

## REPORT OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (LEVEL 2)

At the 2014 IAML conference in Antwerp the General Assembly approved establishing an Ad-Hoc Committee on Organizational Structure (Level 2) with the following terms of reference: “to carry out a critical review of the current system of commissions, professional branches, committees, and other permanent groups within IAML and to establish consistent terms of reference for each group. The Committee will consult widely with the IAML membership and report regularly on its progress to the Board and the General Assembly. It should complete its work in time for the final terms of reference to be presented for approval by the General Assembly in 2016.” The members of the committee, appointed by the Board, are: Bonna Boettcher, Richard Chesser (ex-officio), Barbara Mackenzie (ex-officio), Balász Mikusi, John Roberts (co-chair), Musse Magnussen Svare, and Barbara Wiermann (co-chair). A preliminary report was submitted to the Board for review at its mid-year meeting in London, 13-14 February 2015, and this more fully formed report is offered to the IAML membership for discussion online and during the New York congress in June. The heart of the report consists of a series of recommendations that the Committee plans to present to the General Assembly in New York. These recommendations are numbered “R1.1,” etc., and as necessary explanatory comments are provided in italics. The Committee welcomes all responses to this report and will take them into consideration in determining the final form of the proposals.

### **Background**

At the present time, IAML has three basic types of permanent group at this level: professional branches, subject commissions, and committees. Working groups, as temporary entities, lie outside the scope of this Committee, as do joint commissions, which are governed by agreements with other organizations. The nature of these three types is described in very rudimentary fashion in the Constitution, VII.1-3 and 5 and the Rules of Procedure, VI.1-4 and VIII.1. The professional branches are subdivisions of IAML by the type of institutions in which our members typically work. The commissions address issues that cut across institutional boundaries and are of concern to a broad range of IAML members. Both types of group have been primarily responsible for organizing congress sessions, in recent years as part of the Programme Committee or the newly created Forum of Commissions and Professional Branches, and for initiating projects, which are then usually carried out by working groups under the supervision of the parent body. Commissions and professional branches elect their own officers but have no fixed membership; elections are held during one of their congress sessions and everyone in attendance is entitled to vote. By contrast, committees are “established to advise the Association on administrative and legal matters” (Constitution, VII.5). They do not normally present congress sessions, the membership of the committee is fixed, and the chairs are appointed by the Board.

### **General Considerations**

R1.1. IAML should maintain the three basic types of permanent group it has now. The Committee proposes, however, that the term “commission” be replaced by “roundtable” and the term “professional branch” be changed to “division.”

*Comment: Many people find the term “commission” confusing, because it is so similar to “committee” and because the word “commission” is used somewhat differently in different languages. “Professional branch” can also be misleading as it may be understood to apply to a type of work as well as a type of institution or organization. “Division” would more clearly express the institutional basis of this type of group. The term “committee” seems to pose no problems. Since no change in terminology has yet been approved by the General Assembly, the existing terms will be used in the remainder of this report.*

R1.2. The scope and function of each type of group should be more fully defined in the Constitution. It should make clear that the role of a commission or professional branch may extend beyond participation in the planning of congress sessions and encompass other activities, strategic as well as operational.

R1.3. In addition, the Constitution should be expanded to allow for the establishment of permanent subgroups under the auspices of commissions, professional branches, or committees to address narrowly defined issues of ongoing importance as opposed to carrying out finite projects like a working group. Such subgroups would need to be integrally involved in the work of the parent body, reporting regularly during congress sessions and online. They would be created on recommendation of the parent body to the Board and require approval by the General Assembly. If attached to commissions or professional branches, they could be called “study groups”; any subordinate body of a committee would be a “subcommittee.”

*Comment: Currently IAML has only two bodies of this kind, the sub-commissions attached to the Cataloguing Commission, both of which are in the process of being dissolved.*

R1.4. Commissions and professional branches should remain open to all as in the past, as should study groups. However, each group would be required to create a system for interactive online communication between congresses (e.g., via e-mail, blog) in which anyone would be free to join. Subcommittees, like committees, would have fixed memberships.

*Comment: Use of online interactive communication within an individual commission, professional branch, or study group should help to foster a greater sense of cohesion in the group and give it a more dynamic character, allowing participants to share ideas and propose projects or topics for congress sessions. It would also enable people who cannot attend the congresses to take a more active part in IAML at the international level. To enhance the participatory nature of these groups, they might also hold more open discussion sessions during a congress.*

R1.5. Officers of commissions and professional branches should continue to be elected at the congress sessions in the year after the Board elections. To make the process more open and transparent, the Secretary General should solicit nominations for these positions several months before the elections and maintain a list of current nominees on IAML website. Chairs of study groups and subcommittees should be appointed by the Board in consultation with the chair of the parent group.

*Comment: The online voting system would be unsuitable for commission, professional branch, and study group elections because it would require fixed membership in each group and would deprive the Board, which manages these elections, of the ability to adapt to last-minute nominations or withdrawals. Staggering the Board and Level 2 elections has the advantage of preventing too many simultaneous changes in leadership.*

### **Changes in Particular Groups**

R2.1. For the time being, IAML should retain its four existing commissions: Audio-Visual Materials, Bibliography, Cataloguing, and Service and Training. In formulating the terms of the reference of each group, consideration should be given to re-naming it or re-defining its purpose, in coordination with other permanent groups. Proposals for such changes should originate with the group in question, but would require Board and General Assembly approval.

R2.2. The Copyright Committee should be reconstituted as the Copyright Commission.

*Comment: Unlike other IAML committees the Copyright Committee regularly presents congress sessions in the same manner as a commission. Converting it into a commission would allow its chair to become part of the Forum of Commissions and Professional Branches and thus participate in the normal program-planning process. It would also mean that this group would cease to have a fixed membership and that in the future its officers would be elected, rather than having a chair appointed by the Board. The above resolution will be offered to the General Assembly only if endorsed by the Copyright Committee.*

R2.3. It would be possible at later congresses to add one or more new commissions or professional branches, but great care should be taken to ensure that their functions do not significantly overlap with those of any existing groups.

*Comment: It should be borne in mind that any additional commission or professional branch will tend to expand the congress program and make planning and scheduling more complicated. Rather than establishing new commissions or professional branches, it may be more useful to create new study groups under the existing commissions and professional branches.*

### **Documentation**

Given the amount of time and effort required to make changes in the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure, the Ad Hoc Committee has concluded that the terms of reference for the individual groups should not be included in these two documents. Instead, information about these groups would be provided in three ways:

R3.1. The Constitution and Rules of Procedure should be revised to include fuller generic descriptions of the types of group and require that each group have terms of reference approved by the General Assembly.

R3.2. Brief terms of reference for the individual groups would be embodied in a separate document, avoiding unnecessary repetition of the generic descriptions in the Constitution and Rules of Procedure and any information that is subject to frequent change. This document could be revised as needed by a simple vote of the General Assembly.

R3.3. Each group should create its own webpage, listing current officers and committee members, giving instructions on how to participate in a particular commission or professional branch, and describing the group's current activities and initiatives. This webpage would be kept up-to-date by the chair or other officer of the group.

**Plan for Year 2**

Based on the decisions of the General Assembly in New York, the Committee will devote its second year to drafting the necessary changes in the Constitution and Rules of Procedure and creating the document containing the specific terms of reference for each group. The committee will develop a template to be used by the individual groups in formulating their terms of reference, which will then be reviewed by the Committee and the Board to ensure clarity and uniformity of style. The draft documents will be distributed electronically to the general membership for comment, and final versions will be voted on by the General Assembly in Rome.

Barbara Wiermann and John Roberts, Co-chairs  
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