



European Commission
Attn.: Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager
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Subject: Open letter from Wikimedia on making encyclopaedias fit for the digital age

Dear Executive Vice-President Vestager,

We kindly request a meeting with you to talk about how to ensure that encyclopaedic knowledge can be fit for the digital age.

Encyclopaedias are unfortunately marginalised and under-supported in today's information society. This is particularly unfortunate, as this means their facts and reliable information often remain hidden at a time when Europe is struggling to stem the tide of disinformation, conspiracy theories, and unreliable AI models.

Understanding and making more transparent the environment in which citizens look for and access information is a prerequisite for changing this. We support opening up "black boxes" and ensuring fair competition, something the DSA and DMA already tackle. In fact, the entirety of our content and software is freely licensed and offered for download, so that any other project can re-use them and build upon them. Our hope is that this will make encyclopaedic knowledge more reliable and more accessible.

Another part of the challenge is, that in order to be relevant in today's digital society, to be part of citizens' daily lives, encyclopaedic knowledge needs to be available in certain formats and structures: Information must be linked, structured, multilingual, up to date, reusable and readable by humans and machines. The source also has to earn a strong reputation and popularity amongst users. This has been a consistent focus of our mission for over 20 years. Now, as a result of this hard work, when one searches for "Margrethe Vestager" in Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Web.de and Qwant, Wikipedia is usually among the top search results, along with the European Commission's own website. The Wikimedia Foundation does not have agreements with any of these, that would guarantee their favourable treatment of Wikipedia.

We at Wikimedia are dedicated to making encyclopaedic knowledge and facts part of everyone's daily life. We believe national and specialised knowledge resources are a treasure. They should thrive. We love and rely on national and traditional encyclopaedias. We cite and link to them, whenever possible. We would be thrilled to work together with the European Commission and other encyclopaedias on making all reliable knowledge and cultural resources more visible and part of Europeans' everyday experience. Making reliable public content reusable and providing public funding for traditional encyclopaedias to open up could be part of this effort.

Yours faithfully,

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