

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Paris, 5 - 6 November 1993

Present

Robert DAUDELIN
Eva ORBANZ
Clyde JEAUVONS

President
Secretary General
Treasurer

Members

Hoos BLOTKAMP
José Manuel COSTA
Jan-Christopher HORAK
Jorge NIETO
Vladimir OPELA
José Maria PRADO
Guy-Claude ROCHEMONT
Steven RICCI
Roger SMITHER
Ivan TRUJILLO BOLIO

Commission Heads *

Joao BENARD DA COSTA

Commission for Programming
and Access to Collections
Cataloguing Commission
Preservation Commission

Harriet HARRISON
Henning SCHOU

* only from November 5 on 14.00

Honorary Member

Harold Brown
Wolfgang Klaue

Secretariat

Brigitte VAN DER ELST

Executive Secretary

Excused

Ronald MAGLIOZZI

Head of Documentation
Commission

MINUTES OF THE EC MEETING IN PARIS / 5 - 6 NOVEMBER 1993

The first session of this meeting was held in the presence of the elected members of the EC only.

After a word of welcome by Dominique Païni, director of the Cinémathèque Française and host of our meeting, the President, Robert Daudelin introduced the debate. He underlined that total liberty of speech should be the rule and that the responsibility of the debate remained with the group who had prepared it, i.e. José-Manuel Costa, José-Maria Prado and Hoos Blotkamp.

Referring to the numerous and interesting papers they had received from most of the EC members, J-M. Costa said that most of the mentioned problems came to a few main issues:

- the identity of FIAF's membership
- the accessibility to the collections (are we dealing with this correctly?)
- the nature and size of FIAF (more members, different kinds of members?)

These essential questions could take years to be solved but we should aim for the Centennial deadline.

They also needed a strong basic structure of the Federation (General Assembly, Executive Committee, Commissions, Secretariat, Congresses...) and this is why the group proposed to limit the agenda of today's meeting to the only questions related to FIAF's structure. The big issues of membership should be discussed at a later stage when the structure and the governing bodies of FIAF have been clearly defined and strengthened. This approach was supported by Chris Horak.

H. Blotkamp explained their reasons for holding this first part of the EC meeting with "elected" members only. The "group", after reading some of the papers, felt there was obviously a problem of communication between the EC and the Commissions. They thought it was a question of "leadership" of the EC rather than "power".

A general discussion followed on the work of :

- a) the Executive Committee
- b) the Commissions

Clyde Jeavons recalled that no power authority had ever been used in the EC, but it was worth discussing whether this was effective. Perhaps the time had come to shrug off some of our amateurism and make a few changes in our work habits. Roger Smither also felt that FIAF lacked a policy-making body. As the GA was difficult to galvanize to exert this right, the EC should be entrusted with this task.

C.J. felt that "better efficiency" had to do with better geographical representation, specialized groups of archives, etc... Economics was a major factor in this issue. To appoint a senior Administrator at the Secretariat might alleviate several of the above problems, also in taking some of the burden off the EC members' shoulders. Both R. Daudelin and E. Orbanz agreed on this: the officers in the EC were willing to do more for FIAF but simply did not have the time nor the means.

C. Horak agreed that the elected EC must have an executive function and not only an advisory role. He endorsed W. Klaue's suggestion to divide the tasks among all EC members.

Jorge Nieto felt there was a confrontation between an "ideal" and a "feasible" FIAF. We should try to be highly practical and economical in order to be able to help individual archives rather than search for the ideal structure.

Speaking on Commissions, S. Ricci hoped one could find a way to make them more representative geographically and profession-wise. We must recognize that their work is voluntary and be thankful for that, but also support them with more "interest" and active guidance.

GC Rochemont fully supported this statement. C. Jeavons felt they were underbriefed and undermonitored by the EC, but this was probably the EC's fault.

For R. Smither, the problem of "lack of communication" with the Commissions was a phoney issue. The Heads of Commissions regularly reported both to the EC and the GA, but the response was almost total silence from both bodies. Their 2d role was to extend the constituency of FIAF: they represented vital professional skills and the membership should be aware of this perspective. We should continue to invite them to attend EC meetings but perhaps not the whole meeting. V. Opela entirely agreed with R. Smither.

E. Orbanz also saw no reason to exclude the Heads of Commissions from EC meetings, on the contrary. As for the Honorary Members, whilst acknowledging their great experience and the services they might still render to the Federation, she said that most of their letters referred to the fact that they had lost contact with our work. We should do everything in our power to have them participate in our work and our meetings.

C. Jeavons agreed we should be open to voluntary participation and work on their part, in special tasks that would fit their individual skills, but not impose an active role on them.

For reasons of efficiency and better functioning of the meetings, the following Recommendation was finally passed (by 10 votes for and 3 votes against): "The Executive Committee shall separate its function as a decision making body and an instrument of communication by holding separately sessions of elected members only and meetings of a wider group including Honorary Members and Presidents of Commissions."

After lunch, the EC members were joined by Henning Schou, Harriet Harrison (Heads of Commissions), Harold Brown and Wolfgang Klaue (Honorary Members).

The President summarized the discussion of this same morning and asked for comments on the part of

1° Honorary Members

J.M. Costa repeated his suggestions to entrust the Honorary members with tasks such as:

- representing FIAF in some international forums (e.g. Unesco), not for active participation but to affirm our existence and the necessity of AV preservation;
- to present papers on film archiving at some important conferences, on behalf of FIAF;
- participation in FIAF's annual Symposia to present the experience of the past. Etc...

H. Schou having underlined that Harold Brown was already more than active in the Preservation Commission, W. Klaue responded to J.M. Costa's suggestions with the need to be realistic and remember that Hon. Members were not anymore in close contact with the daily life of the Federation and therefore could not represent it very usefully. As for participating in Symposia, it would be difficult for most of the Honorary Members as they did not dispose of the backing and logistics of their institution anymore.

H. Brown added that, as regarded his particular field of expertise, he did not see the use of sitting at administrative meetings but he could still be helpful by giving advice through the mail or other writings if needed. Based on this discussion, Ms Blotkamp said the group would try to come up with suggestions on how to take advantage in the future of the great experience of our seven present Honorary Members, for the benefit of FIAF.

2° Commissions Heads

Both H. Schou and H. Harrison agreed that they would like to see the work of their Commission expanded geographically and covering the various types of archives that exist, but there were limitations to a larger membership for the Commissions both in the Rules and for economic reasons. Corresponding membership was interesting but had its limits too, especially when there were no deadlines of actual meetings to motivate their work for the Commission. R. Daudelin recalled that the notion of corresponding membership had also been evoked as a way of solving the problem of a wider geographical representation.

C. Jeavons insisted on the consultancy role that FIAF Commissions should play. We are the experts in the archive field and yet we do not advise new archival institutions enough. He thought that the financial problem was not a real problem. Finally, he wondered whether a new Commission on Training would not be useful.

W. Klaue said FIAF had always expected from its Commissions to compile specialized information in their field and to spread this knowledge around the membership. This second role is not entirely fulfilled. He did not think new Commissions were a solution but perhaps one could think of other ways, e.g; "working-groups" put together for a limited period of time and for a definite task. He again recalled that Commissions' activities were based on available unpaid human resources, not so easy to find. Perhaps they had a tendency to start too many projects at a time which consequently took time to complete, but this is where some guidance of the EC would be useful. Therefore it was necessary that regular contacts with the EC be foreseen in the Rules, and not only to discuss their particular field. Commission Heads must also be kept aware of the general policy of the Federation.

Referring to Rule 77 (Heads of Commissions should formulate programs of activities), Jorge Nieto felt that the membership should be consulted on priorities for these programs, taking into consideration the needs of all the archives, including developing archives. Ivan Trujillo also raised the problem of the participation of archive staff (other than curators) in the specialized workshops at annual Congresses.

C. Jeavons thought that the Commissions, whilst very active, were perhaps too much "project-based" and not enough "issue-based". There should be more debate on general issues and this debate could be generated by the Commissions themselves, not only by the EC.

Eva Orbanz agreed that, whilst it had already started, a new more concrete trend in the activities and reports of the Commissions should be encouraged: e.g. greater participation in the Symposia, better contacts with the "industry" and the publication of practical rules...

On the issue of consultancy, Harold Brown said that the Commissions very rarely had a call from the people who needed their help. How could the archives be prompted to express what they expected from the Commissions?

Following V. Opela, an obstacle to greater participation from the membership was that Commissions had reached such level of expertise that it was difficult for ordinary staff members of the archives to contribute to their work. Roger Smither added that the people attending General Assemblies or the EC meetings were not the right people to be alert to what the Commissions are about. The General Assemblies are on the whole a gathering of curators; the Commissions seek beyond that to communicate with the specialized staff in the archives. Perhaps there is no solution to this problem, even by organizing workshops at Congresses since these staff members don't come to Congresses.

To fill in vacancies in the Commissions' membership is another problem since so many conditions are required: a certain level of expertise, the ability to work fluently in one or two languages, an archive sufficiently tolerant to allow you the time to work for FIAF and with enough money to finance your travelling to the meetings, plus a curator who will allow comparatively junior staff to take part in FIAF activities (to have a slice of the FIAF cake!) which they sometimes reserve to themselves.

H. Harrison said it was a good idea to limit the number of projects but some of them nevertheless required a lot of time to complete because they needed the cooperation of all members who very often failed to respond.

To answer the suggestion of C. Jeavons to merge the Commissions of Cataloguing and Documentation, she proposed to have once and for all a real debate on this question. She would also welcome the help of external consultancy for some of the Commission's projects.

G. Rochemont would like to see more contacts between the FIAF Commissions and the outside world, the non-film world, the other arts.

Wolfgang Klaue thought one should keep the structure of the Commissions as they are now. The actual trend goes towards better specialization rather than integration. He reiterated his suggestion to establish "working-groups" for limited terms of reference, e.g. Training - Legal matters - Filmmuseums - Philosophy of film archiving (Ray Edmondson's project). He also favored the commissioning of external help for some of the projects.

Hoos Blotkamp suggested to make an inventory of all professional issues that have to be dealt with in FIAF and follow them up by either entrusting them to some Commission or working group, perhaps to an outside consultant or even to one special expert in FIAF. The solution could also simply be conveyed from the experience of another professional body.

J.M. Costa stressed the necessity for the Commissions to complement each other and therefore to exchange minutes and programs as much as possible. He also advocated joint meetings of the Heads of Commissions.

About the Commission's program, he felt it was wrong to discuss the projects one by one but would prefer general discussions at General Assemblies on the whole program and target of each Commission.

J.M. Prado supported this point of view and insisted on the importance to distribute reports and documentation to the membership well in advance of Congresses where they would be discussed.

To conclude, Hoos Blotkamp suggested that a small group should prepare a paper on this topic for the next EC meeting in April, including analysis of the present Commissions' program and achievements, proposals for priorities, etc... The group should be external to the actual Commissions. It was finally reduced to two persons for the preliminary analysis: Hoos Blotkamp and Brigitte van der Elst. The second phase should consist of an inquiry among the membership, a gathering of opinions among the staff of the FIAF archives who benefit from the Commissions' projects, to know what their reaction is to the hard work done until now by these Commissions. Would they have suggestions for different more useful projects? Another approach, etc...? Maybe this is an impossible task but it should be tried.

4. FIAF Congresses

Summarizing the group's analysis of the members' papers on that topic, J.M. Costa introduced the debate by saying that they were all concerned about the lack of participation of the delegates in FIAF Congresses. It seems to derive mainly from insufficient preparation and maybe wrong presentation

of the topics to debate; also the information comes in too late before Congresses.

Secondly, when a decision has to be taken by the General Assembly, it should be presented more clearly and the EC should put forward its own position on the topic.

On Symposia: the two main problems seem to be their organization and the choice of topics.

Their organization should start at least 2 or 3 years in advance and proceed by stages: e.g. several stages of production of papers and discussions, preparatory meetings on a regional level or other partial groupings producing intermediate papers.

As for the topics, they should be very broad and encompass the participation of all the Commissions. Very specialized meetings should not be the subject of Symposia but rather of workshops, summer schools, etc..

The "group" wanted to make a concrete proposal: to hold annual Congresses but General Assemblies only every second year and one or two Symposia every year.

I. Trujillo and Ch. Horak did not see any inconvenience in keeping a GA every year as long as it was well organized and perhaps shorter. W. Klaue added that a GA every second year would imply more power given to the EC, e.g. for incorporating new members. H. Blotkamp saw no problem in doing this.

C. Jeavons also felt it was useful to keep an annual GA, much better prepared. He even advocated a "Congress organising sub-committee", involving the host, the Secretariat, a few chief Executives, perhaps Heads of Commissions or some ad-hoc key people, with central coordination by a paid senior administrator, as already suggested for the Secretariat. Too much time is used during GAs for reports which could be done in writing well in advance. This area could then be subject to intense accountability on key questions which would have been extracted in advance and posed at the GA instead of our rather unfocused and unprepared Open Forums. Professionalism was also absolutely essential for the Symposia, as well as more external participation.

JM Costa agreed but felt that the main problem was to change the spirit of our Congresses. Make the Symposia a concern for all delegates like the GA is and not make such a cut between the two events.

Speaking of membership issues, he also felt that as FIAF was growing fast, it was not possible anymore to give the responsibility of voting on all these administrative matters to the whole General Assembly. This should be the task of the EC.

S. Ricci suggested that the FIAF Journal be supplemented by a regular Newsletter on FIAF organizational matters and planning of GAs and Symposia.

R. Smither wanted that some space be retained at our General Assemblies for improvisation and spontaneity. Open Forums should not necessarily be a shamble.

Ch. Horak felt that Symposia should not be left wholly in the hands of the host archives (But S. Ricci insisted on leaving some responsibility to the host archive to develop topics that interested them). A planning group was essential. Film screenings as well. And a "call" for papers rather than an invitation to participate should be made.

E. Orbanz agreed with the above ideas. They were not all new, but the reason why they were not enforced was often the lack of cooperation from the membership and of financial means: one had to pay expert-speakers to come to our Symposia.

W. Klaue thought we could never organize Symposia which will interest and satisfy every Member. From experience he could tell that the success of a Symposium did not depend so much from the general organization as from its theme. We should look for topics with a wide-interest range and this was difficult to find every year, let alone two per year. The lack of response from our membership is frustrating but we have to face reality, even with the best intentions. He also suggested to examine the ways of other international organisations, similar to FIAF, in organizing their Congresses in order to pick out some interesting solutions.

J. Benard da Costa joined the meeting at this point.

C. Jeavons described the FIAT model for their Congresses. He agreed with W. Klaue that some flexibility and freedom should be retained for the organization of our Congress even if it is done by an appointed organizer and that enough leeway should be given to the host, while FIAF support is given where needed.

J.M. Costa suggested some themes for FIAF Symposia:

- Film museums: this should be a basic issue for all the archives and not only a theme for workshops.
- Legal problems
- The special field of each Commission should not be a topic for Symposia, but perhaps another type of meeting such as the Joint Technical Symposium in the case of Preservation; however it would be interesting to discuss the interrelations between those Commissions, e.g. the

point of convergence between Cataloguing, Documentation and Programming. H. Blotkamp very much supported this approach.

V. Opela underlined that some topics of Symposia would be unattractive to the general membership but still very important for our work. Therefore we should study them and even attract some specialists from outside FIAF.

On the periodicity of General Assemblies, R. Daudelin felt it was important to have at least a short GA every year otherwise some members might take this as a pretext not to attend the annual Symposium. For this reason and several others already enumerated, R. Daudelin, W. Klaue and J.M. Costa made the following proposal: to hold a 2days GA + election every second year and 1day GA the year in between. More responsibilities should then be given to the EC as concerns: admission of members, finances (except for membership fees' issues), and a few other administrative matters. ChH however said one should be cautious not to take away too much power from the GA. This idea had already been rejected by the GA at the Havana Congress in 1990. Democracy was a touchy business that should be fully respected.

J. Benard da Costa, E. Orbanz and R. Smither agreed with this argument, especially as concerned membership questions; the fact that the delegates did not use their rights to discuss or veto the EC's proposals should not mean we take these rights away from them. H. Blotkamp thought the solution here was to find a balance between total democracy and efficiency in our work. We could combine more responsibility for the EC with openness and transparency towards the GA. No question from the GA should ever remain unanswered.

R. Smither also favored Ivan Trujillo's idea of "poster" sessions for the usual administrative reports. By this he meant that such reports, with full details, be "posted" during the Congresses in a place where everyone could read them and that at some definite times, Heads of Commissions or some of their members would be available to answer possible questions from interested delegates. One could complement these with workshops if needed.

After W. Klaue had recalled the duties and tasks of the GA, as described in art. 14 of the Statutes, it was decided that, together with S. Ricci, he would make some suggestions on the structure of future General Assemblies. S. Ricci would furthermore prepare a working document on this matter for the meeting in Bologna.

5. Role and tasks of the Executive Secretariat

H. Blotkamp introduced the topic. She said the Secretariat was perhaps the strongest instrument of FIAF since it was permanent and located in one permanent place. It is an executive body which carries out the instructions of the GA and the EC. The question then is: what should the GA and the EC expect from the Secretariat? How could this tool be reinforced and utilized at best?

After B. van der Elst had explained in details how the Secretariat was functioning at present, Ch. Horak asked the Treasurer how realistic it was, budget-wise, to hire a full-time senior Administrator to undertake all the tasks that had been evoked since the beginning of this EC meeting, and probably some others.

C. Jeavons thought the problem was not insurmountable: the function should be considered as almost self-supporting in the sense that those new activities might generate more income for the Federation, and there were other funding strategies that could be used for this minor increase to the budget. He also insisted that this new job was not meant to replace the honorary functions of FIAF's present officers. Those were still very necessary for general monitoring and wider policy decisions. He proposed, with B. van der Elst, to draft a job description with a quite specific brief for the full-time post he had in mind: to think ambitiously and not be scared of raising the level of work.

E.Orbanz and J.M. Costa insisted that the whole question should be examined in the wider context of FIAF's professionalization and see what were the other services that archives were willing to pay for.

Ch. Horak added that, if the decision to hire a Senior Administrator was made, the relationship of this person with the other bodies of the Federation, his duties and rights, would have to be defined and incorporated into Statutes and Rules since it would mean quite a change in the functioning of FIAF.

It was decided that C. Jeavons and B. van der Elst would draft a tentative job description including all the possible tasks which might improve the professionalism of the Federation and the services to its affiliates. This model would be presented for assesment at the next EC meeting.

6. Follow-up

JM. Costa posed the problem: How do we go on from here and tackle the real important discussion on the bigger issues lying in front of us: - Identity of FIAF and its membership
- Accessibility
- Nature and size of FIAF.

How will the decisions made during the last two days on the structure of the Federation affect the very next General Assemblies and Symposia? How do we involve the General Assembly in this discussion?

S. Ricci, supported by H. Blotkamp, suggested to have a special session at the General Asssembly of Bologna in which some EC members would provoke a debate on all these questions: the future of the Federation. This first debate could then generate a more formal structure and intermediate papers to prepare the Los Angeles Symposium where those big issues would be shaped into very concrete proposals.

C. Jeavons underlined that only relatively small adjustments to our structure were necessary to be able to go forward; he proposed to convert the Open Forum at the GA in a presentation session with a menu of topics and questions arising from our discussion here (e.g. style of future membership, matters of finances, technological future of the moving image, etc...), not to expect a full debate at that meeting but to get people's minds working and obtain concrete results for the L.A. Symposium.

It was finally decided that the 2d day of the GA in Bologna would be entirely dedicated to a special well prepared (by whom?) session on this topic, preceded by the sending of a paper drafted by Roger Smither. The idea to publish some parts of the Paris debate or some of the Paris preparatory papers in the FIAF Journal, prior to the Congress, was finally abandoned. We should not give the impression that the EC has already prepared a position paper on those issues, but rather stimulate the members' opinion and get it to come towards us. One could also commission a few papers from selected people "outside" the EC and let them be compiled and articulated by R. Smither.

W. Klaue was asked to contribute a few thoughts on the identity of FIAF members, emerging from his work with the World Directory of AV archives. He added that one should integrate the reponsibility and duties of FIAF to preserve the moving image heritage, world-wide; there are still large areas in the world where this is not done, which should have an impact on the future tasks of the Federation.

Roger Smither agreed to prepare a first draft for the EC members by mid-January; to be distributed to the whole

membership, with possible amendments, by the middle of March, together with the GA agenda.

The President should introduce the special session as a brainstorming session "with a purpose".

I. Trujillo ended the session with the remark that the EC should not expect very much participation from the general membership. They are not prepared and probably not very concerned!