

Film heritage: collection and preservation, competitiveness of related industrial activities

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This report contains the Commission's assessment of the implementation of the Recommendation of 16 November 2005 on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities. It examines the Commission's initiatives in this area, as well as

Member State actions.

The report states that Member States should continue the application of the Recommendation, and report again to the Commission by November 2009. As a result of the analysis of the current situation, the following points should be considered by Member States in case that they have not yet been tackled:

- establishing a long-term strategy for their national film heritage and annual plans for specific issues (digitisation, restoration, education, etc);
- monitoring compliance with the mandatory forms of deposit (both with the obligation of deposit and the technical quality of the material);
- promoting voluntary deposit as a complement to legal deposit. The Commission has facilitated the negotiation of a framework agreement between the Association of European Film Libraries (ACE) and the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) to establish procedures for voluntary deposit of films with preservation archives. The agreement will regulate the obligations of the archive (responsibility for conservation and preservation, duty to collaborate with the producer, cataloguing), questions related to preservation/restoration (decisions and methods for restoring and preserving the deposited material, possession of the new materials), access, use and withdrawal of the material (both the originally deposited material and the new prints produced by the archive), circulation of works between ACE members for public screening and restoration and, finally, the conditions for permanent withdrawal of deposited material. The signature of the agreement is expected in 2008. The use of the framework contract between ACE and FIAPF is recommended as soon as it becomes available. In the absence of signature of this contract, Member States should encourage by all means agreements between film heritage institutions and right-holder associations covering the possible uses of the deposited material by the archive;
- continuing efforts to achieve interoperability of film databases, and to make those databases accessible via the Internet;
- restoration of cinematographic works, with the objective of sharing know-how and increase resources available;
- seeking agreements with right-holders with a view to promote cultural access to film heritage as broadly as possible;
- creating specialised courses at university level for all areas related to film archives;
- giving higher priority and visibility to educational programmes and activities.

Film archives should, as a priority, make the necessary changes to face the challenges of the digital era. It is estimated that within 5 years, most films will be distributed in digital format. This implies that the following issues will have to be addressed:

- collection / acquisition of digital material (distributed in cinemas or via new channels);
- storage / conservation of digital material, which could require regular migration to new formats or supports;
- applying digital technologies for restoration;

- giving access via internet to the collections, while ensuring respect of copyright laws;
- integration in the European digital library.

The Commission will continue with the execution of its current projects and with the organisation of meetings of the Cinema Expert Group / Subgroup Film Archives to facilitate the exchange of good practices in the areas mentioned above.