

Working Session on the Translation of CIDOC CRM and Multilingualism in Documentation: Challenges and Issues

Satellite activity within the framework of the ICOM Documentation International Conference Tervuren 2026

Organisers

- CIDOC CRM Spanish Translation Initiative Group
- House of European History
- CIDOC CRM SIG
- ICOM Documentation

Introduction and Background

Within the framework of the ICOM Documentation International Conference 2026, the Spanish CIDOC CRM Translation Initiative proposes the organisation of a roundtable and workshop day on 15 November, the day prior to the official opening of the Tervuren 2026 International Conference.

The working day will address two topics of particular relevance both to the translation group and to the House of European History. On the one hand, it seeks to foster exchange translation experiences with other international CIDOC CRM translation teams ; on the other, it aims to open a reflection on the complex and still unresolved relationship between multilingualism and documentation.

The evolution of museum documentation requires in-depth reflection on the future of cultural heritage management: how to integrate different perspectives, recognise linguistic diversity and include the communities that play a central role in heritage processes. Language is not neutral; it shapes ways of understanding, naming and transmitting heritage. Therefore, documentation in multilingual contexts constitutes a conceptual, methodological and technological challenge requiring more inclusive, flexible and collaborative approaches.

The working sessions will be open and free access, both in person or online, and it will take place on Sunday, 15 November, from 09:00 to 17:00 at the House of European History in Brussels. It will be organised within the framework of the ICOM Documentation International Conference 2026, hosted by the AfricaMuseum from 16 to 20 November.

The CIDOC CRM Spanish Translation Initiative was formally established in January 2024. In addition to its regular sessions with members of the translation team, it has organised several activities, including:

- CIDOC CRM Workshop, Mexico City, May 2024;
- Working meeting in Amsterdam, 2024;

- Presentation *“The CIDOC CRM Spanish Translation Initiative: A collective experience of dialogue, learning and knowledge transfer”* at ICOM Dubai 2025;
- Mini colloquium *“First Internal Colloquium: Dialogues on CIDOC CRM in Spanish”*, January 2026.

Proposed Programme (general)

08:30 – Registration

09:00 – 12:00 (15-minute break included) - Morning session : Methodology and Working Processes of CIDOC CRM Translation Groups

Context

This session aims to continue the dialogue established in 2024 with CIDOC CRM translation groups in order to exchange challenges, lessons learned and translation experiences.

Participants

Translation groups + members of the SIG (to be confirmed). Number of participants: to be defined.

Objective

To share the methodologies and working processes of the different international CIDOC CRM translation groups through the exchange of experiences that may contribute to our own translation processes, taking into account that language is not merely a superficial layer of CIDOC CRM, but rather shapes ontological interpretation.

Specific Objectives of the Session

- Identify challenges in the methodologies applied;
- Compare working processes in order to obtain feedback and improve translation practices.

Format

- Hybrid

Activities (to be defined)

- Presentation of participants;
- Case-study presentations;
- Discussion;
- Summary and closing of the session.

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 16:00 (15-minute break included) - Afternoon session : Multilingual Documentation: Challenges in the Museum Management of Cultural Heritage

Context

The current transformation of museums is marked by digitalisation, inclusivity and the growing need to address cultural and linguistic diversity. Multilingualism has therefore become a central area of reflection. The House of European History (HEH) exemplifies the diverse challenges associated with documentation in multiple languages.

Participants

House of European History documentation team + curator from the HEH (?) + Dédalo + Jonathan Ward + George (CRM SIG) + Europeana (?) + Claudio Molina + others. Number of participants in person: to be defined (max 30). online

Objective

To address the integration of linguistic diversity into documentation systems through dialogue between practical experiences, theoretical developments and relevant case studies, with the aim of exploring applied solutions and fostering dynamic exchange among professionals.

Specific Objectives of the Session

- Identify the technological and methodological challenges associated with multilingualism in museum documentation;
- Reflect on different multilingual documentation strategies in museums (use of a base language in documentation systems, inclusive documentation processes, relationships with communities, among others);
- Examine the importance of controlled vocabularies, thesauri, worldviews, translation processes and the appropriation of standards.

Format

- Hybrid but mostly presential

Activities (to be defined)

- Presentation of participants;
- Case-study presentations;
- Discussion;
- Summary and closing of the session.

16:50 – 17:00 Conclusions and Closing Remarks