

Discover the DIGICHer project

The DIGICHer - Digitisation of the cultural heritage of minority communities for equity and renewed engagement - project is kicking off in Finland this week. We explore how the project plans to promote equity, inclusion and diversity in the representation of digital cultural content.



<https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/2021009/F920206CC5EF69AF752E9D5E57FC74EC>

About DIGICHer

The respectful preservation and digitisation of heritage from minority groups is a key issue for the cultural sector as artefacts become increasingly available online, and is a topic which the [DIGICHer project](#) seeks to address in its work over the next three years.

DIGICHer will collaborate with representatives from three minority groups, the Sámi, the Jewish and the Ladin people, to design and develop a new and practical framework that promotes equity, inclusion and diversity in the representation of digital cultural content. This will include research into current approaches to the digitisation of cultural heritage, identifying their shortcomings, and developing recommendations for policy makers that focus on enhancing digitising efforts for cultural heritage collections. The legal, political, socio-economic and technological aspects of this challenge will all be considered.

DIGICHer is funded under the [Horizon Europe programme](#) of the European Union, and will run from February 2024 - January 2027. It is led by Vilnius Gediminas Technical University from Lithuania in close collaboration with [partners from around Europe](#). These include, universities, EU level organisations working in cultural heritage, and organisations representing cultural and linguistic minority communities from around Europe.

The project begins

The project's first meeting takes place at the end of March, and is an opportunity for partners to come together and define their approaches for the coming years. The University of Lapland is a significant location for the project's kickoff, as noted in conversation with Rosa Maria Ballardini, Professor of Intellectual Property Law and Vice Dean (research) at the University's Faculty of Law, and Rene Urueña, Professor of Law at the same institution:

'The University of Lapland, located in the city of Rovaniemi, is the northeasternmost university in the European Union, and it is also close to the Sápmi region, traditionally inhabited by the only Indigenous people in the EU: the Sámi. The University of Lapland is a leader in the area of Arctic research and northern change. A considerable part of its research is focused on Indigenous peoples, to achieve solutions for sustainable development. A project kickoff at the University of Lapland highlights DIGICher's commitment to minorities' involvement in the digitisation and usage of their cultural heritage, contributing to a more responsive and democratic cultural sector'.

Excitement for the future and a sense of purpose

DIGICher partners are enthusiastic about embarking on the project. Kristina Kovaitė, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Vice-Dean and project coordinator, and Aelita Skaržauskienė, PhD, Professor, Chief Research Fellow describe how, 'Embarking on this international project fills us with enthusiasm and excitement. It represents not just a new endeavour, but a bridge to connect diverse cultures and ideas. The prospect of spearheading this international initiative gives us a strong sense of purpose, as we envision the possibilities of creating something truly impactful and valuable for society.'

And Milena Popova, Programme & Business Development Manager at the Europeana Foundation, says, 'We see the DigiCher project as a valuable opportunity to work towards a more diverse and inclusive cultural heritage. By collaborating with minority communities and developing a new framework for proper representation of their heritage, the project will help actors in the data space for cultural heritage and the wider heritage sector to enhance their understanding of minority groups' needs; build capacities for inclusive digitisation; and ensure impactful reuse of minority heritage.'

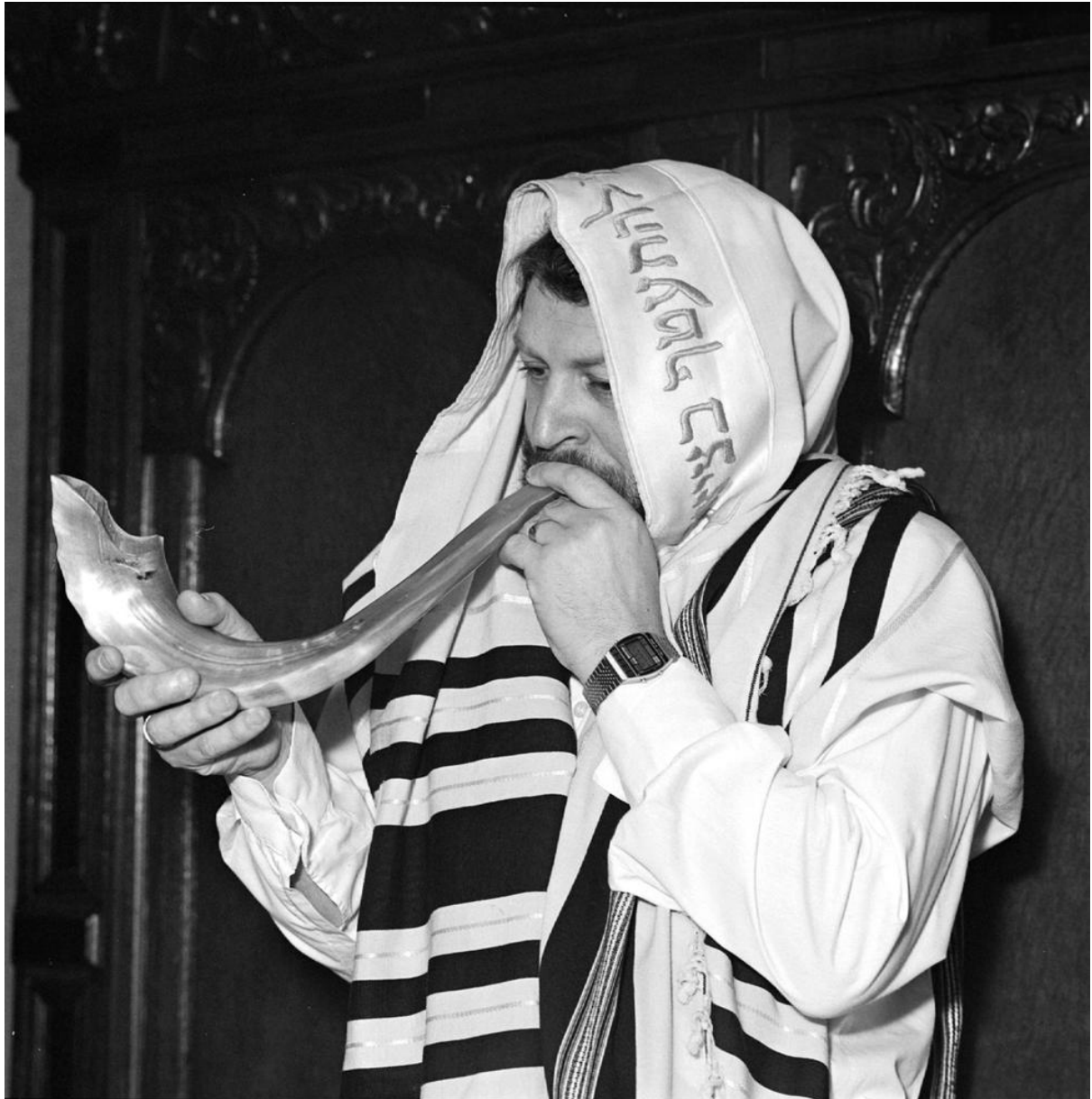


Traditional Ladin costumes of Fassa Valley. In Copyright. Photo by Anton Sessa in the Ladin Calendar 2010. Ladin Cultural Institute. Istitut Cultural Ladin, “majon di fascegn”.

The project will collaborate closely with representatives from the Sámi, the Jewish and the Ladin people, ensuring their direct participation.

Sabrina Rasom, Director of the Ladin Cultural Institute ‘majon di fascegn’ in Fassa Valley, says that the word that she would use to summarise the significance of the Ladin community’s participation in the project is ‘sharing’. ‘Sharing the mission to make digital, cultural and linguistic content available to the communities who experience living as minorities in their daily lives; sharing this content with outsiders without losing its authenticity; and lastly, sharing this European project with academic partners. They will offer their skills to develop a concrete and tailor made system to digitise cultural heritage while ensuring the direct participation of the communities themselves and of their stakeholders.’

Pavel Kats, Executive Director of the Jewish Heritage Network, says, ‘This project is starting in challenging times for Europe: wars and conflicts are raging close to its borders, internal tensions are dangerously high. As often, internal and external crises are triggering a surge in anti-Semitism. To keep its strength and resilience, Europe should be firmly guided by its core values: inclusion, minority rights, the rule of law. DIGICher will be promoting these values with respect to our shared cultural heritage, and the Jewish Heritage Network is proud to be representing the European Jewish community in this timely and vital project.’



https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/270/resource_document_jhm_museum_M002937

Get involved

You can follow project updates on the [DIGICHer webpage](#) and explore news, events and projects related to [diversity and inclusion](#) on Europeana Pro.



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