



**Approved Minutes
Advisory Committee on Cultural Heritage**

Friday 27 October, 2023, 13:05-14:00 UTC

1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda, including agreement to record the meeting

Committee members were welcomed and the agenda was approved.

No committee members voiced matters arising. The Chair noted that WLIC 2024 has been cancelled, and that IFLA's Governing Board is reviewing the future of conferences. Other Units are discussing options for activities, and the GB are discussing potential all-IFLA activities. There will be an update from the Professional Council in the coming month, and suggested any further discussion be postponed until then. All members have received an email from the President on this topic.

The Chair also noted that IFLA is beginning preparation on a new strategy. Finally, the Chair noted that a statement on the situation in Gaza and Israel has been published by IFLA.

2. Approval of September Minutes

No corrections to the minutes were received and the minutes were approved.

3. Introductions

As committee members who were absent from the previous meeting, attendees once again introduced themselves.

4. CER Follow-up

IFLA HQ provided a draft letter for the committee to inform the GB and MLAS on CER, as decided in the September meeting. The Chair noted that she heard positive feedback on CER from the UK National Committee for the Blue Shield, but also noted that it will be important to avoid duplication of work.

The Chair will follow up with IFLA HQ directly with edits on the letter. No other input was received. The Committee agreed that once HQ has received the Chair's edits, the letters would be sent.

5. Ways of Working

One member expressed interest in the Vice-Chair position. The Chair is conscious that both she and the VC are from the UK. Mindful of diversity, a call was given for expressions of interest in the position of Co-Vice Chair, with a deadline of the November meeting. The Chair and VC will write a role description.

It was noted that the committee should consider communicating on CH to a wider community. This could be a newsletter, but other ideas are welcome. Perhaps the role of communications leader could be assigned on a rolling basis. It was noted that this role might be elaborated as the action plan is finalised.

It was noted that the IFLA handbook is relatively new. If there are questions or comments on it, members are encouraged to ask. If the CCH finds procedures that do not work well, they can suggest changes to the handbook.

The Chair will bring proposals for expert advisors to the committee in a future meeting.

IFLA has a way of removing inactive committee members. One member of the committee who has not participated in meeting or responded to email will be contacted one more time. The committee decided that they will then begin the process of removing this member.

6. Action Planning

It was noted that a number of suggestions for the action plan were made on BC.

It will be important that every action on the plan has a committee member taking responsibility for it. If activities do not have a leader, they will not be included.

Key priorities should be fleshed out by the November CCH meeting. If a topic is not on the list by November, it will not go forward on the action plan.

The committee shared ideas for considering digital cultural heritage. There is a lot that can be done targeting different audiences, but perhaps starting with considering the value of digital cultural heritage and the different types of materials that are included.

The CCH might consider the relationship between physical and digital heritage, different risks, the benefits and approaches that could be associated with each type of material. This could consider especially born digital material, as much is already focussed on digitised material. It was noted other bodies like Europeana and the EU are interested in 3D representations. The National Libraries Section's work on legal deposit including born digital materials would be relevant. IFLA could perhaps drill down into the question of how to find a born digital piece as a piece of cultural heritage. There is of course a link to UNESCO.

The broad topic of cultural heritage at risk was also noted. There are many conflict areas, as well as places affected by climate change and theft and trafficking. Perhaps this is a broad area in which a number of activities, including the Risk Register, are included.

The question of context was raised. There are many discrepancies between the framing of cultural heritage, and it is critical to understand that everyone approaches this topic from different contexts. In the African context, for example, there is a range of understanding of how and whether to prioritise cultural heritage.

Therefore the CCH might consider what people might need in order to get involved in the developments on cultural heritage around the world, from a pragmatic perspective, considering what is required at the local level. It was noted that the preservation of documentary heritage, especially written material, is particularly a cultural experience. How do you unfreeze this in a society that is oral in its traditions?

Also in the African context, activists working in culture and climate for example face real danger. Could this factor into the work of the CCH, such as using this group to speak within their particular areas of specialisation.

Communicating on the value of cultural heritage and the activities of the CCH across the Professional Units and IFLA could also be an activity in itself. How can the CCH create a larger conversation on heritage and is appealing to IFLA's membership? There could be input from ex officio members of the professional units and work on this together under the CCH banner.

Regarding the role of cultural heritage in society, it was can difficult to know what is essential in an emergency. There are personally important materials, such as property records and marriage licences. There are also wider materials important to identity, like markers and monuments to a people. There could be space to outline what is needed as vital records, both for a people and a culture. This could be cooperation with ICA – archival records vs heritage.

There was a call to the committee for expressions of interest to lead on one of the topics discussed and turn them into an action for the plan. The committee asked for more time to consider the topics added.

Before the November meeting, a first draft of the action plan will be made.

7. IFLA Register for Documentary Heritage at Risk

IFLA HQ spoke to the issues faced by the risk register, both prior to it going offline in 2022 and the technical problems that took it offline. The committee was still unclear as to the role of the risk register and the purpose it would serve.

A member noted that there are multiple ways to approach risk, such as providing advice to minimise risk, providing assistance in doing risk assessments, and collecting information on materials at risk.

The lack of clarity on the function of the RR was noted as being an issue since its beginning. Collections at risk are fluid, and it is difficult to maintain a register of collections at risk as it puts the onus to register on people that are at times are under duress. It was suggested that rather than maintaining a register of collections, we might maintain a collection of risks, such as conflicts.

It was questions whether we are duplicating work others are doing. IFLA HQ clarified that Blue Shield International does not do this sort of work.

There was some unclarity around its role as a confidential register and not an awareness raising tool. The user interface could be more visual for more engagement.

A refocus could be on mapping where there is documentary heritage that might not be recorded in other registers.

To move forward, IFLA HQ will gather all the information on the RR and create a Basecamp folder. This will include examples of what other organizations have done, as well as all information on the RR from IFLA's records. A dedicated meeting on the RR with a smaller task force could be helpful in elaborating a plan. IFLA HQ will organise a meeting for those that are interested before the end of 2023.

8. AOB and date of next meeting 00:55

There was no other business. The next meeting will be 16 November.