

## **CIDOC 2013 Chair's Report**

Nicholas Crofts  
CIDOC Chair

August 2013

2013 has been a tumultuous year for ICOM. In April, Hans-Martin Hinz wrote to committee chairs informing them that the Director General, Julien Anfruns and the Head of Finances, Lydie Spaczynski, had both been dismissed, saying that "Serious misconduct has taken place in the secretariat". Dissatisfaction with the management of the secretariat had been brewing for some time, due in part to a harsh 'hire and fire' policy, resulting in unusually high levels of staff turnover, but also because of the high-handed attitude of some staff members, the imposition rigid new financial arrangements, and misleading statements about the legal status of International Committees, all combined with disproportionate expenditure by the DG on travel and personal expenses.

Following the dismissals, Hanna Pennock, a member of the Executive Council, was appointed as acting Director General and an enquiry into working conditions was carried out by the labour inspector of the French Ministère du Travail.

### **ICOM Banking facilities**

The financial arrangements for ICOM ICs are of particular concern to CIDOC. We were one of the first ICs to take up the offer of centralised banking services in Paris. The system proved acceptable until it became clear that payments and other transactions agreed by the CIDOC board were being put into question and seriously delayed by the Head of Finances. This interference jeopardised the organisation of the CIDOC Summer School and caused serious inconvenience to beneficiaries of Getty bursaries for the Helsinki conference when funds, already received from the Foundation, remained blocked in Paris. Fortunately we were able to avoid an otherwise catastrophic situation thanks to the help of the Finnish Board of Antiquities who, at short notice, very generously lent us the amount needed. The Getty funds were not released until several months after the end of the conference! Fortunately, our working relationship with Paris now seems to have returned to normal.

### **Legal status of International Committees**

The Legal Status of ICOM's International Committees is also under review. Until recently, the official position has always been that the ICs cannot be considered as legal entities. As such they cannot enter into contractual arrangements, pay employees, open bank accounts, undertake fundraising activities, etc., except as subsidiaries of ICOM. Many of the ICs operate successfully within this framework, but it has become increasingly restrictive for CIDOC and other ICs who are seeking to develop the scope of their activities and professionalise the organisation. On close examination, it appears that the obstacles to legal status are not as insurmountable as the previous DG had maintained. A revision of the ICOM statutes would help to clarify the position and enable International Committees to obtain legal status should they wish to do so. We welcome this opportunity which we will study in detail to see how CIDOC might benefit.

From a broader perspective, the dramatic changes at the ICOM secretariat have underlined the need for greater transparency and improved governance, to ensure that the secretariat remains in the service of ICOM – taking care of the day-to-day running of the organisation and providing services to its members. ICOM's governing bodies, the Executive Council and the General Assembly, must ensure that the secretariat operates legally and ethically, in accordance with ICOM policy and decisions.

### **CIDOC 2013 Rio de Janeiro**

This year's annual CIDOC conference took place Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the ICOM triennial conference, August 10-17. The theme of the general conference took the form of an equation *Museums (memory + creativity = social change)*. Around 70 delegates registered to attend the CIDOC events. In accordance with decisions taken at last year's AGM in Helsinki we adopted a new approach to the ICOM triennial conference – concentrating on networking and cooperation with other International Committees, building on the good relations we have with our colleagues in related fields and hoping to establish new alliances. We contributed to two days of joint events – one in conjunction with ICMS and COSTUME, at the Museum of the Republic in the centre of Rio, the other with ICOFOM and ICTOP. We also maintained an information “booth” during the Rio conference so that potential members could find out more about what we do. During the run up to the conference we organised a full week of training workshops in São Paulo, which was generously supported by the state of São Paulo and the Pinacoteca. Photographs and comments about the events can be found on the CIDOC website and on facebook page CIDOC Events..

### **CIDOC Summer School 2013**

Building on the success of the 2011 and 2012 sessions, CIDOC organized a third Summer School in 2013, focusing on the principles and practice of museum documentation. The programme is organised in collaboration with the Museum of Texas Tech University (MoTTU). In all, thirteen participants (including 3 volunteers) attended the 2013 CIDOC Summer School that took place from July 7 –12 on the MoTTU campus: 5 from Qatar, 4 from the USA, 3 from Egypt, and 1 from Mexico. This third edition focused exclusively on the eight foundation modules. For the first time, the Summer School managed to break even, covering its operating costs. Our thanks again go to the executive director of MoTTU, Dr Eileen Johnson, for welcoming the Summer School to Lubbock and for generously providing staff, facilities and other services, without which the event would not be possible. MoTTU has agreed to host another session in 2014.

### **Plans for 2014**

As I write, preparations are under way for the 2014 CIDOC conference, which will take place in Dresden, Germany September 6-11. The CIDOC board will be meeting there early in 2014 to assist with planning. Mark the date and keep a look out for further information on the CIDOC website.

### **Standards and principles**

A Resolution approving the CIDOC *Statement of Principles of museum Documentation* was passed at the 2013 ICOM General Assembly in Rio, establishing formal acceptance by ICOM. Congratulations go to the authors and all those who contributed to the document. This resolution is a milestone for CIDOC and clearly underlines the importance of museum documentation for ICOM as a whole.

We had also been hoping to have a similar resolution passed concerning the *Statement on Linked Data identifiers for museum objects*; however, the resolution committee recommended that we withdraw the proposal as they believed there was a strong possibility that it would be not accepted by the General Assembly. The document was accepted by CIDOC in 2012.

In addition, one of CIDOC's founding documents is finally available in French, eighteen years after the originally edition! The *International Guidelines for Museum Object Information: The CIDOC Information Categories*,<sup>1</sup> were first published in 1995 and distributed in printed form, accompanied by a 3¼ inch floppy disk, during the ICOM triennial conference in Stavanger. I still have my original copy, now tattered from constant use. No further printed copies were produced, but in electronic form the document has become a standard reference. It is often cited in scientific writing and is one of the fundamental texts used in museology courses throughout the world. Its importance was further multiplied when it was used as the basis for the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model. The longevity of the document is a testament to the collective experience and clarity of vision of the authors.

Both the Statement of Principles and the Guidelines have been translated into Portuguese, to be published in conjunction with the ICOM triennial conference in Rio de Janeiro.

### **CIDOC Newsletter/Bulletin**

A conference edition of the CIDOC newsletter, containing selected papers from the 2012 conference in Helsinki, was distributed in Rio. Following the CIDOC board elections, a new editor, Emmanuelle Delmas-Glass, takes over from Frances Lloyd Baynes. Our thanks go to both of them.

Nicholas Crofts  
CIDOC Chair

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<sup>1</sup> Recommandations Internationales pour la documentation des objets muséaux, 1995  
[http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user\\_upload/minisites/cidoc/DocStandards/CIDOCRecommandations1995FR.pdf](http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/cidoc/DocStandards/CIDOCRecommandations1995FR.pdf)