

MINUTES OF A ROUND TABLE MEETING ON AUDIO-VISUAL RECORDS  
BRUSSELS, 6-7 APRIL 1981

Present: Christian Castellani (FIAT)  
Anne Hanford (FIAT)  
Friedrich Kahlenberg (ICA)  
Charles Kecskemeti (ICA)  
Wolfgang Klaue (FIAF)  
David Lance (IASA)  
Ed Spruit (IFLA)  
Brigitte Van Der Elst (FIAF)  
A L Van Wesemael (IFLA)  
Carlos Wyffels (ICA)

1 Selection of Chairman and Secretary

After discussion it was agreed that Wolfgang Klaue should take the chair and that David Lance would act as secretary.

2 Purposes of the Meeting

In response to the chairman's invitation Mr Castellani restated the reasons for the meeting, referring to the preliminary discussions held in London and to the papers circulated before and after that preliminary meeting. Mr Castellani stressed the need for the five organisations represented to learn more of each others work and to consider the possibility of developing collaborative projects in areas of mutual interest. He drew attention to established schemes of cooperation - notably between FIAF and FIAT - urged their wider extension and drew attention to various possibilities posed in the working document prepared by FIAT for this meeting.

In regretting UNESCO was not represented, Mr Kecskemeti explained that every effort had been made to secure their attendance. It was agreed that UNESCO should be informed of the deliberations and outcome of the meeting.

3 The Agenda

The agenda was approved. It was also agreed that Mr Kahlenberg's definition of audio-visual records should be accepted for working purposes; namely, all records fixing audio or pictorial (whether moving or still) images and emanating predominantly from the late 19th and the 20th centuries.

4 Presentations by each Organisation Represented

It was agreed that the availability of written documents made elaborate presentations on each organisation unnecessary.

A ICA: Mr Kecskemeti explained that the ICA was concerned with everything relating to archives as such. The emphasis in its activities was placed on public records originating from all levels of the administrations,

but it was also concerned with private and business archives. The development of archives was of special interest and ICA had seven Regional Branches operating in the 3rd World. There were four main categories of membership (national archival administrations, professional associations, archival institutions and individuals) and the national archival administrations of 115 countries belonged to ICA. Archival development, studies and research and the preparation of finding aids represented the three main lines of activity.

The ICA's involvement in the audio-visual field varied from country to country. From the 1960's sound and photographic records had increasingly been deposited in traditional archives though, owing to technical problems, archives were less common dealing with moving image records. Public archives, in particular, widely recognise the importance and quality of audio-visual records as part of the archival heritage. Mr Wyfells added that in several countries radio and television records are statutorily part of the public record resources and, therefore, included in public archive collections.

- B IFLA: Mr Wesemael reported that IFLA was a non-governmental body with over a thousand members in more than one hundred countries, who were mainly association or institutional members. In addition to its headquarters at The Hague, IFLA had regional centres for Asia, Africa and Latin-America, which were mainly responsible for the organisation of its work within the 3rd World. Additionally there was the UBC office in London. Cataloguing was an area of main interest and development in IFLA and the universal availability of publications a major current concern. IFLA is a grade A UNESCO affiliate and has close relations, as well as joint programmes, with the ICA.

Within IFLA audio-visual activities are centralised in an Audio-visual Branch which is responsible for the establishment and application of library standards for all such materials. The Federation has a special interest in the use of audio-visual records for library training in 3rd World countries and is also concerned with legal deposit laws which, in some countries, make libraries responsible for the preservation of audio-visual materials.

- C FIAT: Mrs Hanford explained that FIAT was formed in 1977 by archivists in broadcasting organisations to fill a gap which was felt to exist in the established international bodies. Its work was mainly carried out by specialised commissions dealing with particular fields such as, for example, selection, preservation, cataloguing and exchange.

As regards membership, Mr Castellani explained that FIAT was originally conceived as an association of television organisations. FIAT was currently considering, however, extending its membership to include all collecting centres which are responsible for TV material as archives. The Association's main roles are to act as a pressure group to encourage the preservation of TV materials and to foster the improvement of services provided by TV archives to their users.

- D IASA: David Lance informed the meeting that IASA was concerned with all aspects of sound archive work and included all categories of institutions and individuals that were engaged in the preservation of sound documents. It was, thus, a multi-disciplinary and a multi-institutional association, whose interests included the use of sound recordings as well as their collection, conservation and organisation. The Association's membership amounted to nearly three hundred of whom approximately two thirds were institutional members and one third individual. It was a UNESCO affiliated body and had two major structural characteristics. First, its main activities were undertaken by a series of specialist committees dealing, for example, with copyright, cataloguing, technical and training matters. Secondly, it contained a series of national branches which were responsible for regional activities. In addition to international and national conferences, occasional specialist meetings were sponsored and publications included both a journal, published three times a year, and several special publications. A collaborative publication with UNESCO on the planning, organisation and management of sound archives was in hand and a manual on technical and preservation matters would shortly be offered to UNESCO.
- E FIAF: Mr Klaue said that FIAF had been formed in 1938 and is today an association concerned with film both as historical document and as an expression of art. Covering 47 countries the membership was divided into full and observer categories. Membership was primarily of national film bodies but regional or specialised archives were also eligible. FIAF had four main branches of activity: collection, preservation, cataloguing and use. There were annual conferences and symposia devoted to special themes and publications on such topics as preservation, cataloguing and EDP systems. The international index to film periodicals, a handbook on film archive methods and a regular newsletter were also published by FIAF. Other activities include the exchange of films and film programmes for theatres. A wide variety of different types of collecting institutions were included among FIAF's membership and the Association was financed solely from member and observer subscriptions.
- F ICA (continued) : Mr Kecskemeti added that the ICA had approximately 800 members, published a yearly journal and a variety of other specialised publications and was engaged on projects dealing with such matters as finding aids, international standards and guidelines, micro-filming, access, legal problems, etc.

## 5 Schemes for Cooperation - Approach to Discussion

At the chairman's suggestion it was agreed to make the working document the basis for discussion and to go through it point by point. At the end of this process the meeting would attempt to compile a short list of the most important schemes where cooperation was most badly needed. Mr Klaue also invited additions to the working document.

At Mr Kahlenberg's suggestion it was agreed to add the subject of "access to audio-visual archives for research purposes" as item E3. Indexing was incorporated into item B2 at Mr Wesemael's request. As item F the question of public and scholarly awareness of audio-visual archives was also included. On a point of clarification it was agreed that C2 should be taken to include the standardization of formats.

## 6 Exchange of Information

The chairman stressed the importance of improving communications as an essential basis for cooperative work and suggested this should include exchanging such materials as journals, annual reports, lists of members, special publications and details of current projects. Representatives should also be invited to attend all conferences and symposia. Exchanges should be made on a regular basis, perhaps yearly.

As a practical means of coordinating exchange and cooperative work, Mr Lance suggested that each organisation should nominate a member as its international liaison officer, to send and receive, digest and disseminate information. Such an officer might also ensure the attendance of specialist members at future meetings where matters of a technical nature were under consideration. It was generally agreed that such a mechanism would be useful, facilitating the kind of selection necessary for a meaningful exchange of information once areas of cooperation had been agreed.

On behalf of the ICA, Mr Kecskemeti offered to publish information on available publications and projects currently in hand within any of the organisations represented. Mr Kecskemeti suggested that a formal statement of the common willingness to cooperate on audio-visual matters would be useful and that round table meetings should be held on a regular, perhaps yearly, basis.

## 7 Themes of Cooperation (numbered in accordance with the FIAT working document)

(A) 1 Relations between different types of collecting institutions  
This item was defined as meaning: to provide information about the links which exist in different countries between different kinds of institutions collecting audio-visual records. As it was agreed that such links were often poor and such information was frequently not available, this project would have as one aim the public exposure of these problems. This might be furthered by selecting a few countries as a sample for a study. If such a project was endorsed by the executives of the five organisations, it was agreed that a short list of three or four countries should be chosen for study and an application be made to UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Division to fund the project. If it was approved then each association should prepare a list of the problems in its field and of the kind of information which such a study should seek to elicit. Among the countries suggested for study were Argentine, Canada and the German Federal Republic. The study should include questions relating to such major activities as conservation, for example.

(A) 2 Method of selection  
As a means of implementing cooperation, Mr Kecskemeti suggested that the ICA's existing project on the selection of moving images and related records, which is being supported by UNESCO's General Information Programme, might be submitted for comments to the other organisations present. Mr Lance offered to extend IASA's scheduled conference session on selection to cover all audio-visual records. Mr Castellani preferred an exchange of papers on selection as a first step with the mode of cooperation to be agreed subsequently. Further discussion was inconclusive.

(B) 1

Minimum data lists

It was generally agreed that "lists of essential terms" would be a more fruitful approach than endeavours to establish minimum terms. Mr Wesemael undertook to circulate information relating to IFLA's work on essential data terms and Mr Klaue agreed to draft a project which, after reactions from the other bodies, might be presented to UNESCO for funding as a joint project. Mr Castellani preferred a meeting among the documentation specialists of each organisation to take place before any other action was taken. Eventually it was decided that Mr Wesemael would take informal soundings with the Norms and Standards Office of UNESCO about supporting such a project.

Discussion on item B of the working document concluded at this point.

(C) 1

Systems of storage and management of holdings

Each association reported that some work had been done in this field but that in no case did formal standards exist. It was felt that an exchange of information should take place before any specific schemes for cooperation were further discussed. Mr Kecskemeti reported that ICA expected to start developing, in cooperation with UNESCO/PCI, guidelines for archive buildings next year. The other organisations may be consulted on these guidelines.

(C) 2

Technical studies on archival media

It was generally felt that the groups represented were unlikely to be able to influence manufacturers to produce base materials to archival standards but that a combined approach of the five associations to one manufacturer might be worthwhile. It was agreed that a meeting among technical specialists was essential in this area and that, as a beginning, they should list the particular problems which each association faced. If this course was approved, it was agreed that FIAT should be responsible for the preparation of a later meeting.

(C) 3

Textual material relating to audio-visual records

It was generally agreed that supporting documentation related to the audio-visual records deposited in archives is frequently inadequate for the needs of proper catalogue description. Mr Kahlenberg and Mr Wyffels felt that this deficiency should be made more widely known. It was agreed this subject should be noted and taken up for discussion at a future round table meeting.

(D) 1

Training

Training courses, seminars or the placement in advanced archives of individuals from 3rd World countries was a matter of general concern and Mr Kecskemeti offered to advertise all such available programmes among ICA member countries. Mr Lance felt that training was perhaps the single most important field for cooperation and stressed the importance of general audio-visual training, since few countries offered career structures for any one A-V medium. Such training was felt to be generally needed, in developed as well as 3rd World countries. As a basis for developing a general course, Mr Klaue offered to circulate details of training programmes developed by FIAF. It was also agreed that each organisation would send information about work being

done in the teaching field to Mr Klaue with a view to FIAF preparing proposals for an extended course on audio-visual archives. More specialised courses might best be left in the hands of the individual associations.

This concluded discussion on item D.

- (E) 1 General register of audio-visual archives  
It was agreed that those associations which had published directories would circulate copies of the questionnaires they had used and the question of a general directory brought forward a future round table meeting. Mr Wesemael agreed to ask whether the Council on Library sources would be willing to support such a project.
- (E) 2 Specialised finding aids  
This subject was interpreted as specialised finding aids, such as catalogues on particular topics (eg audio-visual records relating to the Second World War). All organisations agreed such publications would be extremely valuable but that there were severe practical obstacles to their production among which would be the need for substantial financial support. It was felt that such projects were too ambitious for the present, though it might be possible to add audio-visual records to some established work (such as the ICA/UNESCO series of Guides to the History of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania).
- (E) 3 Access to archives for research purposes  
Discussion focussed primarily on the problems of access to broadcasting archives. It was agreed that this was a long standing and recurrent problem, the solution of which was primarily dependent on national legislation rather than international recommendations. It might be useful for the five organisations to exchange information on their various experiences and, after identifying the major problems, approach UNESCO regarding an international survey to clarify the legal situation. Each association might also draw UNESCO's Belgrade recommendation to the attention of its members. However, there was no support for Mr Kahlenberg's suggestion that the organisations present should make specific recommendations to their members and FIAT, in particular, was reluctant to include these issues in the group's programme.
- (F) 1 Public and scholarly awareness of audio-visual archives  
The Chairman felt it would be useful to inform the members of each association of UNESCO's recommendation for the safeguarding and preservation of moving images. Copies of the text were circulated at the meeting. The question of scholarly awareness was felt to have been adequately discussed under item (E)3.

## 8 General Discussion and Conclusions

The Chairman observed that it was not possible at this stage for the group to take any decisions, since the content of its discussions would need to be reported to the executives of each organisation. In reviewing the minutes of the meeting the following points were agreed:

- (A) The IFLA and ICA secretariats should be included in the distribution list for papers arising from this and any future meetings.

- (B) France should be included in the sample study referred to under point 7(A)1. The selection of a 3rd World country could be deferred but Algeria, Argentine and Malaysia were among the possibilities. It was also agreed that FIAF, in view of its close relations with Cultural Heritage, was the most suitable potential organiser of such a study.
- (C) The future course of action was discussed. It was decided that Mr Lance should circulate a draft of the round table minutes and after receiving comments, prepare and distribute a final paper. The minutes should then be submitted to the executives of the five bodies and the areas for possible cooperation agreed. The working programme then could be drawn up at a future round table meeting when the allocation of tasks and approaches to UNESCO should also be settled.
- (D) As regards a timetable, it was accepted that discussion of the programme to be adopted could not be achieved by all the executives before September 1981. The five organisations would, therefore, endeavour to present their formal reactions during October. The likely venue for a second round table meeting is Paris.

9 Vote of Thanks

Mr Wyffels was warmly thanked for the outstanding hospitality which the Royal Archives had provided and the meeting was closed.