

International Electrotechnical Committee

Meeting of IEC TC 60, April 9-16, 1994
Bucharest, Romania

By Frederick M. Remley

IEC Technical Committee 60 — Recording, and its two subcommittees, SC 60A — Sound Recording and SC 60B — Video Recording, met in Bucharest, Romania, April 9 to 16, 1994. TC 60 produces IEC international standards for professional and consumer audio and video recording systems. The Bucharest meeting was the most recent in a sequence that began in 1969; meetings are held at approximately 15-month intervals.

National IEC membership for the U.S. is held by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The SMPTE Engineering Department serves as technical advisor to ANSI in the area of video recording, while the Audio Engineering Society (AES) performs a similar function for IEC's sound recording standards.

Approximately 35 delegates from a dozen countries around the world attended the meeting in Bucharest, joining a contingent of 19 Romanian engineers with special interests in recording technology. Henry Zahn (Germany) is chairman of TC 60; Akikazu Shibata (Japan) serves as secretary. Pierre Amiguet represented the IEC Central Office located in Geneva, Switzerland. The meetings were held in a training school located directly adjacent to the Hotel Parc, in suburban Bucharest. Most of the delegates stayed in the Hotel Parc and found the facilities to be convenient and adequate. Through out the week of meetings the Romanian National Committee for the IEC provided excellent secretariat services and organized a tour of the Bucharest region designed to give the delegates a better under-



Delegate Eric Pohl (L) and SC 60B chairman Fred Remley at IEC meeting.

standing of the culture and history of Romania.

The U.S. delegation consisted of delegation leader Koichi Sadashige, Consultant; Eric Pohl, NBC; Donald Hayes, Optical Disc Corp.; and SC 60B Chairman Fred Remley. Sadashige also serves as convener of SC 60B Working Party 1 — Professional Video Recording. Pohl attended the sessions concerned with videotape recording and Hayes participated in the videodisk standards discussions.

TC 60 — Recording

The primary work of TC 60 is to administer the work of its two subcommittees, SC 60A and SC 60B, and to arrange for information exchanges with a number of other organizations through formal and informal liaison arrangements. In addition, TC 60 has an active group working with definitions for record-

ing terms, the Joint Editing Group on Terminology, JET-1.

Organizational Matters

It has been evident for several years that there is an increasing convergence of interests and efforts among several IEC Technical Committees and IEC/ISO Joint Committees that are responsible for different but related audio and video technologies. At a 1992 TC 60 meeting and again at Bucharest in 1994, serious discussions were held by the officers of TC 60 and its subcommittees about merging the work of some closely related international committees. Specifically, the standards work of IEC TC 84 — Equipment and Systems in the Field of Audio, Video and Audiovisual Engineering, SC 12A — Receiving Equipment, and ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee-1 (JTC-1) SC 29, Coded Representation of Picture, Audio, and

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Multimedia/Hypermedia Information all have relevance to technical matters that are assigned to TC 60 — Recording.

The convergence of interests is a result of the nearly universal move toward digital representations for audio and video signals as well as a parallel move toward digital control of most communications systems. Each of the groups is striving to develop digital specifications for the equipment types assigned to them, and it is inevitable that overlaps will occur among the groups unless excellent coordination exists. Accordingly, it has been decided that leaders of the groups will meet to discuss possible reorganization of the work assignments and perhaps to prepare a redefinition of the responsibilities of the relevant IEC Technical Committees. This meeting will most likely occur in the fall of 1994.

SC 60B — Video Recording

SC 60B is responsible for a list of some 21 projects that are currently under discussion and for the technical maintenance of some 33 international standards on video recording that have already been approved and published. New projects are approved after discussions held in SC 60B meetings, but the drafting of international standards is done by the two Working Parties of SC 60B. These Working Parties met many times in Bucharest and their work is summarized below.

SC 60B Working Party 1 — Broadcast Video Recording (WP-1)

The convener of WP-1 is Koichi Sadashige (U.S.). The work discussed by WP-1 in Bucharest involved both old and new topics in broadcast recording system standardization. A new definitive standard was developed for the tape reels (spools) used for reel-to-reel broadcast video recorders, thus consolidating three

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older IEC specifications and achieving unified dimensioning and tolerancing. Final approval was given to a draft standard for the D-3 digital composite recorder specification and the draft will be circulated to the IEC National Committees for voting. The IEC standard for the Type D-1 digital component recorder (EC 1016) was amended to include the present status of D-1 recorder manufacturing and related cassette technology. A standard for the measurement of audio performance of analog broadcast VTRs, IEC 1237-Part 4, was approved. Discussions were held about future standardization of the methods of measurement for digital composite broadcast VTRs and for measurements of the digital audio systems used in digital VTRs. Digital Betacam and the proposed D-5 format were discussed, and D-5, at least, will become an item of work for the next meeting of SC 60B.

SC 60B Working Party 2 — Nonbroadcast Video Recorders (WP-2)

The convener of WP-2 in Bucharest was Dr. Hiroshi Sugaya (Japan). Among other items, the group received a technical description of the newly announced consumer-grade digital VCR format developed over a period of many months by an

international consortium of VCR manufacturers. Descriptions of a new multipurpose “W-VHS” system for broadband analog videotape recording and specifications for a new “Hi-Vision LD” HDTV videodisk system were also discussed. Specifications for these new systems are expected to be submitted later for standardization by the IEC. Initial work was completed on new sections (parts) for IEC Standard 1041, Methods of Measurement for Nonbroadcast Videotape Recorders, including measuring methods of calibration tapes for nonbroadcast VTRs (Part 4) and for “highband” nonbroadcast VTRs, such as S-VHS™ and Hi-8™ machines (Part 5). Projects are under way that deal with methods of measurement for consumer camera-recorders and for the automatic video functions of nonbroadcast color video cameras and camera-recorders. Videodisk systems were discussed as well and a specification is being developed for methods of measurement of videodisk players. There was also discussion of a high-density compact disk digital video system that will be introduced to the market in the near future and may be submitted for standardization at a later time.

TC 60 and its subcommittees will meet again in about 15 months at a location yet to be determined.