

# Foreword

It gives us immense pleasure to present the proceedings of the international conference “SOIMA 2015: Unlocking Sound and Image Heritage”. This publication is the result of a longstanding and extremely fruitful collaboration between the International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCRROM) and the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA).

ICCRROM and KIK-IRPA have a common institutional mandate of promoting cultural heritage research and conservation. An important concern is the safeguarding of endangered sound and image heritage. Although global statistics are difficult to find, the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations has estimated “that within the next 10 to 20 years, a significant amount of audiovisual heritage will inevitably and irreparably fade away”. Moreover, knowledge on sound and image heritage preservation and access is fragmented, trapped in separate areas of expertise, thereby adding another challenge to content collectors and users.

ICCRROM’s Sound and Image Collections Conservation (SOIMA) programme has been actively engaged in developing a response to the global challenge of sustaining sound and image collections since its creation in 2006. Through numerous international partnerships, the programme has succeeded in fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange.

KIK-IRPA has a massive photo collection which is being digitized to promote greater access. The institute has built partnerships across private and public sectors to ensure the long-term preservation of and access to its image collections. Through collaborations with SOIMA, KIK-IRPA has trained its staff and has joined ICCROM in building capacity in the area of sound and image heritage.

Recognizing the need for greater collaboration and exchange of knowledge and information between collectors and users, ICCROM and KIK-IRPA organized an international conference which took place in Brussels, 3–4 September 2015. Sixteen public and private institutions joined us in this endeavour, for which we are extremely grateful.

The papers in this publication are based on discussions held during the conference. They shed light on the diversity in the types of collecting institutions, conservation strategies and creative uses of sound and image heritage. By making this an open-access publication, ICCROM and KIK-IRPA hope to reach institutions and professionals who share similar challenges of preservation and access, for a problem shared is a problem solved.

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