact, experts can be influenced by many negative effects in producing correct beliefs, and their reliability can be assessed by checking whether some of these effects were in place when the experts made their belief (*ibid.*).

Members of government cannot directly assess whether the means suggested by experts and the administrative and executive government will obtain the desired end – that is whether the policies that have been drawn up will lead society and sectors toward the aims that have been collectively put forward through a democratic procedure (*ibid.*). Yet, it is possible to assess the reliability of an expert that has created the laws and policies in place and decide whether or not he/she should be authorised (*ibid.*). Yet, some evidence can be so complex that it is impossible to evaluate it properly.

Cerovac (2016) thus affirms that epistemic authorities should be trusted, but trust should not be blind. When unable to evaluate the experts' claims, the experts' credibility should be evaluated instead.

Head (2023) also affirms that governments are more likely to perform competently when they have both a strong internal policy capacity and strong links to external expertise and stakeholder experience. By improving the ability of the government agencies and by drawing upon a wide range of expertise through multi-stakeholder approaches, governments could better address the legitimacy deficit, encourage innovation and enhance capacities for long-term problem-solving (*ibid.*). Head (2023) believes that robust advisory systems are crucial for obtaining beneficial policy impacts, but improved outcomes and public trust can also be influenced by other political and contextual factors like an effective leadership, organisational capability and transparency, as well as a good tolerance of differences.

Having analysed the relevant literature on the concept of trust and distrust, it is now necessary to look at how trust has been applied in the relevant debates in the two countries.

2 – Italy and Spain: the relationship of trust and the local debates

In an environment like the post-COVID European Union, it was easy to see how media have also influenced the role of expertise, with individuals initially feeling the urgency of the situation also thanks to the role of experts and adhering to the recommended measures and health policies like the lockdown and the social distancing. Yet, as the world moved further into the pandemic – especially when a solution under the form of vaccines started to arise, experts' authority started to decline, with uncertainty growing both at expertise and political decision-making level (Pellizzoni 2021).

The uncertainty over expertise has apparently raised also in other sectors, among which the cultural one. This can be seen also in the recent debates developed in the two countries analysed in Chapter 1 (par. 3 and par. 4).

In the following sections it will be seen how the relationship of trust and the lack of collaboration between decision-makers and expertise has influenced the debates in the two countries.

2.1 – Italy: experts and decision-makers – a fluctuating relationship

As was seen in Chapter 1 par. 3, the debate over the Ministerial Decree 161/2023 has raised issues linked to economical and jurisprudential aspects. Other than that, though, the expertise has convened that the Ministerial Decree moves further away from the NDP (Caso 2024b; Liverani 2024), especially for not opening a consultation to revision the regulation taking into account the requests of those working on the field and

the relevant expertise (ibid.). Differently from the decree, in fact, the NDP not only took into great consideration the opinion of the field experts but was elaborated by them (Caso 2024a; Liverani 2024).

The result has been a hinder to digitalization projects that were to be kickstarted by the PND through the NextGenerationEU funds, as we will see in Chapter 3.

This lack of coordination can be explained by the discrepancies that exist in Italy at the political level, as there has not been a continuity in government over the last years. In fact, the NRRP has been developed under the Draghi government and continued developing under the Meloni one, when the Ministerial Decree 161/2023 was issued.

Carney's (2016) thought could easily explain the case of Italy, where there has been some discordance between the Draghi government and the Meloni one in legislating. In fact, while the Draghi government made great use of experts in delineating the National Digitalization Plan (NDP), the Meloni government's minister of culture Sangiuliano opted instead for not involving experts of the cultural sector when issuing the Ministerial Decree 161/2023, facing the consequence of being criticized by the expert elite in the sector and even by the Court of Auditors (Caso 2023; Caso 2024b; Corte dei Conti 2023; Giaume 2023).

Having settled only at the end of 2022, the Meloni government did not have the necessary time to build the necessary relationship of trust with experts as the Draghi government had the time to do. In fact, as we will also see in the next chapter where the NDP is carefully delineated, the Draghi government minister of culture Franceschini had delegated the creation of the Plan to a series of experts, first and foremost the director of the Italian Digital Library (IDL) Laura Moro, architect and museum director in Piedmont (DiCultHer 2023). Moreover, the period between the creation of the NDP and the fall of the Draghi government gave time to the IDL to open consultations with experts and organizations in the sector, giving space for the authoritative voices to express their opinion on the fundamental elements of the Plan before its official publication.

Instead, the time between the settlement of the Meloni government and the issuing of the Ministerial Decree 161/2023 was very little, as it was only March when the Decree was passed. With only 5 months in office, the Ministry of Culture might not have had the

time to build the relationship of trust envisioned by Carney (2016) with the experts, probably also urged by the interests and needs of replenishing the State museums' pockets after a time of crisis. This might have led him to choose to completely rule out the possibility of a collaboration with experts in order to fulfil the necessities of the State in little time, even if not with the wished results considering the reaction of the expertise.

Yet again, Mazzoleni (2014) and Majone's (1989) view on the reality of political debates can be applied to the case at hand. As we have mentioned before, these scholars believe that policy debates are not always based on factual evidence but are a series of opinion-based ideological commentaries (Majone 1989; Mazzoleni 2014).

The increasing amount of anti-intellectualism inside political debates might well explain why no collaboration occurred during the drawing up of the Ministerial Decree 161/2023. The lack of coordination therefore appears as a consequence of the increased change in the relationship between decision-makers and expertise, especially after the so-called "death of expertise" (Nichols 2017), which has brought experts' credibility to be undermined as a consequence of their inability to solve complex problems in the less time possible (Head 2023). If to that, we add the fact that advice has become more and more contested in nowadays policy systems (Daly 2019), it is easy to understand why coordination failed to happen.

Though, if the politicians side had developed a policy that was coherent with the previous one in granting a move towards Open Access, then the lack of expertise would not have mattered, and certainly would have not posed a problem for both the sector and the decision-makers. Instead, since the choice was to move further away from the NDP, the use of experts would have been necessary for the decision-makers, as it would have aided them in developing policies that – even if not coherent with the previous ones – would have answered to the needs of the cultural field, thus satisfying both the experts and the workers who so criticized the decree.

While this proves that external experts are necessary in the policy process, the case of Spain proves us the opposite.

2.2 – Spain: the other side of the coin

Just like in the case of Italy, also Spain's debate over the Law on Patronage – discussed in Chapter 1 par. 4 – saw a lack of cooperation between the decision-makers and the experts. Nevertheless, there are some differences between Italy and Spain: first of all, while Italy changed its approach to expertise together with the changing government, in Spain this did not happen as first of all there was a sort of continuity in government – considering that Sánchez was Prime Minister when the RTRP was first drawn up and even now. Secondly, while Italy has proved to not be completely successful in its digitalization aims, Spain has instead proved great ambition which led it to lead a successful digitalization policy for cultural heritage.

The case of Spain's lack of collaboration can be explained by Crease's (2023) acoustical model. As it was possible to see, the debate in Spain regarding the law on patronage is characterised by the overlap of different voices – as also Mazzoleni (2014) would argue, mostly opinion-based ones. In an environment such as this, it would not be difficult to understand why the experts' voices would go unheard, suppressed by the louder voices of people who do not possess the same level of expertise as people that actively work in the public sector, which resulted more prominent (Crease 2023) – namely, the politicians of the various parties and *juntas* of the autonomous communities.

In Crease's (2023) theory, though, the acoustical model results in an unsuccessful event of distrust and mistrust, which prompts the decision-makers and the citizens to entrust contrarian or wrongful opinions from those who are not qualified enough to give factual evidence. In this case, the policy process remained within the political fora, just like it happened with the RTRP. This decision still brought a success among the cultural heritage policies landscape in Spain, considering that both the reforms on the Law on Patronage (Albendea 2024; Felipe 2024) and the projects launched by the Spanish government (Biblioteca Nacional de España 2023; ExibArt 2022; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía 2022; Museo Nacional del Prado 2024a; Museo Nacional del Prado 2024b) have proved to be successful.

The success could be explained by the fact that decision-makers sometimes have the competencies on one issue necessary to elaborate policies without the need for experts.

Grødem and Hippe (2019) have in fact argued that existing studies on relationships between experts and politicians often regard the latter as outside the epistemic communities, affirming a lack of expertise. In their study, instead, the two scholars affirm that not only politicians can also be experts, but they can also play a pivotal role within the epistemic communities they belong to (ibid.).

Since they also categorize as experts, politicians involved in academic communities are usually resistant to the possible persuasion done by experts (Grødem and Hippe 2019) who want their voices to be heard in the hermeneutical space theorized by Crease (2023). This would also give them more power during the policy process, as they can design the policies in the way they deem it more efficiently possible, as well as are able to develop a rhetoric which allows them to present proposals to a larger, non-expert audience (Grødem and Hippe 2019).

Certainly, this choice brought them some critique, as reported by Gimeno Feliu (2023) who denounced the lack of involvement of independent experts. Still, this approach has also proved another point brought forward by Grødem and Hippe (2019): politicians who work on an issue for a sustained period of time will end up having access to expert knowledge to the point where they will assimilate it – thus not needing anymore direct help from experts. In Spain, in fact, the Law on Patronage has been discussed for years, which would inevitably bring politicians to not only gain expertise on economics, but also on cultural valorisation, thus leading to successful policies just like the January 2024 reform.

CHAPTER 3 – Italy and the *Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale*

1 – Italy’s solution in the face of crisis

The *Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza* – from now on referred to as NRRP – is the programme with which the government intends to manage the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) funds – that is, the economic recovery and revitalisation tool introduced by the European Union (EU) to restore the losses caused by the pandemic (Openpolis 2023). Italy has been the country that has received most money out of the EU Member States, receiving a total of about EUR 121 billion in loans, for a total amount of EUR 191 billion for the period 2021-2026 (Openpolis 2021).

Drafted by the then Prime Minister Mario Draghi and his government and approved by the European Commission in June 2021, the Italian NRRP has an articulated structure. It foresees six missions, organised into components, each of which comprises a series of measures that can be either regulatory reforms or economic investments (Openpolis 2023).

In a total of 358 measures and sub-measures – of which 66 are reforms and 292 investments – the most relevant to this study is the Mission 1 (Digitalization, Innovation, Competitiveness, Culture and Tourism), Component 3 (Tourism and Culture 4.0) (Ministero della Cultura 2021a). The interventions aim to restructure the key assets of Italian cultural heritage and favour the birth of new services, also considering social participation as a way to include and regenerate, with the objective of improving the attractiveness, digital and physical accessibility and security (ibid.). The measures are based on a multilevel governance model and foresee a strong cooperation between public actors, in line with the Faro Convention and the European Action Framework for Cultural Heritage (ibid.).

Due to its agency as a performance contract, the NRRP is focused on achieving precise results by defined dates (Ministero della Cultura 2021c). When regulating

financial relationships between the EU and the Member States, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) – on which the NextGenerationEU is based – defines the milestones and targets (M&T) to describe the development and the results obtained by the reforms and the investments adopted (ibid.). The milestones are qualitative goals that individuate key phases of the implementation of measures, such as the legislation adopted; the targets, instead, are quantitative objectives measured through well-defined indicators, such as, for example, the number of artworks digitalized (ibid.). RRF disbursements – except for the advance – are made according to the achievement of M&T (EU Council 2021).

The NRP individuates various M&Ts for its Mission 1 Component 3, yet the second one is the most useful to this research, as it specifically focuses on the digitalization of cultural heritage. The target – based on the Investment 1.1 *Strategie e piattaforme digitali per il patrimonio culturale* aims to measure the increase in volume of digitalized cultural heritage goods available online, dividing them between digitalization of books and manuscripts, documents and photographs, artworks and historical and archaeological artifacts, monuments and archaeological sites, audiovisual materials, including the normalization of previous digitalisations and metadata (Ministero della Cultura 2021c). The final objective is to reach 65mln digital resources to be produced and published in the Italian Digital Library (IDL) (ibid.).

2 – Piano Nazionale di Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale: the structure

The National Plan of Digitalization of Cultural Heritage (NDP) is the first sub-investment promoted by the IDL (Ministero della Cultura 2021b). The NDP is the instrument of strategic planning used to develop the models, processes, methods and rules of implementation of the digital transformation process, but also to guide the actions of the bodies contributing to it (ibid.).

The NDP defines the strategic context to refer for the realisation of the objectives of the NRRP and is a useful methodological reference for all institutions and workers in

the cultural sector, both private and public, who recognizes themselves in the values expressed by the document (Italian Digital Library 2022a).

The Plan is divided into three sections, interconnected in a process dimension. Firstly, we have the vision, which outlines the trajectories and opportunities for change, highlighting the long-term goals (Italian Digital Library 2022b). Then, there is the strategy: this section establishes all the factors needed to implement and achieve the change objectives and identifies the actions that the Ministry will take to ensure the common enabling environment (ibid.). Lastly, there are the guidelines, which are operational tools in support of planning and execution of activities related to the digitalisation of heritage and the digital transformation of cultural sites (ibid.).

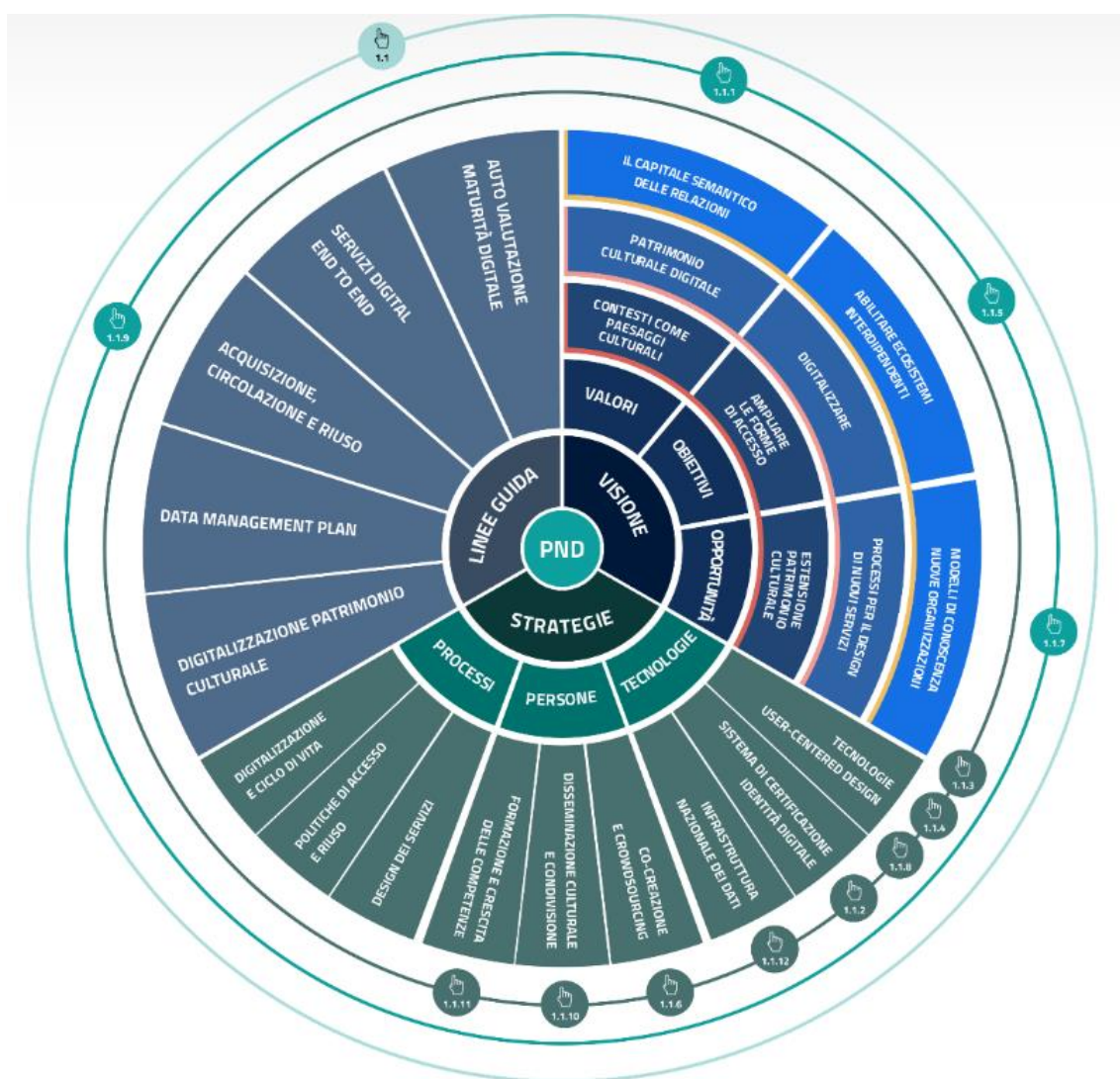


Figure 8. Diagram summarising the structure of the NPD (Italian Digital Library 2022b)

2.1 – The Vision

According to the NDP, Italian cultural heritage is the result of a long process which started with protection and preservation of material cultural heritage, which started including immaterial cultural heritage only recently in the last half decade (ibid.).

The Ministry of Culture appears to be focused on granting new services in the digital world, such as assisting and favouring the birth of innovative enterprises and intercept the new needs of both the visitors – by, for example, redesigning the interaction modes both at an internal and external level – and of cultural institutions – by optimizing the work logic (Italian Digital Library 2023).

Rather than simply aiding culture, as from what can be perceived by the “Vision” portion of the NDP, the Ministry aims to revolutionize cultural heritage by focusing on the concept of digital culture meant as a strong relations’ system able to kickstart new sensorial perspectives and involve bigger audiences, which in the past were excluded from cultural accessibility (ibid.). As such, the attention moves on the people rather than the cultural institutions, whether they are representatives of cultural institutions, researchers, people who work in the cultural sector, as well as firms and professionals that work in this ecosystem (ibid.).

To do so, the Plan individuates three trajectories which create a sort of interdependency among values, objectives and opportunities of digital transformation (ibid.).

NDP’s values revolve around the concepts of cultural environment, digital cultural heritage and relations (ibid.). According to the plan, these values create a common terrain on which they can operate and pose as the premise for reaching specific objectives in such a vast project (ibid.). Here is where public administration comes to play, as it has the fundamental role of preserving cultural heritage and make it accessible to everyone in the long-term (ibid.). The NDP is thus perceived as an opportunity to valorise cultural goods and give them a new space formerly dominated by commercial big tech (ibid.).

2.2 – The Strategy

In order to reach the objectives defined by the NDP, the Ministry individuated a strategy at the national level, which - according to the Plan – is able to better catch the opportunities offered by the digital transformation process and translate them in concrete actions by harmonizing the cultural dimension and the managerial and technological ones (Istituto Centrale per la Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale 2022).

The strategic actions are divided into three fundamental aspects: the enabling technologies, the processes and the people. According to the plan, there is a circular process in which the technologies enable processes, which in turn are governed by people in order for them to produce their effects. Based on these parameters, the Plan aims to measure the digital maturity of a cultural organisation (ibid.).

The enabling of a technology framework aims at creating a national cultural heritage software infrastructure for data management and preservation which works as part of a national strategic hub. The aim is to create a cultural heritage “SPID”, that is a digital identity for artworks and artifacts of sorts; the NDP, in fact, envisages a national digital identity certification system for cultural heritage (ibid.). This aspect is certainly one of the most peculiar in the Plan.

According to the NDP, the Ministry of Culture – in collaboration with the *Agenzia per l’Italia Digitale* (AgID), the technical agency of the Italian Prime Minister’s Office which ensures the implementation of the objectives of the Italian Digital Agenda (AgID 2024) – aims to create a system that allows cultural heritage to exist in the digital environment and gain its own digital identity just like it happens for people, who bear both an “original” identity and a “digital” one – just like Italy has done with the creation of the SPID, the Public System of Digital Identity.

The creation of a digital identity of sorts is certainly useful for cultural heritage, as it allows it to legally exist in the cyberspace and therefore be protected, but at the same time I argue it reinforces the gap Italy and the rest of the European countries share over the Open Access issue, which has been discussed in the second chapter.

As affirmed by the Italian Supreme Court in its decision No. 18218/2009, the notoriety of certain goods entails the possibility of the economic exploitation of their image (Studio Martelli and Partners 2022). The principle has thus been affirmed by Italian civil law protection of the name and image, pursuant to Arts. 6, 7 and 10 of the Civil Code, can be invoked not only by natural persons, and that, in the case of undue use of the name and image of an asset, protection is due to the owner of the right to its economic exploitation (ibid.).

This decision has been clearly exploited in the following years by the Italian State, who – as argued by Caso (2023a) – has most recently passed the Ministerial Decree 161/2023, followed by its amendment 108/2024. By creating a digital identity, it will be easier for the cultural asset to be recognized in its legal form in the cyberspace, but it will also be easier for the State and the State-owned institutions to issue a fee to those who want to access the good, digitally reproduce it and reuse it (ibid.).

The technological framework enables technologies to connect cultural heritage with people and creative industries, through a “Platform of digital services for developers and businesses” envisaged as part of the NRRP investments (Istituto Centrale per la Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale 2022).

Then, the strategic line of action identifies all the key processes of digital transformation, such as the digitalisation and the life cycle of the digital resources, which must refer to the so-called FAIR principles – Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (ibid.). Even in this case, the ministerial decree comes to play.

My reasoning is – as theorized also by Caso (2023b) – that if there are high fees imposed on the reuse of cultural heritage, it will be difficult for the digital resources to respect the “R” point of the FAIR principles, that of reusability. By imposing fees on Italian cultural assets, the State risks making cultural heritage impossible to reuse not because of some technical issue, but merely because of an economical one (ibid.). Those countries which, instead, allow Open Access, will favour a larger reusability of their cultural assets. The result will be that Italy will be eventually “cut out” in favour of other countries with better opportunities (ibid.).

Other points of the key processes are an up-to-date policy for access, reproduction and reuse of digital reproductions of cultural heritage and the design of services and models for the creation of cultural, social and economic value in which it is possible to distinguish basic digital services, value-added digital products and services and management of digital services (Istituto Centrale per la Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale 2022).

Lastly, in order for the digital transition of heritage to produce both cultural and social value, the Plan deems it necessary to put people at the centre of the change process (ibid.). This is only possible through training and skills upgrading, a measure that is envisaged by the NDP investments through a lifelong learning programme (ibid.). The objective is to create a platform for integrated access to digital cultural heritage so as to grant both cultural dissemination and social sharing and build a network of exchanges around cultural heritage that is capable of stimulating the reuse of digital resources and the mechanisms of co-creation and bottom-up value production (ibid.).

2.3 – The Guidelines

In the third section of the NDP it is possible to find the most technical part of the Plan – the guidelines.

The five guidelines of the NDP highlight and suggest useful methodologies and procedures to address the challenges of implementing the processes identified in the Strategy section aforementioned by providing informative and non-prescriptive references, and outlining a technical and methodological framework, with related bibliographical references (ibid.). Each guideline delves into a specific aspect of digitalisation practices and will be subject to periodic reviews to ensure that it keeps up-to-date with the evolving regulations, methods, standards and technological advancements (ibid.). These guidelines are generally aimed at the staff in cultural institutions involved in digital transformation processes, who are provided with a multilevel operational framework that can assist in decision-making and strategic practices, as well as in planning and executing the necessary operations (ibid.).

3 – Analysis

Having reviewed in a more or less general light the structure of the document and its focal points, it is necessary to lead an analysis over the efficiency of the NDP and the projects launched by the Ministry of Culture.

The first thing that stands out is the lack of a continuity between the two legislatures – that is the Draghi one and the Meloni one – in the approach the two ministries of culture adopted in the policy process.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Draghi government’s minister Franceschini and his team had delegated the creation of the Plan to the Italian Digital Library (IDL), a team mostly composed of experts in the cultural, technology and economic sector (DiCultHer 2023). Moreover, the choice of delegating to experts gave way to even a bigger involvement of the people in the cultural sector.

In fact, before the official publication of the NDP, the IDL led a public Consultation on the NDP, which was carried out with the aim of sharing, through an inclusive participatory process extended to all stakeholders, the strategic vision of the IDL and of the Ministry of Culture (Italia OpenGov 2022).

By looking at the final report of the Consultation, the open contribution has raised questions mainly regarding accessibility and availability, the strategies and monitoring modalities and transparency, focusing especially on the issue of the licences and terms of use delineated in the Guideline No. 3 of the NDP (ParteciPa 2022b). Moreover, the participants have all raised questions about the role of State, non-State and internal institutes within the Ministry of Culture and the state of the past digitalisation projects (ibid.).

The *Associazione Italiana Biblioteche* (AIB) has denoted the absence in the NDP of the word “Inclusion” among the keyword of the plan, while there is “Accessibility” (Associazione Italiana Biblioteche 2022). According to the association, there is a clear difference between the two terms: accessibility includes the provision of devices needed to make use of the materials – such as, for example, data, indexes and softwares –;

inclusion, on the other hand, is the cultural, human aspect of accessibility. The AIB deems it a limitation to concern oneself with one aspect but completely ignore the other. In fact, a project like the digital transition should aim to improve society by affecting human relationships, contribute to changing the paradigm of the founding value of culture – that is democracy (ibid.). But, a fundamental element like inclusion becomes overlooked, even where the term “accessibility” is used in its place to deal with specific needs – e.g. people with disabilities or other kinds of specific access needs – risking that the objective of the project seems to be rather one-sided (ibid.).

Moreover, what has been raised by the 2022 Consultation is that there is a lack of understanding of the processes of digitalisation among members of the Ministry. According to the dossier obtained from the contributions given during the open Consultation, the “photographic” approach proposed by the NDP to digitalize is not in line with the methods and techniques of digitalization of cultural artifacts, which have been consolidated by norms, rules, national and international guidelines (ParteciPa 2022a).

The issue of the Creative Commons (CC) licenses and the State declaration of the “MIC Standard” rule of law is certainly one of the topics that seems to have raised more doubts during the Consultation (ibid.). While in 2022 the Consultation has raised Open Access as an option for the future of reproductions of Italian cultural heritage (ibid.) – also considering the views of the EU –, as of now the State is still lacking in this sense, in what seems to be a way of ignoring the point of view of all the personnel involved in culture, other than that of the EU (ibid.).

According to the Plan, with the introduction of the user licence, the authorisation to use images previously in place would be substituted (Pirrelli and Cosenza 2022). This means that copyright now does not apply and digital services can be licensed or used through special public-private partnerships (ibid.).

Yet, as reported by the Italian branch of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), while the Plan clearly exposes the advantages of Open Access for cultural heritage, by exclusively adopting the “MIC Standard” licence it creates a clear contradiction between what is written in the NDP and reality (International Council of

Museums 2022) – as we have seen with the ministerial decree 161/2023 passed by the Minister of Culture Sngiuliano (Giaume 2023).

Just like was analysed in the debate section of the second chapter of this work, even ICOM Italy strongly believes in the potential of Open Access for the museums and strategic opportunities, even expressing their approval in a very clear way during publications, parliamentary auditions and international conferences (International Council of Museums 2022), which shows clearly that Italy should move towards that way in order to grant greater access to reproductions and allow greater partnerships to happen.

It needs to be noted that Open Access is assimilated to an administrative concession for the re-use of images of cultural goods on the web with a zeroing of the licence fee for possible commercial re-use pursuant to Artt. 107-108 of the *Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio* (Codice Dei Beni Culturali E Del Paesaggio 2004). The zeroing of the fee for commercial purposes is not compatible with the current legislation for more than one reason. Firstly, the regulations of the ministerial institutes already provide for the director's power to reset the fee related to the commercial re-use of images to zero; secondly, the provision to make the publication of images free of charge in any editorial product, even of a distinctly commercial nature, seems to further confirm this interpretation (ibid.).

The ICOM believes that a margin of discretion is needed for directors to decide whether to issue fees or grant Open Access (ibid.). It is also true that some cultural organizations already have the possibility to choose whether to zero their fee, while others that manage public cultural goods have ample decisional margin (ibid.) – for example, the Egyptian Museum in Turin, where the director launched a project to fully digitalize the museum's heritage and made it available freely on its website through Open Access (Caso 2023a).

Yet, as of now the “old rules” persist in Italy. The Court of Auditors has pronounced itself on the matter numerous times, firstly in 2022 – just at the wake of the NDP -, when it invited the Ministry to abandon “the traditional proprietary paradigms” (Caso 2023b), then in 2023, when it expressly rejected the decree 161/2023 due to the issues it posed to the study and enhancement of national cultural heritage, as well as a

wider circulation of knowledge (Corte dei Conti 2023), something that only a greater democratization granted by digitalization can allow.

Even Creative Commons (CC) Italy (2022) expressed its perplexities over the NDP. According to the organization, on one hand the Plan represents an important step towards the digital transformation of cultural institutions, but on the other it risks limiting – instead of developing – access and use of cultural heritage, with grave negative effects on public domain, creators’ participation to generative creativity and on civil society in general (ibid.). According to CC Italy (2022), the Plan could limit in a prohibiting way the fundamental right to people to access culture and the liberty of artistic expression.

For the organisation, public domain should be protected as it consents essential access to knowledge and culture other than promoting creativity (ibid.). The scope of the public domain is unduly reduced by the application of the cultural heritage code, which unjustifiably limits opportunities for reuse and creativity to the detriment of the public interest (ibid.).

On the other hand – as affirmed by Laura Mauro, director of the IDL – Open Access is not actually fully compatible with the *Codice dei Beni Culturali*, as the Plan is a guideline that works only under the current legislation (AgenziaCULT 2022a). In the director’s view, commercial reuses are not free but subject to authorisation. In her interview with the Press Agency AgenziaCULT, she affirmed: “Content can circulate freely and can also be reused commercially. Ours is not a hostile regime but a regulated one. In any case, the guidelines are set up in such a way that any regulatory changes can be accommodated” (ibid.).

In her opinion, what creates an impediment to circulation of reproduction and reuse is not the licence per se, but the correctness of the publication of the images or the quality of that data (ibid.). “The licence is one of the three components which make data open, but the others are much more important because they actually allow the data to be read, understood, used and reused” she stated (ibid.). Therefore, the Plan was created in order to maximise in the best way possible the sharing of data and raise its quality accordingly; if there was no Plan, commercial reuse would not be feasible at all (ibid.).

Truth is that, thanks to the diffusion of the web and the advent of social media, there have been modifications of Artt. 107-108 of the Code aimed to liberalize the use of images for non-commercial purposes, while any other use is still subject to authorisation and the possible payment of a fee managed by the cultural institutions holding the collections – and the NDP is just a confirmation of this eventual change (Bertacchini 2024).

Another point in favour of the actual structure of the NDP was given by the Ministry of Culture’s Higher Council for Cultural and Landscape Heritage. According to the Council, the Plan has been successful in placing the digital alongside the material, not creating an overtaking of the latter for the benefit of the former (AgenziaCULT 2022b). According to the Council, digitalisation should not be just a tool, but a context to make better known and available to a wider set of recipients the heritage in its original material reality – thus lacking “ontological autonomy”, as defined by the Plan (ibid.).

If successful, the Plan would help Italian museums to develop further their digitalisation processes – something that, according to the *Politecnico di Milano*’s School of Management Observatory on digital innovation in cultural activities and assets had already started in the first year of the pandemic, with an increase in digitalization of their collections of 30% (Croce 2023).

Still, the NDP has showed that the relationship between decision-makers and experts persists. Especially, we can distinguish between two patterns of trust and approaches to expertise which come together to aid the decision-making process.

If one looks at how the NDP was first born, it is possible to identify Crease’s (2023) call-and-response approach to expertise in the way that the relationship of trust and collaboration started. The Draghi government Ministry of Culture delegated the delineation of the policy process to experts on call – just like a decision-maker would do when retrieving information (ibid.). A relationship like this one is usually meant to be temporary – as the name suggests, one calls and the other responds.

Instead, the process adopted by the IDL was deemed to be longer than temporary, involving other experts in their work in order to gather more evidence and opinions from expertise in their field. While this relationship of trust might look like an expert-expert

one, it cannot be defined as such, as the delegating force still is involved in the decision-making process on some level. Yet, it still opens the way to Crease's (2023) second approach to expertise to make its way in the relationship of trust among decision-makers and expertise, that is the acoustical model.

With an open consultation, many different ideas were able to come together to voice their opinion and give fruitful feedback on the NDP. Though, while Crease (2023) uses the mix of different voices to explain how a dissonant one or the one of someone who is not an expert can make their way into the policy process, in this case it is possible to see how, if more voices of experts come together and collaborate with the decision-makers, the results might actually be positive.

At the same time, it is also possible to witness another call-and-response situation, in which the experts – together with the ministry – summon other experts of the cultural sector to gather the relevant information directly from the source and understand how to improve the digitalization plan in an efficient manner.

On the other hand, the consequent model of regulation adopted by the following ministry shows the complete opposite of what has been said up until now.

The lack of collaboration for the Ministerial Decree 161/2023 and its successor Ministerial Decree 108/2024 sets great differences in the cultural sector, but especially in the relationship between the expertise and the decision-makers of the cultural sector.

As was stated in Chapter 2, there are various reasons why the choice was to not involve experts in the policy process. Certain is that the relationship of trust that had been created between experts and politicians that existed before the fall of the Draghi government did not resist against the change of governments.

This is the result of a diversification not only in the sources of policy, as Head (2023) affirms, but also in the great difference between the two governments in which the regulations were being drawn up. In fact, while the Draghi government was a technical government, the Meloni one is a political one which came as the result of the September 2022 elections. This means that from a “grand coalition” government (Haski 2021) it moved to a highly political one, with the policy debate climate becoming highly partisan,

which has challenged the role of the expertise who in turn has found difficulty in keeping track (Head 2023).

The result, though, has not been as satisfactory as it should have been, considering that, as we will see in the next section, only one digitalization project has been financed by the NRRP funds, while the other are all the result of public-private partnership between the museums and investment agencies or firms.

If the policies adopted had been coherent between one another, probably the lack of expertise would not have been as criticized as it has been. The issue lies in the fact that not only expertise was involved in one policy process and not the other, but also that the result obtained did not satisfy the requests of the sector which transpired both from the creation of the NDP and the open consultations and had been previously taken into great consideration.

As of now, there are already a series of projects all over Italy that have successfully implemented the strategic plan and the guidelines of the NDP and have been brought to completion. The majority of them, though, regard more the so-called “lifelong learning programme” aforementioned rather than an actual digitalization of cultural assets. In the next paragraph we will see how this has evolved.

4 – Projects

The empirical research has brought to light a clear contraposition between privatization and state intervention, showing on one side a project that has been led mainly thanks to the investments of the NRRP, while on the other projects that necessarily required investments by the private sector.

In this paragraph, a series of successful projects will be presented and analysed in order to understand whether eventual PPPs have been led, or if the cultural institutions were able to launch projects only through the funds given by the government through the NRRP.

4.1 – *Oggetti Museali*: museums for everyone



Figure 9. *Oggetti Museali* (Musollino 2023)

The first project is actually the fourth out the NRRP projects launched by the IDL – *Oggetti Museali*. The project is completely dedicated to the digitalization of Italian museum repositories, where there are still treasures that have not been brought to the view of the visitors, with the aim of enriching, expanding and organising the national digital cultural heritage (Musollino 2023).

This is an important project not only because it deals with a large-scale digitalization, but also because it creates greater democratization than other museums' digitalization processes: in fact, museum repositories are usually the custodians of a very large number of cultural goods that are not displayed in the halls – most of the times for preservation needs – despite having great artistic value (ibid.). Sometimes, they become protagonists of temporary exhibitions or are visible only to scholars who request to access them (ibid.).

By digitalizing the national repositories, instead, these cultural goods become accessible to everyone, therefore making cultural heritage even more accessible and inclusive. Thanks to this project, it will be possible for everyone to study or even just admire those elements that normally would not be accessible to the public.

In fact, the project will make over 600,000 objects – including archaeological finds, artworks, drawing and prints – available to all through high-quality reproductions, each accompanied by metadata which will be available within the IDL (ibid.). Another strand of the investment is reserved for the digitalisation of graphic works – such as drawings, prints, sketches and engraved matrices – preserved in the institutes that belong to the General Directorate for Museums, among which we can find the collections of the Prints and Drawing Cabinets of the *Galleria degli Uffizi* and of the *Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte*, for a total of over two million digital resources being produced (ibid.).

The project is still a work in progress, having only been launched in October 2023, but it already poses as one of the most significant interventions ever conducted both at the Italian and European level.

4.2 – Sistema Informativo Musei Arte Archeologia Architettura di Roma e Territorio: when the public meets the private



Figure 10. Sistema Informativo Musei Arte Archeologia Architettura di Roma e Territorio (SIMART 2024)

To talk about cultural heritage and not talk about Rome – capital of Italy and best representation of an open-air museum for the relevant number of cultural sites and museums it hosts – would be absurd.

Rome has been great proof of not only being exemplary for its digitalization projects, but also because it launched a successful collaboration between the public administration – that is, the Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage – and privates – Sirti S.p.A., an innovation hub that works in the development of web infrastructure (Sirti 2022), and *Zètema Progetto Cultura* (2017), an investee company from Rome that operates in the cultural sector.

Through the investments given by *Zètema*, Sirti has developed a cataloguing and managing system for cultural, monumental and territorial heritage in Rome, the *Sistema Informativo Musei Arte, Archeologia, Architettura di Roma e Territorio* (SIMART) (Sirti 2022). The system has collected and inputted in its database around 500.000 cultural elements belonging to 33 different structures among museums, collections, archives and monuments (SIMART 2024), which can also be consulted in the singular museums' collections. A clear – and most of all, famous – example is the *Musei Capitolini* (2024b), which have successfully digitalized their artworks that are now available on their website.

Other than the aforementioned project which involves the whole of Rome's cultural heritage, the museum has made available a web series on the history of the museum, together with insights on their expositions, digital activities and games available on their website (Musei Capitolini 2024a).



Figure 11. 3D reproduction of the *Dying Gaul* (Italian: *Il Galata Morente*) preserved in the *Musei Capitolini* (SIMART 2024)

4.3 – The Egyptian Museum in Turin: a bridge between a crisis and new opportunities



Figure 12. Digitalized reproduction of the Sphinx (Museo Egizio 2024)

After having mentioned numerous times its successful digitalization project, it is necessary to mention the work done by the Egyptian Museum in Turin.

The museum was able to digitalize over 5.500 images of 2.300 artifacts thanks to the collaboration with Wikimedia Italy and Creative Commons (CC) Italy (Casagrande 2023). This project was the result of a four-year agreement stipulated in 2022 that envisages the collaboration among the three bodies to make the photographic reproductions and the content of the Egyptian Museum's collections available online, adopting the Creative Commons tools and licences (ibid.).

But what is even more astounding, as was already mentioned in Chapter 2, is the choice to allow Open Access: in fact, it is possible to download and reuse freely the museum's heritage under the Creative Commons licence CC BY 2.0 (ibid.). By allowing anyone to freely download and reuse their heritage – even for commercial purposes – the Museum can attract new visitors and researchers to their cultural institution through the Internet, granting greater accessibility.

If every museum in Italy was to do so, they would gain the same benefits of the Egyptian Museum. That is why Wikimedia Italy has launched the project *Tutti I musei su Wikipedia* to invite other Italian cultural institutions to collaborate with Wikipedia and the

Wikimedia projects in order to elaborate Open Access Policies and publish a selection of their images and documents with free tools and licences (ibid.).

5 - NRPP and the Ministerial Decree 161/2023: two sides of the same coin

Even if just three, these cases can be useful to understand what the landscape for culture and investing in culture in Italy over the years has been and how it has developed with the NRRP.

It would seem that the NRRP funds have contributed to establish successful projects like the aforementioned *Oggetti Museali* (Musollino 2023). Yet, we are dealing with only one project that actually aims to digitalize in the midst of plenty of others launched that only contribute to create more expertise.

It is evident that expertise is still necessary in cultural policy – and more generally in the cultural sector – to the point where it is difficult for the Ministry of Culture and the IDL to launch other digitalization projects. As shown above, other museums have opted for investee companies operating in the sector or organizations involved in culture such as Wikimedia. The fear is that, other than policy-makers distancing themselves from experts because of possible lack of time due to government discontinuity, diversification of policy sources of partisan climates, expertise – in this case intended as museum directors and sector workers other than scholars on the matter – has in turn started to distance itself from policy-makers because their voice has been ignored, and their needs were not completely met.

While the NRRP and the NDP were not completely unsuccessful – still considering the amount of projects that have been launched in the last years – what results as unsuccessful is the creation of a new relationship of trust among decision-makers and expertise for the government, with the risk of fragmenting it further over time.

Moreover, what resulted unsuccessful was the coherence among policies. As aforementioned, government discontinuity and differing approaches have created two

policies that resulted different not only in their choice of involvement of expertise or lack of thereof, but also in the position they took in reference to Open Access and reproduction fees. As was said before, if coherence had been kept among the two policies, then the lack of expertise would have not been as relevant. Yet, due to the great discrepancy between the two, experts felt the necessity to make their voices heard even more.

In this case, the inclusion of expertise in the policy process would have been helpful to the Italian cultural sector, as it would have taken into account not only the needs of the workers in the sector, but also of the relevant expertise. While the choice was made probably to avoid misplacements of trust, it resulted in a necessity of placing trust on expertise.

CHAPTER 4 – Spain and the *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia*

Componente 24

1 – *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia*: the Spanish alternative

The Spanish *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* – from now on referred to as RTRP – is the plan elaborated by the Spanish government to manage the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) funds. Spain is one of the main beneficiaries second only to Italy, with a total amount of EUR 163 billion, including EUR 84 billion in loans, for the period 2021-2026 (Gobierno de España 2022a). The Plan details a comprehensive agenda of investments and reforms specifying the goals, objectives and indicators for monitoring and control (ibid.).

The Plan draws inspiration from the Agenda for Change (Ford 2021), the 2030 Agenda (United Nations 2015) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2024) and is structured around ten lever policies that have a direct impact on those productive sectors with the greatest capacity to transform Spain's economic and social fabric. These policies, in turn, comprise of 31 components or lines of actions, structured into 111 reforms and 142 investments (Gobierno de España 2022a).

To facilitate the deployment of the investment, the Plan – drawn up by the Spanish government under the guide of the Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez – is based on four cross-cutting elements: ecological transition, digital transformation, territorial and social cohesion and gender equality (ibid.).

Just like in the case of Italy, even the Spanish RTRP has its Milestones & Targets (M&T), the measures established in order to assess the progress towards the fulfilment of the reforms and the investments in the Plan (ibid.). The projects included in the RTRP are carried out through agreements, tendering of contracts and calls for subsidies and aid from

the General State Administration, Autonomous Communities and, where appropriate, Local Entities (ibid.).

The ninth policy – or *política* in Spanish – is focused on the revaluation of the cultural and sports industries, which in turn branches in three different points of the plan: cultural industry, the audiovisual sector and sports (El Español 2021a).

In this context it is possible to find the Component 24 – *Revalorización de la Industria Cultural*. The component aims to boost the contribution of the cultural sector to digital transformation, as well as social and territorial cohesion, to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, to economic, social and institutional health and resilience and to policy for the next generation (El Español 2021b).

In Spain, cultural industry has an indispensable value both for society and economic development, as it contributes to generate wealth and employment. In Spain, the cultural participation before the pandemic has shown high levels in certain cultural indicators and the contribution of culture to Spanish GDP has been growing since 2013 (Gobierno de España 2021b). Yet, despite these data, the sector suffers due to a series of structural characteristics which prevented it from developing its full potential, which has then also been hurt further by the pandemic (ibid.)

The reforms and investments under Component 24 are proposed within the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and the Council passed on the 12th of February 2021 establishing the Resilience Mechanism (European Parliament and Council 2021) and is in line with the Council Conclusions on the EU implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with the Development Strategy General Guidelines approved by the Spanish government (Gobierno de España 2021a).

The component therefore chose to include an important group of reforms and investments aimed at strengthening the value chain of Spanish cultural industries by reinforcing their capacities and resilience (ibid.). To do so, they promoted three strategic axes: competitiveness, dynamization and digitalisation and sustainability of large cultural services (ibid.).

For the purpose of this research, the latter will be the focus of this chapter.

Spain has clearly individuated the potential of the digital transition especially for culture, as it allowed the development of new business models, but also allowed new cultural products and artistic formats and spaces for cultural dissemination to grow (España puede 2021).

On the other hand, Spain has perceived that the transformation and sustainability of the major cultural services provided by institutions of strategic importance – such as, for example, the main Spanish museums and libraries – must be ensured (ibid.). That is why the Component recognizes as part of its objectives the consolidation of digitalization and the launch of digitalization projects for the big cultural services, like for example the *Museo Nacional del Prado*, the *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Reina Sofía*, as well as the archive systems, the repositories and the registers of historical heritage and the national public libraries (ibid.).

2 – *Digitalización e impulso de los grandes servicios culturales: a description*

As previously mentioned, Spain has greatly understood the impact digitalisation has on all aspects of life – e.g. digital services to citizens, education, preservation, access to information – especially with the advent of COVID-19. The massive and unprecedented demand for this type of services have underlined the need to make a leap towards a global plan for access to the collections and the services based on the digitalisation of heritage (ibid.).

The Component 24 Investment 3 *Digitalización e impulso de los grandes servicios culturales* is the third investment and annex of the Component 24. It comprises six great digitalization projects for six different cultural institutions in Spain for a total of EUR 73 million invested (ibid.).

2.1 – Proyecto 1: Museo Nacional del Prado

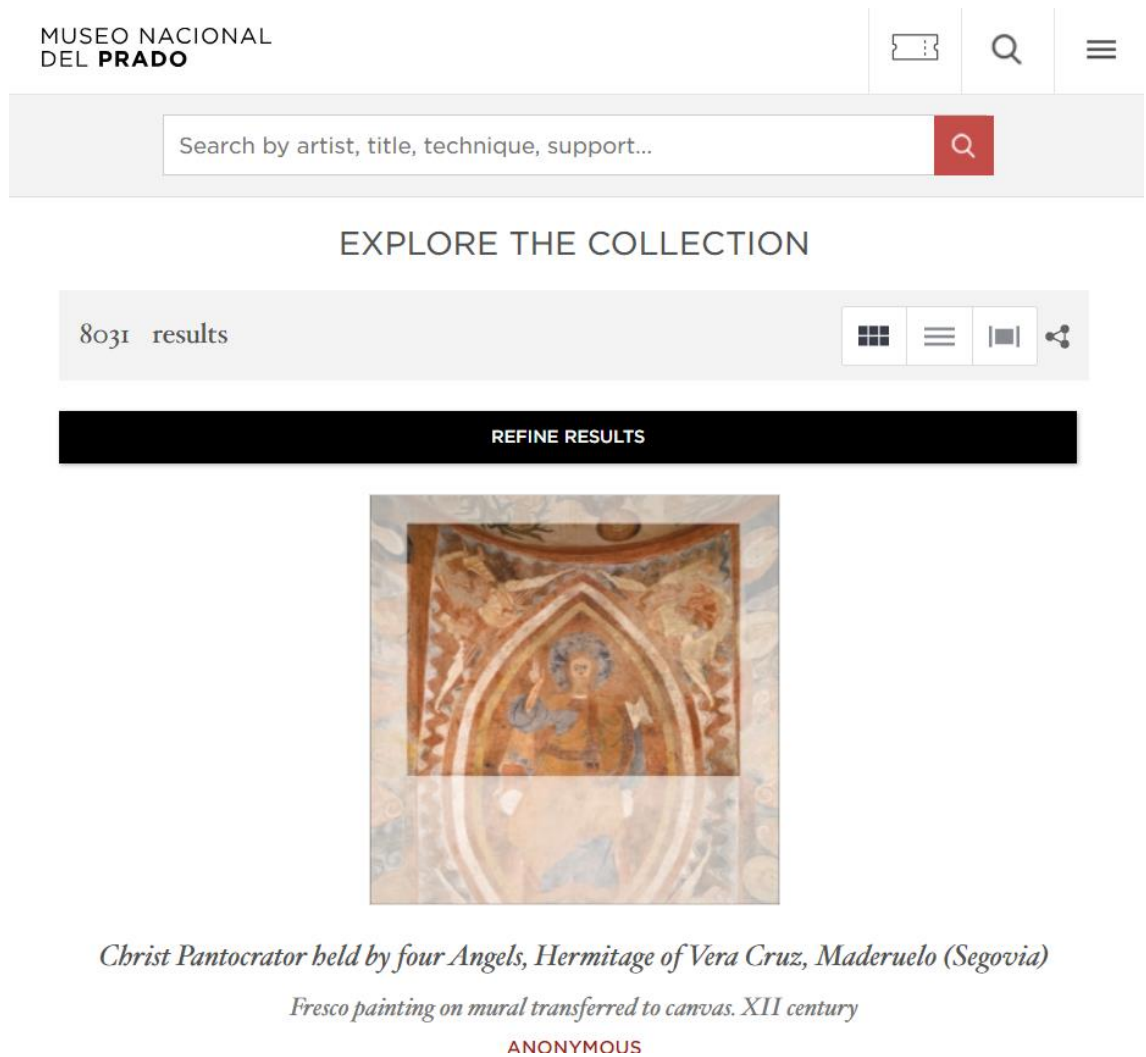


Figure 13. Explore the collection – Museo Nacional del Prado (Museo del Prado 2024c)

The first project regards the *Museo Nacional del Prado*, the museum hosted in Madrid and most known for its Spanish paintings' collection, as well as artworks from Flemish and Italian artists.

The project aims to increase the accessibility and integration in the urban fabric, as well as integrating all measurement parameters in a single monitored system in order to develop an inclusive experience that reaches a greater number of people (ibid.). To do so, the Spanish government presents as the main objective the creation of an interoperable

digital platform between museums based on the *Museo Nacional del Prado*'s digital semantic model by collaborating with organizations, developing digital administration and creating multimedia content (ibid.).

As reported by Javier Romera (2024), journalist for *The Economist Spain*, the museum has moved forward thanks to the funds given by the NextGenerationEU, implementing 92% of them in its digitalization project.

The museum has used an investment of EUR 19 million to execute the plan, acquiring a series of high-performance devices which have further expanded its cultural heritage analysis capacities (ibid.). The museum has shown a clear aim in adapting the management and infrastructure of the institution, as well as committing to the digital transition and qualified as a fruitful cultural and educational environment, highlighting the importance of digital solutions and experiences which favour the museum's research and conservation work (ibid.)

The museum has thus made its archive available on its website (Museo Nacional del Prado 2024a), where it is also possible to experience virtual visits by exploring the collections through a series of temporary exhibitions (Museo Nacional del Prado 2024b), just like in the case of Italy's *Musei Capitolini* (2024). To do so, the museum employed gigapixel technology, which allows visitors to immerse themselves in the rooms of the museums and appreciate the artworks in high definition, creating a new form of experience (Museo del Prado 2024b).



Figure 14 Digitalized copy of "Saturn" by Francisco Goya (Museo del Prado 2024a)

Moreover, as of April 2024, the museum has digitalized other 90 paintings and 5 sculptures of its collection and the interior of its galleries in order to offer to the public a virtual tour that is available online for free, always thanks to the RTRP (Sky Arte 2024). Thanks to the guided virtual tours, visitors can access freely the halls of the museum and participate in various thematic tours, all accessible through its website (ibid.).

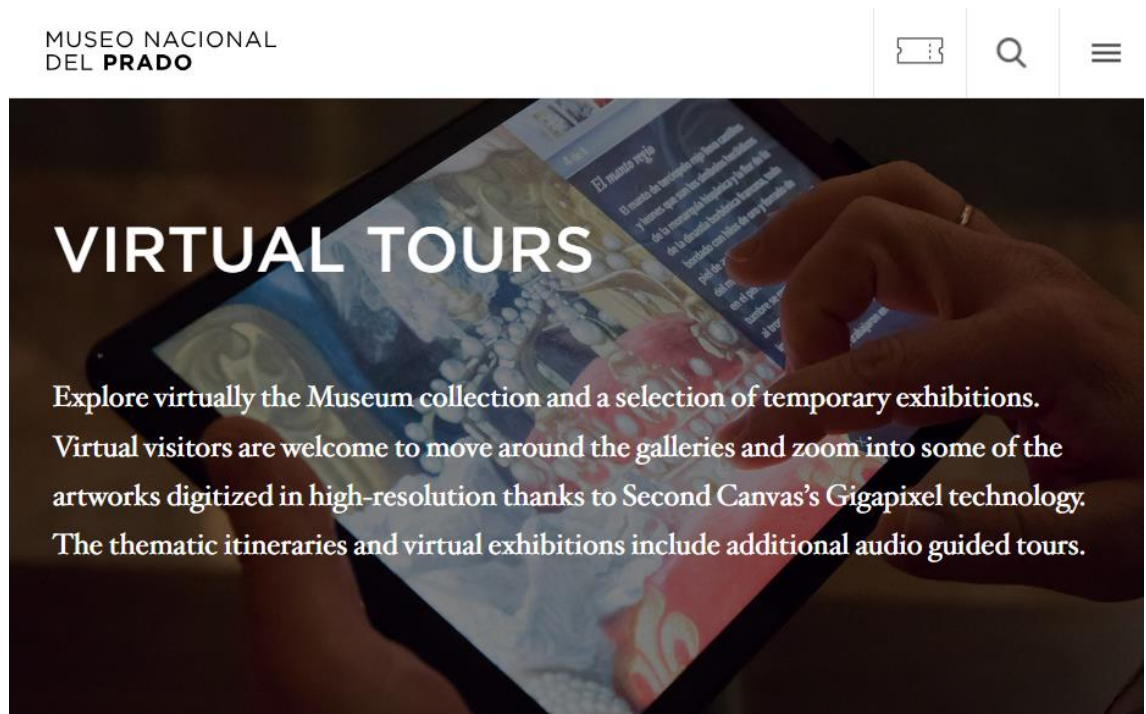


Figure 15. Virtual tours - Museo Nacional del Prado (Museo Nacional del Prado 2024d)

2.2 – Proyecto 2: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

The second project regards the *Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía*, the modern and contemporary art museum hosted in Madrid and dedicated to artistic production from the start of the 1900s until today, most notably known for hosting the *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso.

For this project, the Spanish government has foreseen grants and research residencies between 2021-2023 for young artists and thinkers to establish a sustainable

and resilient network of contacts aimed at promoting the relations with the cultural ecosystem in order to generate synergies between artists, organisations and the public in the long-term, as well as generating useful confrontation of audiences and arrangement of spaces, intelligent development and protection of their collections from emergencies (ibid.). To reach these objectives, the government planned to digitalise public cultural heritage and the integral management of artworks, as well as improving the quality of the digital offer addressed to the citizens (ibid.).



Figure 16 Digitalised reproduction of "Guernica" by Pablo Picasso (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía 2022)

In this case, the grants and activities are to be completed by 2026, as required by the Facility's rules (ibid); yet, already in 2022, the museum presented its digital platform, *LaDigitaldelReina*, a project that made available to all those interested in contemporary art more than 27.000 digital objects of different nature: archives, books, paintings, magazines, photographs, audios, videos, prints etc. (ExibArt 2022).

In addition to the records of each work or document, the platform incorporates exhibitions and author files that offer additional information (ibid.). The cards are linked to each other so that it is possible to go from the record of a work to that of the exhibition of which it is part of and, from the record of the exhibition to that of the artist, so that visitors and researchers can be introduced to other creations by that person (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía 2022).

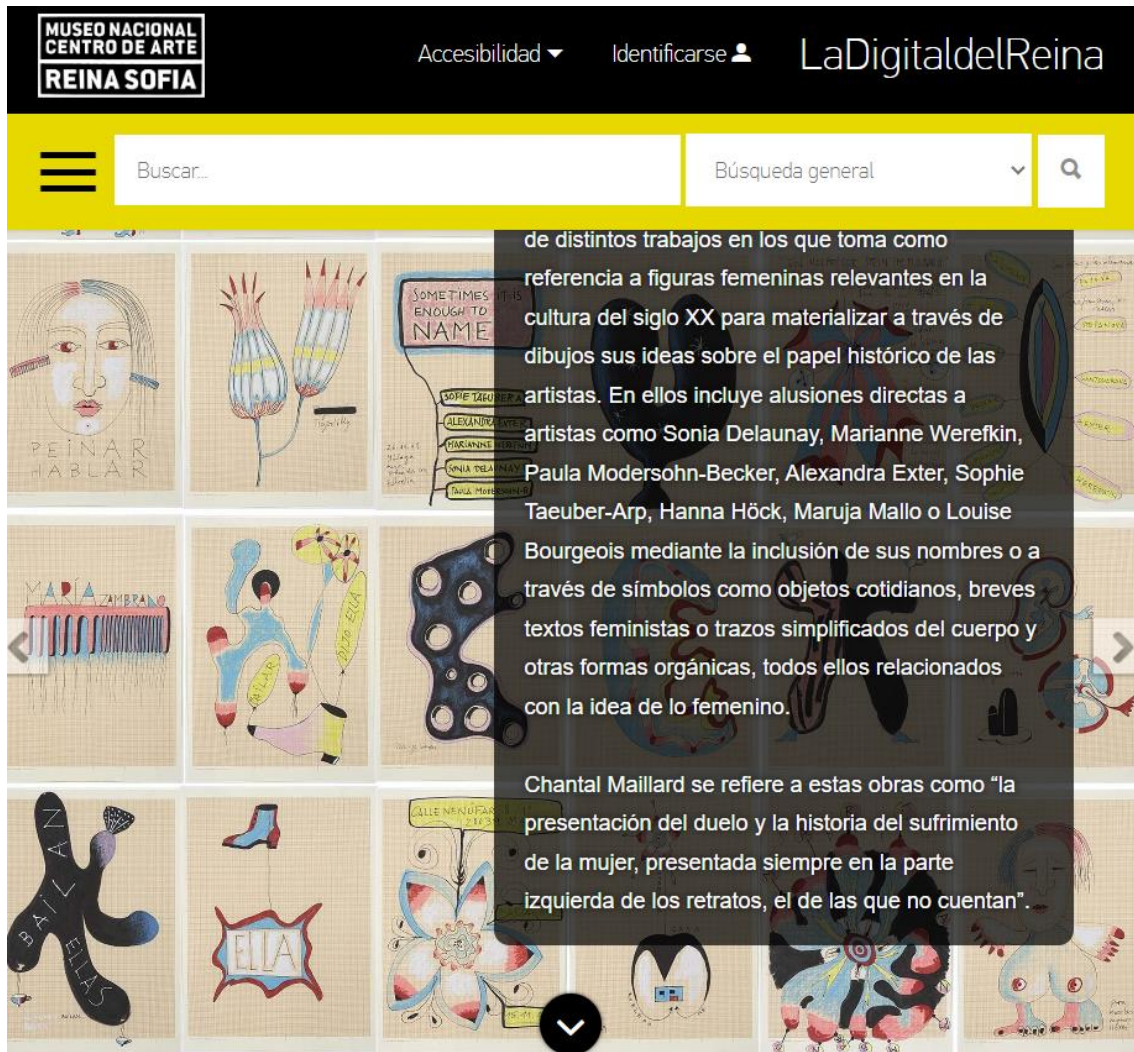


Figure 17. LaDigitaldelReina - Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía 2022)

2.3 – Proyecto 3: Biblioteca Nacional de España

The third project involves the Spanish National Library – in Spanish *Biblioteca Nacional de España* (BNE), the largest and major public library in all of Spain, most notorious for having one of the largest librarian collections in the world.

For the library, the investment aims to encourage the use and reuse of the BNE’s digital data and collections in order to give ample support to teaching, research, cultural industries and technological development, while at the same time minimising the digital divide by fostering the acquisition of digital skills and delocalising training programmes

(España puede 2021). Moreover, the Plan aims to encourage inter-territorial cooperation in digital projects through a comprehensive plan for digitalisation, preservation and access that makes the right of access to information compatible with copyright protection (ibid.).

As of now, it has already been possible since 2008 to consult the Spanish digital library through the BNE website. According to the library's website, the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica* provides free and open access to thousands of digitalized documents, including printed books, manuscripts, drawings, engravings, pamphlets, posters, photographs, maps, atlases, but also sheet music, historical press and sound recordings (Biblioteca Nacional de España 2024).



Figure 18. Biblioteca Digital Hispánica | Biblioteca Nacional de España (Biblioteca Nacional de España 2024b)

In 2023, the BNE published its digital strategy for the years 2023-2025 where it divides between four working areas. The first one is access to the collections, where the BNE affirms that by 2025 it will consolidate a massive digitalization of its collection, ensuring the entry of the Electronic Legal Deposit and the collection of the web archive,

while access routes will be expanded (Biblioteca Nacional de España 2023). The second one, instead, aims to work on new digital services in the library web ecosystem, with BNElab becoming a catalyst for innovation, citizens participation and reuse of data and collections in the cyberspace (ibid.).

The last two working areas regard alliances and efficiency. For what concerns alliances, the BNE aims to incorporate communities and social, professional and economic agents into the BNE strategy and create new cooperation environments for reflection and collective creation (ibid.). Lastly, the efficiency working area is mainly focused on technological updating and integration and training, with the objective for the library to become a catalyst and promoter of new professional dimensions, commitments and services required by the current ecosystems of knowledge generation and distribution, as well as becoming a hub for collective reflection and recreation for collective heritage (ibid.).

2.4 – *Proyectos 4,5 y 6: towards a greater digitalization*

The last three projects concern digitalization and development of the interoperability and capacity of the systems.

The project number four is the creation of a Plan for digital access to the bibliographic heritage (España puede 2021). The investment aims to digitalise bibliographic heritage collections, from State Administration and other administrations or private entities, in order to make them available to citizens through digital repositories, thereby facilitating research, training and equal access for citizens to cultural goods and cultural heritage (ibid.).

The main objectives of this plan are the improvement of the collection of data on digitalization in Spain since, as reported by the BNE (Biblioteca Nacional de España 2024a), the existing data in Spain are insufficient and very irregular among the different Autonomous Communities and institutions. The aim is to improve such aspect in order to be able to make more informed strategic plans and evaluate more completely the digitalization activity in the country (ibid.). In addition, the working group on the Strategy

wants to rationalize the efforts of memory institutions in the field of digitalization, online accessibility and preservation of bibliographic materials by leading cooperative actions and projects that eliminate duplication; promote the accessibility and reuse of contents through their contextualization and positioning on the web, to confluence with the creative industries and the dissemination of clear and simplified information on intellectual property rights (ibid.).

To do so, the Spanish government first aimed to elaborate the *Estrategia Nacional de Digitalización* that can encompass all sectors of cultural heritage, all following the recommendations of the European Commission (ibid.).

In November 2021, the Ministry of Culture published the *Estrategia Nacional de Digitalización*, which was elaborated by the *Grupo de Trabajo Estratégico para la Estrategia Nacional de Digitalización*, and that aims to guide Spain's work in relation to the digitalization and the dissemination of the bibliographic heritage in the years 2022-2026 (Ministerio de Cultura 2021).

The fifth project, instead, regards capacity building and interoperability of the archive systems of all types, inventories and registers of historical heritage, including audiovisual (España puede 2021). The sixth project, the last one out of the projects, regards the measures for the modernisation of public management tools and the implementation of a comprehensive system for the digitalisation and cataloguing of documentation, resources, assets, structures and infrastructures of the *Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música* (INAEM) (ibid.). This project includes measures like the implementation of different advanced tools for planning, management and impact assessment of public aid systems for the stage, opera and music sector, as well as the implementation of an integral digital system (INAEM DIGITAL) for the digitalisation and cataloguing of INAEM's documentation services, archives, structures and infrastructures (ibid.).

3 – Componente 24: not only digitalization

As was said in the previous paragraph, digitalization is not the only focus of the Component 24. In fact, there are also two reforms that are of great interest to Spain's cultural industry and are also of interest to this analysis.

The first reform - *C24.R1 Desarrollo Estatuto del Artista y Fomento de la inversion, el mecenazgo cultural y participación* – aims to develop the *Estatuto del Artista* together with promoting investments, cultural patronage and participation to culture (Gobierno de España 2021). This reform aims to address the weaknesses of the existing labour and fiscal regulatory framework, which does not address the particularities of the cultural sector, such as the irregularity of income and work activity or the fact artists sometimes have to depend on public funds (ibid.).

As also reported in the Component, some measures have already been adopted, such as those contained in the Royal Decree-Law 26/2018 of 28th of December, which approves emergency measures on artistic creation and cinematography (Jefatura del Estado 2018).

Notwithstanding this, there is still a number of issues which the Plan has identified as in need of development, such as all those aspects related to VAT, the personal income tax, the IAE, the trade union representativeness and the health and special labour relations of artists in public performances (España puede 2021).

Certainly, one of the main challenges in the Spanish cultural sector is the difficulty for a vast majority of institutions to find traditional financing channels and to attract private resources. As a solution, the government has decided to improve the regulation of patronage in order to favour a regime of tax incentives so to grant the cultural sector to recover and achieve greater international competitiveness (ibid.).

The second reform – *Plan de refuerzo de los derechos de autor y derechos conexos* – is the culmination of the regulatory procedure for the approval of the future law on Intellectual Property Rights in the European Digital Single Market, which should

transpose Directives 2019/789 and 2019/790 on copyright in the Digital Single Market, thus making them into Spanish domestic law (ibid.).

The directives were transposed in 2021 with the Royal Decree-Law 24/2021 of November 2 – way after the deadline set on the 7th of June 2021 (Sánchez Aristi 2021). The new regulation poses some limits to intellectual property in the digital and cross-border environment, as set out in Art. 67 of the Royal Decree but also to the use of works and other subject-matter in digital and cross-border educational activities, which allows acts of reproduction, distribution and public communication by digital means of works and other subject-matter for educational purposes, provided that they are carried out in a secure technological environment, as set out in Art. 68 (Jefatura del Estado 2021).

The third limitation is that of the conservation of cultural heritage, as set out in Art. 69, according to which the institutions responsible for cultural heritage may, without the authorization of the owner of the rights and for purposes of conservation, make reproductions of the works or other benefits permanently contained in their collections (ibid.).

The last limitation is included in Art. 70, entitled *Pastiche* (ibid.). The article states that the transformation of a published work consisting of taking certain characteristic elements of the work of an artist and combining them in a way that gives the impression of being an independent creation does not require the authorization of the author or owner of the rights, provided that there is no risk of confusion with the original work and no harm is done to the original work or its author (ibid.).

But most importantly, Art. 71 of the Royal Decree-Law regulates the use of works and performances outside of the commercial circuit by institutions which are responsible for cultural heritage, provided that these works and performances are permanently part of the institution's collection (ibid.). Just like the European Directive, Art. 71 provides two possibilities. On one hand, there is a collective management entity sufficiently representative within the sector concerned, in which case the entity may grant a non-exclusive authorization for the institution to reproduce, distribute, communicate or make available to the public – for non-commercial purposes – works and performances outside of the commercial circuit (Sánchez Aristi 2021). On the other, there is no management

entity, therefore the cultural heritage institution may carry out the aforementioned acts without the need for authorization (ibid.).

Lastly, in Art. 72 the Decree-Law faithfully transposes the provisions contained in Art. 14 of the European Directive, aimed at promoting access to works of visual art in the public domain: once the exploitation rights of a work of visual art have expired, any material which results from a reproduction of such work shall not be subject to intellectual property rights unless the material resulting from the reproduction is original to the extent that it is an intellectual creation of its author (Jefatura del Estado 2018).

4 – Analysis

As proved by the Component 24, the Spanish level of use of technologies to preserve and valorise cultural heritage is high, and the RTRP is proof of that. This has been confirmed even by the European Commission, who has found that Spain’s recovery and resilience plan has been able to respond well to the need to foster a strong recovery (European Commission 2022).

The success of the Component 24 can surely be attributed to the focus on three big cultural institutions such as the *Museo del Prado*, the *Museo Reina Sofia* and the *Biblioteca Nacional de España*, which allowed the government to digitalize numerous cultural assets in an efficient manner and managed to do so in little time (España puede 2021). By focusing on only three big projects, it was easy for the government to comply with the M&Ts and bring forward their objectives.

It also needs to be noted that, while this may be what has been planned at State level, the *Juntas* of every Autonomous Community elaborating their own projects in order to digitalize cultural heritage using the RTRP funds. For example, the *Junta de Castilla y León* – which received the majority of the funds to revalorise its cultural industry – has elaborated its own plan of reforms and investments to strengthen the value chain of cultural industry “by reinforcing their capacities and resilience, promoting three strategic

axes” among which the digitalization and sustainability of large cultural services (Palacín 2022).

Certainly, dividing the projects into those that can be launched at State level and those that can be launched at Community level can help the Spanish cultural administration to not lose track of the developments of the Plan, as well as employing the funds efficiently so that greater digitalization can be brought on. At the same time, to some it might look as if the State has chosen to give more attention only to what is preserved in the capital’s museums, delegating to the Autonomous Communities what is considered as “smaller heritage”.

Nonetheless, the Spanish government has allowed the Autonomous Communities to expand and diversify its cultural offer in a new and unconventional way, digitalizing the inventories of their Catholic churches as well as digitalizing state-owned yet autonomously managed documentary collections (Gobierno de España 2022b).

On the other hand, it is clear that there is still some work to be done regarding the reforms.

While the transposition of the European Directives 2019/789 and 2019/790 may have come to aid to cultural institutions in generating digital reproductions of their content (Sánchez Aristi 2021), for what regards the Patronage Law, Spain seems to find itself in somewhat high waters.

As also reported in Chapter 2, in 2023 the government Sánchez II had not yet found a solution to improve the Patronage Law to the benefit of both cultural institutions and privates, to the point that it became object of debate during the electoral campaign (Díaz de Quijano 2023). This was certainly a stain on the old Sánchez government, as in the Plan they had delineated they would have found a solution quickly.

Instead, what has come forward from the debate section in Chapter 2 is that the government launched the debate around the new law without setting a clear deadline, even if Sánchez deemed it feasible before the end of his second legislature (González 2022).

Sánchez's hopes were not that groundless, as in its third mandate he managed to find what looks like a doable solution for the country. The urgency was given by the Royal Decree-Law 6/2023 of the 19th of December which approved urgent measures for the execution of the RTRP in matters of patronage among other things, which passed on the 1st of January 2024 (Felipe 2024). The new features have direct consequences on the promotion of culture, as it promotes new tax incentives that cultural entities have been demanding for some time, which will make donors' contribution more attractive, whether they are individuals or companies (ibid.).

Still, as was previously said, this certainly cannot be categorized as the final solution, as there is still a lot to be done. The *Partido Popular* (2024) has since then reopened the debate in the autonomous communities governed by it, attesting that what has been done is still not enough to revitalise the cultural and creative industries in the country, as there has been no space yet for the creation of smart and efficient PPPs through State regulation.

What is certain is that, if Spain wants to move forward in their efforts to grant greater PPPs and allow bigger donations to happen, they are on the way to do so. With bigger incentives such as the ones promoted by the new law, more people will be attracted to making donations to cultural institutions who would in turn increase their funds so that they can kickstart more digitalization projects. This would surely advantage the Autonomous Communities which, even if they have been given EUR 115,4 million in funds for their revalorization efforts (Gobierno de España 2022b), certainly could benefit from more funds for their projects.

At the same time, though, it seems necessary to find a concrete solution that is closer to the existing social and fiscal context Spain is in (González 2022). The new Patronage Law does not distance itself much from the old regulations on patronage, only making the fiscal incentives higher by 5% both for individuals and companies (Albendea 2024): in fact, for donations made by individuals, the deduction base which can benefit from the 80% deduction percentage has been increased from EUR 150 to EUR 250, while the donations exceeding EUR 250 will have right to a deduction of 40% instead of the old 35% (ibid.). For legal entities, instead, the corporate income tax deduction percentage

is increased from 35% to 40% and the taxable income limit is instead increased to 15%, while previously it was at 10% (ibid.).

As it is possible to see, the increases in tax incentives have been little – only 5% for legal entities and for individual donations exceeding EUR 250 – while the monetary value of the donations to be made to access the 80% deduction has increased. One will wonder if this system really makes PPPs and patronage more attractive to the eyes of Spanish people and national and international companies, but this is still unconfirmed as the Law is too recent to bring forward satisfying answers.

Even if it might not seem perfect, the RTRP has proved to be a success at least for the cultural sector, despite lacking a collaboration between decision-makers and expertise.

As was also argued in Chapter 2, the choice to not bring expert into the policy process might have happened because the policy debate environment in Spain has been characterized by an overlap of different voices mostly based on opinions rather than factual evidence (Mazzoleni 2014). Probably, if the decision-makers had chosen to open the forum also to expertise, the result would have been detrimental to experts, whose voices would have been suppressed by the different opinions proposed by the different parties in conflict with one another (Head 2023).

An environment like this one – similar to Crease's (2023) acoustical model – would have made it difficult if not impossible for experts to have their voice be heard. The risk would have been an even greater prolongation of the negotiations of the law, which, as was mentioned earlier, was not what anyone in Spain wanted. In fact, as also affirmed by Head (2023), experts cannot grant rapid political decision-making, since providing evidence takes time.

This is probably why both for the RTRP and the policy reforms adopted the Spanish government did not opt for experts' involvement.

Moreover, the possible presence of decision-makers with enough competencies on the issue to not need the involvement of experts (Grødem and Hippe 2019) made it so that, even without expertise, Spain was able to obtain successful policies in little time.

5 - Spain: a possible success?

As it was possible to see thanks to the RTRP, Spain has for now been successful in its digitalization project, managing to launch great State-level initiatives which have even been completed. Moreover, by disbursing part of the funds to the Autonomous Communities, it has managed to decentralize its efforts in an efficient manner, so that it was possible for each Community to oversee and start works in the way they deemed most efficient.

On the other hand, as it was possible to see in this chapter, the Law on Patronage still raises some doubts regarding its effectiveness, something that necessarily needs to be looked upon. Certainly in the future it will be possible to see whether the new fiscal incentives and deductions in place have effectively brought forward more donations to cultural institutions – especially to those in the Autonomous Communities which benefit less from the RTRP than the *Museo del Prado*, the *Museo Reina Sofia* and the BNE.

One thing that is certain is that, while Spain has proved to be great in administrating the European funds, it has done so only because it has made strategic choices: by focusing only on three fundamental State cultural institutions, the government contained the expenses so that it could also disburse one part to the Autonomous Communities.

The case of Spain certainly poses as a good counter thesis to Italy's case: in fact, Spain has proved that experts are not always necessary, especially if the decision-makers involved have worked on an issue for a sustained period of time and therefore have access to expert knowledge to the point where they can be considered experts on the issue themselves (Grødem and Hippe 2019).

This proves that the lack of collaboration – or the trust or distrust in experts – does not necessarily hinder the success of public policies if the decision-makers are able to implement strategies that not only can effectively aid the cultural sector, but are also coherent with previous strategies, so as to obtain successful policies which can make the cultural sector not only resilient, but also innovative and able to adapt to future needs and challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this work, it has been argued that trust is the motor of the policy process, as it influences the outcome of a policy depending on the abilities of decision-makers and the eventual collaboration with expertise. To do so, it focused on the topic of the digitalization of cultural heritage, especially on the digitalization plans elaborated in Italy and Spain, two countries with similar tourism and heritage backgrounds.

Starting from Crease's (2023) theory on how the call-and-response and the acoustical models of expertise can explain relationship of distrust or mistrust, the work analysed different views on the relationship of trust between decision-makers and expertise, among which it is possible to find Carney (2016), Cerovac (2016), Head (2023) and Thunert (2021).

Crease's (2023) models showed that in the dynamic relationship between expertise and decision-makers there are various fallacies, such as interests superseding evidence-based reasonings, dishonesty, mistakes or wrongful entitlement. Moreover it proved how difficult it can be for an expert to make his/her voice heard in a space in which information can be received and perceived differentially, where voices mix and the result is sometimes being ignored in favour of less expert voices – or, sometimes, not expert at all.

Other views have instead shown that expertise has evolved, including areas that distance themselves from natural science – such as education and cultural heritage – which people are used to consider authoritative and trustworthy (Thunert 2021). Moreover, according to Thunert's (2021) theory on knowledge society, the common belief has become that expertise should be democratized, to the point that not only more experts are produced, but also that expertise has become a common public good in a society that has much higher levels of education and new technologies.

A society with this characteristics is contemporary society, where the internet has somewhat dissolved the boundaries between experts and common people. In a space such as this one, various voices mix, with the risk of the expert losing to others who do not possess the same level of expertise but result as such because of the “loudness” of their voices, just like in Crease's (2023) acoustical model. It is easy to see how decision-makers

can lose trust in expertise if trust is placed on the “wrong” individual, to the point where scholars have even declared the “death of expertise” (Nichols 2017).

Yet again, other views have defined the rise of evidence-free decision-making a myth (Andrews 2017), according to which scientific evidence has become only one factor of the policy process and has therefore not disappeared completely. Some others instead attribute the possible lack of collaboration with experts to the lack of time sometimes decision-makers face in building the relationship of trust with an expert (Carney 2016), or to the fact that evidence takes time to be collected and policy-making – especially in times of crisis – needs to be quick to answer to the needs of the citizens (Head 2023). If we add the highly partisan climate of policy debates, it is easy to see how expertise cannot keep up with the inter-related crises that arise in policy-making (ibid.).

The policy debates in Italy and Spain have evidenced the lack of collaboration and trust in experts in the policy process, but with clear differences.

Italy has shown that expertise is still necessary in some context and that continuity and coherence in policy-making are necessary for successful policies to be implemented. The divergence between the National Digitalization of Cultural Heritage Plan (NDP) and the following Ministerial Decree 161/2023 have been a proof of that.

In fact, the main difference in the approaches chosen between the NDP and the Ministerial Decree can be attributed to government discontinuity. As was affirmed in Chapter 3, the Draghi government – who was in charge of delineating the NDP as well as the NRRP – greatly relied on experts during the policy process, as not only the NDP was elaborated by the experts belonging to the Italian Digital Library (DiCultHer 2023), but they listened to the opinion of workers and other experts in the sectors through open consultations (ParteciPa 2022a; ParteciPa 2022b). The Meloni government’s Ministry of Culture, instead, opted for not involving expertise into the policy process, with the result of a Decree that not only received critiques from experts for its fees, but also distanced itself greatly from the views expressed in the NDP (Caso 2023a; Croce 2023). As was affirmed throughout this work, the reasons why this choice could have been made are various, but it is certain that the relationship of trust that had been created between experts and decision-makers during the Draghi government did not resist against this change.

Discrepancies at the political level, discontinuities in governments and incoherence between policies in the absence of expertise can hinder the eventual success of policy implementation. The clear differences in use of expertise between the NDP and the Ministerial Decree have brought to a somewhat unsuccessful implementation of policy, focusing more on “lifelong learning” experiences rather than actual digitalization of cultural assets, due also to the difficulties posed by the new reproduction fees proposed by the aforementioned Ministerial Decree.

Spain, instead, has differentiated itself from Italy, launching successful digitalization projects at the State-level as well as disbursing funds in its Autonomous Communities in a successful manner. On the other hand, the Law on Patronage has raised doubts on its effectiveness, but it is too early to declare its success or not since the law is too recent.

Yet, Spain has proved the exact opposite of Italy’s case. The Spanish government has proved that experts are not always necessary, especially if the decision-makers have gained enough relevant expertise on a matter by working for a sustained period of time on it (Grødem and Hippe 2019). In Spain, the policy debate around the Law on Patronage first started in 2002 with the Law 49/2002 (Jefatura del Estado 2002) and was opened up again in 2014 (Rubio Arostegui and Villaroya Planas 2019) and prolonged until 2024 when the new Law was approved (Felipe 2024). Due to the long time the debate took to shape into a cohesive policy, decision-makers had enough time to gain relevant expertise on the matter to the point where external expertise was not necessary anymore.

Moreover, the continuity in government between the Sanchez II government and the Sánchez III one also granted continuity and coherence in policy. While it might be argued that the third Sánchez government is a coalition one, it still holds true that there is still a continuity in policy implementation, which brought to successful results. In fact, as was affirmed in Chapter 4, all the projects and reforms delineated by the Component 24 of the *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia* have been launched and completed (Albendea 2024; Biblioteca Nacional de España 2023; Biblioteca Nacional de España 2024b; ExhibArt 2022; Jefatura del Estado 2021; Museo Nacional del Prado 2024a).

As a result, the lack of collaboration between expertise and decision-makers has not necessarily hindered the success of the policies adopted, as they have up until now contributed to the resilience and innovation of the sector, as well as being able to adapt well to future needs and challenges. This is because the decision-makers have been able to implement strategies that aided the cultural sector and were coherent with previous cultural strategies.

In conclusion, we can deduce that expertise is yes a fundamental part of policy-making, but it is so only in the cases in which decision-makers either do not possess the relevant expertise to be able to do without external experts or when continuity between governments and policies is not granted. If these cases occur and external expertise is not adopted as a choice, the result might hinder the success of the policies and obtain in return critiques, as it has happened in the case of Italy (Caso 2024a; Caso 2024b; Corte dei Conti 2023; Manacorda and Modolo 2023).

What is necessary, therefore, is not only evidence-based decision-making in order to obtain successful policies, but also continuity in government and – when that cannot happen, as was the case of Italy – continuity and coherence in developing and implementing policies, so to successfully adapt the needs and interests to those of the sector in a way that innovates the sector, but also makes it easily adaptable to new and eventual crises. Only in this way will decision-makers be able to allow themselves to not rely on external expertise.

Yet, it is impossible to say that trust in experts has been lost, as was possible to see in Chapter 2 – rather, the role of expertise is evolving according to the evolution of policy-making and society, with decision-makers becoming the expert when needed. In turn, though, the traditional expertise – the one based on years of education and experience in a relevant field – is slowly becoming tuned out by new and louder voices. This means that it is not trust that is dissipating, but that expertise is slowly losing out to a more booming voice that not necessarily corresponds to that of an expert, resulting in misplacement of trust and – as a consequence – an eventual distrust. The risk is that, in the future, expertise will be more and more ignored in fear of “trusting the wrong expert”, while at the same time experts will not be able to keep up with the quick pace of policy-making and with the highly partisan climate in which evidence comes little into play.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale. 2021. “Next Generation EU E Il Piano Nazionale Di Ripresa E Resilienza.” Agenzia per La Coesione Territoriale. 2021. https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/dossier_tematici/nextgenerationeu-e-pnrr/.
- AgenziaCULT. 2022a. “Piano Digitale Del MiC, Laura Moro: ‘Orientato a Massimizzare La Condivisione Dei Dati.’” AgenziaCult. July 8, 2022. <https://www.agenziacult.it/cultura-e-digitale/piano-digitale-mic-moro-orientato-a-massimizzare-la-condivisione-dei-dati/>.
- ———. 2022b. “Piano Digitale MiC, Parere Favorevole (Con Osservazioni) Del Consiglio Superiore.” AgenziaCult. July 8, 2022. <https://www.agenziacult.it/notiziario/piano-digitale-mic-parere-favorevole-con-osservazioni-del-consiglio-superiore/>.
- AgID. 2024. “L’Agenzia | Agid.” [Www.agid.gov.it](http://www.agid.gov.it). 2024. <https://www.agid.gov.it/it/agenzia>.
- Agostino, Deborah, Michela Arnaboldi, and Antonio Lampis. 2020. “Italian State Museums during the COVID-19 Crisis: From Onsite Closure to Online Openness.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 35 (4): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2020.1790029>.
- Ahluwalia, Sangeeta C., Maria O. Edelen, Nabeel Qureshi, and Jason M. Etchegaray. 2021. “Trust in Experts, Not Trust in National Leadership, Leads to Greater Uptake of Recommended Actions during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* 12 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.12219>.
- Ahmed, Rukhsar. 2023. “Digitalization of Museums and Academic Benefits for Tourists (Slemani Museum as Case).” In *Application of Modern Trends in Museums*, edited by Ladislav Župčán. Vol. 1. IntechOpen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.110797>.
- Albendea, Gema L. 2024. “Las Claves de La Reformada Ley de Mecenazgo.” *Revista Haz*. January 24, 2024. <https://hazrevista.org/tercersector/2024/01/claves-reformada-ley-mecenazgo/>.

- American Alliance of Museums. 2019. “Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion.” American Alliance of Museums. September 22, 2019. <https://www.aam-us.org/>.
- Andrews, Leighton. 2017. “How Can We Demonstrate the Public Value of Evidence-Based Policy Making When Government Ministers Declare That the People ‘Have Had Enough of Experts?’” *Palgrave Communications* 3 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0013-4>.
- Associazione Italiana Biblioteche. 2022. “Osservazioni Ai Documenti Del Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale.” AIB WEB. 2022. <https://www.aib.it/documenti/osservazioni-pnd-0622/>.
- Autellitano, Saverio. 2022. “La Ricostruzione Grafica Dei Bronzi Di Riace - Magna Grecia 3D - Saverio Autellitano.” Magna Grecia 3D. July 13, 2022. <https://magnagrecia3d.com/la-ricostruzione-grafica-dei-bronzi-di-riace/>.
- Babones, Salvatore. 2018. *The New Authoritarianism: Trump, Populism and the Tyranny of Experts*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bertacchini, Enrico. 2024. “Quanto Vale l’Immagine Dei Beni Culturali | E. Bertacchini.” Lavoce.info. January 3, 2024. <https://lavoce.info/archives/103198/quanto-vale-limmagine-dei-beni-culturali/>.
- Bertini, Vanni. 2023. “Osservazioni Sul DM 11 Aprile 2023, N. 161.” Associazione Italiana Biblioteche. May 2, 2023. <https://www.aib.it/notizie/osservazioni-sul-dm-11-aprile-2023-n-161/>.
- Biblioteca Nacional de España. 2023. “La BNE Publica Su Estrategia Digital 2023-2025.” Biblioteca Nacional de España. 2023. <https://www.bne.es/es/noticias/bne-publica-su-estrategia-digital-2023-2025>.
- ———. 2024a. “Estrategia Nacional de Digitalización Del Patrimonio Bibliográfico.” Biblioteca Nacional de España. 2024. <https://www.bne.es/es/iniciativas-proyectos/estrategia-nacional-digitalizacion-patrimonio-bibliografico>.
- Biblioteca Nacional de España . 2024b. “Biblioteca Digital Hispánica | Biblioteca Nacional de España.” Www.bne.es. 2024. <https://www.bne.es/es/catalogos/biblioteca-digital-hispanica>.

- Caffo, Rossella , and Maurizio Lunghi. 2004. “Il Ministerial NetwoRk for Valorising Activities in Digitisation (Minerva).” <https://www.minervaeurope.org/publications/minervabooklet-e.pdf>.
- Cairney, Paul. 2016. *The Politics of Evidence-Based Policy Making*. London Palgrave Macmillan Uk :Imprint: Palgrave Pivot.
- Capurro, Carlotta, Gertjan Plets, and Jaap Verheul. 2023. “Digital Heritage Infrastructures as Cultural Policy Instruments: Europeana and the Enactment of European Citizenship.” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 30 (3): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2193401>.
- Casagrande, Paolo. 2023. “Museo Egizio: Online Tutte Le Immagini Dei Reperti Esposti.” Wikimedia Italia. June 1, 2023. <https://www.wikimedia.it/news/museo-egizio-online-tutte-le-immagini-dei-reperti-esposti/>.
- Caso, Roberto. 2023a. “Quali Politiche per La Riproduzione Dei Beni Culturali?” *Finestre Sull’Arte* 20 (1).
- ———. 2023b. “Quali Politiche per La Riproduzione Dei Beni Culturali?” *Finestre Sull’Arte* 20 (1).
- ———. 2024a. “A Margine Del Volume ‘Le Immagini Del Patrimonio Culturale. Un’eredità Condivisa?’ a Cura Di Daniele Manacorda E Mirco Modolo, Pacini Editore, 2023.”
- ———. 2024b. “La Liberalizzazione Delle Immagini è in Stato Confusionale - Il Giornale Dell’Arte.” [Www.ilgiornaledellarte.com/Articolo/La-Liberalizzazione-Delle-Immagini-e-In-Stato-Confusionale](http://www.ilgiornaledellarte.com/Articolo/La-Liberalizzazione-Delle-Immagini-e-In-Stato-Confusionale). April 30, 2024. <https://www.ilgiornaledellarte.com/Articolo/La-liberalizzazione-delle-immagini-e-in-stato-confusionale>.
- Cerovac, Ivan. 2016. “The Role of Experts in a Democratic Society.” *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 7 (2): 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20162.75.88>.
- *Codice Dei Beni Culturali E Del Paesaggio*. 2004.
- Corte dei Conti. 2023. *Gli Esiti Dell’Attività Di Controllo Svolta Nell’Anno 2022 E Le Misure Conseguenziali Adottate Dalle Amministrazioni*. https://trasparenza.mit.gov.it/moduli/downloadFile.php?file=oggetto_allegati/23

317130313335918200__Ocorde_dei_conti_deliberazione_20_ottobre_2023_n_7_62023g.pdf.

- Crease, Robert P. 2023. “Mistrust of Experts by Populists and Politicians.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Expertise and Democratic Politics*, edited by Gil Eyal and Thomas Medvetz. Oxford University Press.
- Creative Commons Italia. 2022. “Creative Commons E Il Capitolo Italiano Di CC Esprimono La Propria Posizione Sul Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale (PND) – Italia.” Creative Commons Italia. July 5, 2022. <https://creativecommons.it/chapterIT/index.php/1430/>.
- Croce, Margherita. 2023. “La Digitalizzazione Delle Collezioni Museali. Stato Dell’arte E Prospettive.” *Aedon* 2 (1): 179–201. doi: 10.7390/108954.
- CulturaItalia. 2008a. “CulturaItalia | Mission.” [Www.culturaitalia.it](http://www.culturaitalia.it). 2008. <https://www.culturaitalia.it/mission/>.
- ———. 2008b. “Home.” [Www.culturaitalia.it](http://www.culturaitalia.it). 2008. <https://www.culturaitalia.it/>.
- Daly, Tom Gerald. 2019. “Democratic Decay: Conceptualising an Emerging Research Field.” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 11 (1): 9–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40803-019-00086-2>.
- Díaz de Quijano , Fernando. 2023. “Debate Electoral Sobre Cultura: Estas Son Las Propuestas de PSOE, PP, Sumar Y Vox.” *El Español*. June 28, 2023. https://www.elespanol.com/el-cultural/letras/20230628/debate-electoral-cultura-propuestas-soe-pp-sumar-vox/774672929_0.html.
- DiCultHer. 2023. “Intervista All’Arch. Laura Moro, Direttore Generale Dell’Istituto Centrale per La Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale Del Ministero Della Cultura. – CULTURE DIGITALI.” [Diculther.it](http://diculther.it). 2023. <https://www.diculther.it/rivista/intervista-allarch-laura-moro-direttore-generale-dellistituto-centrale-per-la-digitalizzazione-del-patrimonio-culturale-del-ministero-della-cultura/>.
- Doulamis, N., A. Doulamis, C. Ioannidis, M. Klein, and M. Ioannides. 2017. “Modelling of Static and Moving Objects: Digitizing Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.” In *Mixed Reality and Gamification for Cultural Heritage*, edited by M. Ioannides, N. Magnenat-Thalmann, and G. Papagiannakis. Springer.

- Economou, Maria. 2015. “Heritage in the Digital Age.” In *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, 215–28. Wiley Blackwell.
- El Español. 2021a. “El Sector Cultural Recibirá 525 Millones de Euros de Los Fondos Europeos Para La Recuperación.” *El Español*. May 14, 2021. https://www.elespanol.com/el-cultural/arte/20210514/sector-cultural-recibira-millones-fondos-europeos-recuperacion/581193580_0.html.
- ———. 2021b. “Componente 24: Revalorización de La Industria Cultural.” *El Español*. May 22, 2021. https://www.elespanol.com/wakeupspain/20210522/componente-revalorizacion-industria-cultural/583192434_0.html.
- España puede. 2021. “PLAN NACIONAL de RECUPERACIÓN, TRANSFORMACION Y RESILIENCIA DETALLE de LAS INVERSIONES Y REFORMAS.” <https://espanadigital.gob.es/sites/espanadigital/files/2022-07/C24%20-%20Revalorizaci%C3%B3n%20de%20la%20Industria%20Cultural.pdf>.
- EU Council. 2021. *Allegato RIVEDUTO Della DECISIONE DI ESECUZIONE DEL CONSIGLIO Relativa All’approvazione Della Valutazione Del Piano per La Ripresa E La Resilienza Dell’Italia*.
- European Commission. 2010. “Boosting Cultural Heritage Online: The European Commission Sets up a Reflection Group on Digitisation.” European Commission. 2010. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_10_456.
- ———. 2022. “Spain’s Recovery and Resilience Plan.” Commission.europa.eu. 2022. https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/spains-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en.
- European Parliament and Council. 2021. *Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 Establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/241/oj>.
- ———. 2023. *DIRETTIVA (UE) 2019/1024 DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO Del 20 Giugno 2019 Relativa All’apertura Dei Dati E al Riutilizzo Dell’informazione Del Settore Pubblico*.

- European Parliament and European Council. 2019. “Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market and Amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC.” Eur-Lex.europa.eu. 2019. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/790/oj>.
- European Union. 2021. “NextGenerationEU.” Next-Generation-Eu.europa.eu. 2021. https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en.
- Europeana. 2021. “Discover Inspiring European Cultural Heritage.” Www.europeana.eu. 2021. <https://www.europeana.eu/en>.
- ———. 2024. “Scopri Il Patrimonio Culturale Digitale Europeo.” Www.europeana.eu. 2024. <https://www.europeana.eu/it>.
- Europeana Pro. 2020. “Opportunities Offered by Digital Technologies for the Cultural Heritage Sector.” Europeana Pro. 2020. <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/europeana-initiative-position-consultation-on-opportunities-offered-by-digital-technologies>.
- ExhibArt. 2022. “El Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid) Anuncia La Creación de Una Nueva Plataforma Digital.” Exibart.es. December 16, 2022. <https://www.exibart.es/noticias/el-museo-reina-sofia-madrid-anuncia-la-creacion-de-una-nueva-plataforma-digital/>.
- Felipe, García Míguez. 2024. “Claves de La Nueva Ley de Mecenazgo: Un Impulso a La Cultura Y La Investigación - LegalToday.” Www.legaltoday.com. July 29, 2024. <https://www.legaltoday.com/opinion/articulos-de-opinion/claves-de-la-nueva-ley-de-mecenazgo-un-impulso-a-la-cultura-y-la-investigacion-2024-02-19/>.
- Ford, Steve. 2021. “NHS Pay Guide: Agenda for Change Annual Pay Scales 2020-21.” Nursing Times. December 19, 2021. <https://www.nursingtimes.net/careers/your-nursing-career/nhs-pay-guide-agenda-for-change-annual-pay-scales-2020-21-19-12-2021/>.
- Furia, Alessia. 2022. “Un’app per Ricostruire I Bronzi Di Riace: La Nuova Frontiera Dell’archeologia Pubblica.” ArtsLife. January 8, 2022. <https://artslife.com/2022/01/08/unapp-per-ricostruire-i-bronzi-di-riace-la-nuova-frontiera-dellarcheologia-pubblica/>.

- Giaume, Giulia. 2023. “Il Decreto per Far Pagare Le Immagini Culturali | Artribune.” Artribune. May 8, 2023. <https://www.artribune.com/professionisti-e-professionisti/politica-e-pubblica-amministrazione/2023/05/decreto-ministero-pagare-immagini-culturali/>.
- Gobierno de España. 2020. *España Digital 2025*.
- ———. 2021a. *Plan de Recuperación, Transformación Y Resiliencia*.
- ———. 2021b. “Revalorización de La Industria Cultural.” Planderecuperacion.gob.es. 2021. <https://planderecuperacion.gob.es/politicas-y-componentes/componente-24-revalorizacion-de-la-industria-cultural>.
- ———. 2022a. “Plan de Recuperación, Transformación Y Resiliencia: DGPMRR.” Www.fondoseuropeos.hacienda.gob.es. 2022. <https://www.fondoseuropeos.hacienda.gob.es/sitios/dgpmrr/es-es/Paginas/plan.aspx>.
- ———. 2022b. “El Gobierno Acuerda La Distribución a Las Autonomías de 115,4 Millones de Euros Del Plan de Recuperación Destinados a Revalorizar La Industria Cultural.” Planderecuperacion.gob.es. April 5, 2022. <https://planderecuperacion.gob.es/noticias/el-gobierno-acuerda-la-distribucion-a-las-autonomias-de-115-coma-4-millones-de-euros-del-plan-de-recuperacion>.
- González, Noemí Romero. 2022. “El Debate Sobre Una Nueva Ley de Mecenazgo, ¿Cuál Es El Problema?” Instituto Europeo de Asesoría Fiscal. November 18, 2022. <https://www.ineaf.es/tribuna/el-debate-sobre-una-nueva-ley-de-mecenazgo/>.
- Gretzel, Ulrike, Matthias Fuchs, Rodolfo Baggio, Wolfram Hoepken, Rob Law, Julia Neidhardt, Juho Pesonen, Markus Zanker, and Zheng Xiang. 2020. “E-Tourism beyond COVID-19: A Call for Transformative Research.” *Information Technology & Tourism* 22 (2): 187–203. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00181-3>.
- Grødem, Anne Skevik, and Jon M. Hippe. 2019. “The Expertise of Politicians and Their Role in Epistemic Communities.” *Policy & Politics* 47 (4): 561–77. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557319x15662966019989>.
- Harris, T.M., and G.R. Lock. 1994. “Oward an Evaluation of GIS in European Archaeology: The Past, Present and Future of Theory and Applications.” In *GIS*

and Archaeology: A European Perspective, edited by G. Lock and Z. Stančič, 349–65. London: Taylor and Francis.

- Haski, Pierre. 2021. “Mario Draghi Vuole Rilanciare l’Italia E L’Europa.” *Internazionale*. *Internazionale*. February 18, 2021. <https://www.internazionale.it/opinione/pierre-haski/2021/02/18/draghi-italia-europa>.
- Head, Brian W. 2015. “Toward More ‘Evidence-Informed’ Policy Making?” *Public Administration Review* 76 (3): 472–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12475>.
- ———. 2023. “Reconsidering Expertise for Public Policymaking: The Challenges of Contestability.” *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 1 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12613>.
- Hendriks, Friederike, Dorothe Kienhues, and Rainer Bromme. 2015. “Measuring Laypeople’s Trust in Experts in a Digital Age: The Muenster Epistemic Trustworthiness Inventory (METI).” *PLoS ONE* 10 (10). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0139309>.
- Hosking, Geoffrey A. 2014. *Trust : A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- International Council of Museums. 2022. “Commenti ICOM al PND.” Italy: ICOM Italia.
- Istituto Centrale per la Digitalizzazione del Patrimonio Culturale. 2022. “Strategia.” Istituto Centrale per La Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale. 2022. <https://digitallibrary.cultura.gov.it/strategia/>.
- Italia OpenGov. 2022. “Consultazione Sul Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale | Italia Open Gov.” Open.gov.it. 2022. <https://open.gov.it/consultazione-piano-nazionale-digitalizzazione>.
- Italian Digital Library. 2022a. “Il Piano.” Istituto Centrale per La Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale. 2022. <https://digitallibrary.cultura.gov.it/il-piano/>.
- ———. 2022b. “Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale | 4. Struttura Del Documento.” Docs Italia. 2022. <https://docs.italia.it/italia/icdp/icdp-pnd-docs/it/v1.0-giugno-2022/struttura-del-documento.html>.

- ———. 2023. “Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale | 5. Visione.” Docs Italia. February 1, 2023. <https://docs.italia.it/italia/icdp/icdp-pnd-docs/it/v1.1-febbraio-2023/visione/index.html>.
- Jefatura del Estado. 2002. *Ley 49/2002, de 23 de Diciembre, de Régimen Fiscal de Las Entidades Sin Fines Lucrativos Y de Los Incentivos Fiscales al Mecenazgo*.
- ———. 2018. *Real Decreto-Ley 26/2018, de 28 de Diciembre, Por El Que Se Aprueban Medidas de Urgencia Sobre La Creación Artística Y La Cinematografía*. Vol. 314. <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rdl/2018/12/28/26>.
- ———. 2021. *Real Decreto-Ley 24/2021, de 2 de Noviembre, de Transposición de Directivas de La Unión Europea En Las Materias de Bonos Garantizados, Distribución Transfronteriza de Organismos de Inversión Colectiva, Datos Abiertos Y Reutilización de La Información Del Sector Público, Ejercicio de Derechos de Autor Y Derechos Afines Aplicables a Determinadas Transmisiones En Línea Y a Las Retransmisiones de Programas de Radio Y Televisión, Exenciones Temporales a Determinadas Importaciones Y Suministros, de Personas Consumidoras Y Para La Promoción de Vehículos de Transporte Por Carretera Limpios Y Energéticamente Eficientes*. Vol. 263.
- ———. 2023. *Real Decreto-Ley 6/2023, de 19 de Diciembre, Por El Que Se Aprueban Medidas Urgentes Para La Ejecución Del Plan de Recuperación, Transformación Y Resiliencia En Materia de Servicio Público de Justicia, Función Pública, Régimen Local Y Mecenazgo*.
- Jones, Jonathan. 2015. “Why We’re Still up in Arms about the Mystery of the Venus de Milo.” *The Guardian*. May 11, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/shortcuts/2015/may/11/venus-de-milo-arms-reconstruction-spinning-prostitute-sculpture>.
- Kitcher, Philip. 2001. *Science, Truth and Democracy*. Oxford Academic Press.
- Lewicki, Roy J., and Carolyn Wiethoff. 2014. “Trust, Trust Development, and Trust Repair.” In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, edited by Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman, and Eric C. Marcus. Jossey-Bass.
- Liverani, Paolo. 2024. “Riproduzioni Dei Beni Culturali Statali: Il Nuovo Decreto Ministeriale 108/2024.” *ROARS*. May 3, 2024. <https://www.roars.it/riproduzioni-dei-beni-culturali-statali-il-nuovo-decreto-ministeriale-108-2024/>.

- Lupo, Eleonora. 2020. “Per Un ‘Patrimonio Culturale Di Prossimità’: Opportunità Progettuali Oltre L’emergenza Pandemica.” *MD Journal* 1 (1).
- Majone, Giandomenico. 1989. *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Manacorda, Daniele, and Mirco Modolo. 2023. *Le Immagini Del Patrimonio Culturale. Un’eredità Condivisa? Ediz. Illustrata*. Pisa, Italy: Pacini Editore.
- Manfredini, Anna Maria, and Fabio Remondino. 2012. “A Review of Reality-Based 3D Model Generation, Segmentation and Web-Based Visualization Methods.” *International Journal of Heritage in the Digital Era* 1 (1): 103–23.
- Mazzoleni, Gianpietro. 2014. “Mediatization and Political Populism.” In *Mediatization of Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mihelj, Sabina, Katherine Kondor, and Václav Štětka. 2022. “Establishing Trust in Experts during a Crisis: Expert Trustworthiness and Media Use during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Science Communication* 44 (3): 107554702211005. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10755470221100558>.
- Ministerio de Cultura. 2021. “Publicada La Estrategia Nacional de Digitalización 2022-2026.” [Cultura.gob.es](https://www.cultura.gob.es/cultura/bibliotecas/noticias/2021/estrategia-nacional-digitalizacion.html). December 1, 2021. <https://www.cultura.gob.es/cultura/bibliotecas/noticias/2021/estrategia-nacional-digitalizacion.html>.
- Ministerio de Cultura, and Ministerio de Administración Pública. 2007. *Plan de Modernización de Las Instituciones Culturales de La Administración General Del Estado*.
- Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. 2017. *Plan Cultura 2020*.
- Ministero della Cultura. 2021a. “Cultura 4.0.” PNRR Cultura. 2021. <https://pnrr.cultura.gov.it/>.
- ———. 2021b. “M1C3 - Investimento 1.1 ‘Strategie E Piattaforme Digitali per Il Patrimonio Culturale.’” PNRR Cultura. 2021. <https://pnrr.cultura.gov.it/misura-1-patrimonio-culturale-per-la-prossima-generazione/1-1-piattaforme-e-strategie-digitali-per-laccesso-al-patrimonio-culturale/>.
- ———. 2021c. “PNRR - Milestone E Target.” PNRR Cultura. 2021. <https://pnrr.cultura.gov.it/milestone-e-target/#M1C3-2>.

- ————. 2022. “Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale.” https://digitallibrary.cultura.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PND_versione1_1_gen2023.pdf.
- ————. 2023. *Linee Guida per La Determinazione Degli Importi Minimi Dei Canoni E Dei Corrispettivi per La Concessione d’Uso Dei Beni in Consegna Agli Istituti E Luoghi Della Cultura Statali*. Vol. 161.
- Musei Capitolini. 2024a. “Museo Digitale | Musei Capitolini.” Musei Capitolini. 2024. <https://www.museicapitolini.org/it/gruppo-infopage/museo-digitale>.
- ————. 2024b. “Tutte Le Opere | Musei Capitolini.” Musei Capitolini. 2024. https://www.museicapitolini.org/it/collezioni/tutte_le_opere.
- Museo Egizio. 2024. “Museo Egizio.” [Museoegizio.it](https://museoegizio.it/). 2024. <https://museoegizio.it/>.
- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. 2022a. “LaDigitaldelReina - Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.” [Museoreinasofia.es](https://ladigitaldelreina.museoreinasofia.es/). 2022. <https://ladigitaldelreina.museoreinasofia.es/>.
- ————. 2022b. “LaDigitaldelReina - Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.” [Museoreinasofia.es](https://ladigitaldelreina.museoreinasofia.es/). 2022. <https://ladigitaldelreina.museoreinasofia.es/>.
- ————. 2024. “Collection | Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.” [Www.museoreinasofia.es](https://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/collection). 2024. <https://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/collection>.
- Museo Nacional del Prado. 2024a. “Archivo Del Museo Nacional Del Prado.” Museo Nacional Del Prado. 2024. <https://archivo.museodelprado.es/ms-opac/>.
- ————. 2024b. “Archivo Del Museo Nacional Del Prado.” Museo Nacional Del Prado. 2024. <https://archivo.museodelprado.es/ms-opac/>.
- ————. 2024c. “BIMUS - Museo Nacional Del Prado.” [Museodelprado.es](https://www.museodelprado.es/en/learn/library/bimus). Museo del Prado. 2024. <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/learn/library/bimus>.
- Musollino, Paola. 2023. “Musei, a Disposizione Di Tutti Digitalizzate 600.000 Opere Custodite Nei Depositi.” Istituto Centrale per La Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale. October 30, 2023. <https://digitallibrary.cultura.gov.it/notizie/musei-a-disposizione-di-tutti-digitalizzate-600-000-opere-custodite-nei-depositi/>.
- Nichols, Tom. 2017. *The Death of Expertise : The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters*. New York, Ny: Oxford University Press.

- Openpolis. 2021. “Il Pnrr Italiano E Il Confronto Con Gli Altri Paesi Europei.” Openpolis. October 11, 2021. <https://www.openpolis.it/il-pnrr-italiano-e-il-confronto-con-gli-altri-paesi-europei/>.
- ———. 2023. “Cos’è Il Pnrr, Piano Nazionale Ripresa E Resilienza.” Openpolis. February 28, 2023. <https://www.openpolis.it/parole/cose-il-pnrr-piano-nazionale-ripresa-e-resilienza/>.
- ParteciPa. 2022a. “Consultazione Pubblica Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale 2022-2023 | Dossier - Contributi Aperti.” ParteciPa, Italia OpenGov.
- ———. 2022b. “Report Finale Della Consultazione - Piano Nazionale Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale.” Rome, Italy: ParteciPa, Italia OpenGov.
- Partido Popular. 2024. “Los Consejeros de Cultura Del PP Apuestan Por Una Nueva Ley de Mecenazgo Para Revitalizar Las Industrias Culturales Y Llegar a Todos Los Ciudadanos.” Partido Popular. February 22, 2024. <https://www.pp.es/actualidad-noticia/consejeros-cultura-pp-apuestan-por-una-nueva-ley-mecenazgo-revitalizar-las>.
- Pavlidis, George, Anestis Koutsoudis, Fotis Arnaoutoglou, Vassilios Tsioukas, and Christodoulos Chamzas. 2007. “Methods for 3D Digitization of Cultural Heritage.” *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 8 (1): 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2006.10.007>.
- Pellizzoni, Luigi. 2021. *Scienza in Discussione? Dalla Controversia Sui Vaccini All'emergenza Covid-19*. Angeli.
- Pirrelli, Marilena. 2023. “Concessione d’Uso Dei Beni E Degli Spazi Culturali: Il MiC Detta Le Tariffe.” *Il Sole 24 Ore*, May 13, 2023. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/concessione-d-uso-beni-e-spazi-culturali-mic-detta-tariffe-AESxH6SD>.
- Pirrelli, Marilena, and Giuseppe Cosenza. 2022. “Le Novità Del Piano Di Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale.” *Il Sole 24 ORE*. June 5, 2022. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/le-novita-piano-digitalizzazione-patrimonio-culturale-AEQDnZcB>.

- Postrel, Virginia. 2015. “If We Can 3-D Print the Venus de Milo with Arms, What Are Her Arms Doing?” *Slate Magazine*. May 1, 2015. https://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2015/05/the_venus_de_milo_s_arms_3d_printing_the_ancient_sculpture_spinning_thread.html.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital.” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1): 65–78.
- Reeder, Leslie A., Torben C. Rick, and Jon M. Erlandson. 2010. “Our Disappearing Past: A GIS Analysis of the Vulnerability of Coastal Archaeological Resources in California’s Santa Barbara Channel Region.” *Journal of Coastal Conservation* 16 (2): 187–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11852-010-0131-2>.
- Rodríguez Morató, Arturo , and Gloria Guirao Soro. 2024. “Digital Cultural Policy in Spain. The Game of Emulation.” In *Digital Transformation and Cultural Policies in Europe*, edited by Ole Marius Hylland and Jaka Primorac, 64–82. Routledge Research in the Creative and Cultural Industries. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/77185/1/9781003820840.pdf#page=81>.
- Romera, Javier. 2024. “El Museo Del Prado Avanza En Su Digitalización Tras Ejecutar El 92% de Los Fondos Europeos.” *ElEconomista.es*. elEconomista. March 17, 2024. <https://www.eleconomista.es/actualidad/noticias/12726590/03/24/el-museo-del-prado-avanza-en-su-digitalizacion-tras-ejecutar-el-92-de-los-fondos-europeos.html>.
- Rubio Arostegui, Juan Arturo, and Anna Villaroya Planas. 2019. “El Papel Del Mecenazgo En La Política Cultural Española.” *Gobierno de España - Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte*.
- Sacco, Pier Luigi, and Evakeria Travkina. 2020. “Culture Shock. COVID-19 and the Cultural and Creative Sector.” Vol. 1.
- Salarelli, Alberto, and Anna Maria Tammaro. 2006. *La Biblioteca Digitale*. Editrice Bibliografica.
- Samaroudi, Myrsini, Karina Rodriguez Echavarria, and Lara Perry. 2020. “Heritage in Lockdown: Digital Provision of Memory Institutions in the UK and

- US of America during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 35 (4): 337–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2020.1810483>.
- Sánchez Arísti, Rafael. 2021. “Directiva 2019/790 Sobre Derechos de Autor Y Derechos Afines En El Mercado Único Digital.” Cuatrecasas. November 17, 2021. <https://www.cuatrecasas.com/es/spain/propiedad-intelectual/art/ue-transposicion-de-la-directiva-ue-2019-790-i>.
 - Sanders, Donald H. 2007. “Why Do Virtual Heritage?” Williamstone, MA, USA: Institute for the Visualization of History and Learning Sites, Inc.
 - Sigala, Marianna. 2020. “Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and Implications for Advancing and Resetting Industry and Research.” *Journal of Business Research* 117 (1): 312–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.015>.
 - SIMART. 2024. “SIMART.” SIMART. 2024. <https://simartweb.comune.roma.it/>.
 - Sirti. 2022. “Sirti per La Digitalizzazione Del Patrimonio Culturale Di Roma Capitale.” Sirti S.p.A. May 10, 2022. <https://www.sirti.it/sirti-per-la-digitalizzazione-del-patrimonio-culturale-di-roma-capitale>.
 - Sky Arte. 2024. “Il Tour Virtuale (E Gratuito) Delle Collezioni Del Museo Del Prado | Sky Arte.” [Arte.sky.it](https://arte.sky.it/news/tour-virtuale-museo-del-prado). April 23, 2024. <https://arte.sky.it/news/tour-virtuale-museo-del-prado>.
 - Strada, Silvia. 2023. “Italia: Open to Meraviglia.” Ministero Del Turismo. May 4, 2023. <https://www.ministeroturismo.gov.it/italia-open-to-meraviglia-2/>.
 - Stricker, Didier, Patrick Dahne, Frank Seibert, Ioannis T. Christou, Luis Almeida, Nikos Ioannidis, and Renzo Carlucci. 2001. “Design and Development Issues for ARCHEOGUIDE: An Augmented Reality Based Cultural Heritage On-Site Guide.” In *Proceedings of the Euro Image ICAV 3D Conference in Augmented Virtual Environments and Three-Dimensional Imaging*.
 - Studio Martelli and Partners. 2022. “La Tutela Dell’immagine Dei Beni Culturali.” Studio Martelli and Partners. February 17, 2022. <https://www.studiomartelli.it/la-tutela-dellimmagine-dei-beni-culturali/#:~:text=Il%20diritto%20all>.
 - Tallandini, Laura. 2006. “Il Censimento Delle Collezioni Digitalizzate Degli Atenei E Degli Enti Di Ricerca Italiani Nell’Ambito Del Portale Michael.” *DigItalia* 1 (1): 111–15.

- Thatcher, Mark, and Anna Pirri Valentini. 2023. “Possibilità, Opportunità E Rischi Del Finanziamento Privato Alla Cultura. Alcuni Esempi Dal Modello Italiano E Inglese.” *Rivista Di Politica Economica* 2 (1): 107–31.
- Thunert, Martin. 2021. “Waning Trust in (Scientific) Experts and Expertise? Recent Evidence from the United States and Elsewhere.” In *Authority and Trust in US Culture and Society. Interdisciplinary Approaches and Perspectives*, edited by Gunter Leyboldt and Manfred Berg. American Culture Studies.
- United Nations. 2015. “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” United Nations. 2015. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.
- ———. 2023. “United Nations Sustainable Development.” United Nations. 2023. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.
- ———. 2024. “The 17 Sustainable Development Goals.” United Nations. 2024. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.
- Vlahakis, Vassilio, John Karigiannis, Manolis Tsotros, Michael Gounaris, Luis Almeida, Didier Stricker, Tim Glue, Ioannis T. Christou, Renzo Carlucci, and Nikos Ioannidis. 2001. “ARCHEOGUIDE: First Results of an Augmented Reality, Mobile Computing System in Cultural Heritage Sites.” In *Proceedings of the Conference on Virtual Reality, Archaeology and Virtual Heritage*, 131–40. New York: ACM.
- Zètema Progetto Cultura. 2017. “Zètema.” Zètema. 2017. <https://www.zetema.it/societa/>.
- Zidan, Ahmed Adel. 2024. “Digital Cultural Heritage: Theory and Practice.” International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. February 19, 2024. <https://www.ifla.org/news/digital-cultural-heritage-theory-and-practice/>.

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a halt, leading governments to start lockdowns in order to safeguard people's health and companies, organizations and institutions adopting smart working as a solution to cope with the emergency, while tight travel restriction were put in place all around the world. The consequence was an unprecedented crisis in the contemporary world. The cultural sector, and especially cultural tourism, was one of the most impacted from the restrictions, as the lockdowns forced cultural institutions to close temporarily to visitors to reduce the spread of the virus.

While creativity among cultural organizations spurred due to the need to adapt themselves to the crisis and engage audiences in a new way, the short-term solution brought out another need that the cultural sector has to adapt to: in the long-run, digitalization would require a more planned and long-term approach so to meet the demands of an ever-evolving public.

In this scenario, the European Union (EU) has proved its ability of being a cohesive force by launching the NextGenerationEU, a temporary economic recovery and revitalisation instrument to restore the losses caused by the pandemic aimed to aid all EU Member States. The Member States have in turn to develop appropriate policies and guidelines that suit their distinct and varied institutional, economic and social settings while also pursuing the larger EU goals. In this regard, the instrument's activities have introduced an opportunity for countries to invest in technology and digitalization on larger scale in order to support cultural heritage and the cultural sector.

A large-scale plan such as this one needs government's strong engagement with the various sectors in order to understand their necessities and adapt their policies accordingly. To do so, the involvement of expertise would be necessary, as evidence-based policy-making would help decision-makers to elaborate successfully large-scale policies like the ones envisaged by the NextGenerationEU. Yet, this has not always been the choice, as it has been in the case of Italy and Spain, two countries with similar tourism scenarios and similar cultural heritage backgrounds. In both countries, expertise was not

always the option, considering instead a more opinion-based approach. While experts have criticised the choice, feeling ignored and left out of something that interested them greatly, the general perception has become that, sometimes, experts are not necessary anymore. This has brought on a bigger question – are decision-makers losing trust in experts?

To answer the question, this work has looked into the relationship of trust between decision-makers and expertise, focusing especially on the reasons why a decision-maker would choose not to trust an expert. Starting from the call-and-response model and the acoustical model theorized by Crease (2023), this thesis has looked into the possible fallacies in a relationship of trust between the two actors, looking at reasons for mistrust and distrust. Moreover, Thunert's (2021) theory on knowledge societies, as well as Carney's (2016) theory on trust and Head's (2023) view on the rapid pace and partisan climate of policy-making have given some insight into why decision-makers are choosing not to involve expertise in the policy process.

The findings transpired by the analysis of the policy debates in Italy and Spain and on the outcome of their digitalization plans as well as the relevant policies on the matter has shown two very differing results.

Italy has proved that expertise is still necessary in some context and that continuity and coherence in policy-making are necessary if one government wants to obtain a successful policy. The divergences found between the NDP and the following Ministerial Decree 161/2023 – object of debate in Italy – have been proof of that. Discrepancies at the political level, as well as discontinuity in government and incoherence between policies in the absence of expertise can hinder the eventual success of policy implementation. The clear differences in use of expertise among the two policies have brought to a somewhat unsuccessful implementation of the policy.

On the other hand, Spain has proved the complete opposite of Italy, proving that experts are not always necessary, especially if the decision-makers have enough relevant expertise on a matter (Grødem and Hippe 2019). The result is that the lack of collaboration did not necessarily hinder the success of the policies adopted, as they have contributed to the resilience and innovation of the sector. The decision-makers of this country have,

differently from Italy, been able to implement strategies that aided the cultural sector and were coherent with previous cultural strategies. Moreover, a somewhat continuity in government has led them to be coherent also in policy development without necessarily turning to expertise.

The findings have helped deduce that external expertise is not completely lost and is instead evolving according to the evolution of policy-making and society, with decision-makers sometimes becoming experts in a relevant field when needed. The traditional role of the expert is though slowly disappearing, becoming increasingly muted by new and louder voices based more on opinions rather than factual evidence, increasing the risk of misplacing trust and thus leading to a risk of complete distrust for evidence-based opinions by the expertise. The risk is that, in the future, expertise will be more and more ignored in fear of “trusting the wrong expert”, while at the same time experts will not be able to keep up with the quick pace of policy-making and with the highly partisan climate in which evidence comes little into play.