

# EDITORIAL

## IFLA 2003 in Berlin



This year, after many attempts and a twenty-year interval, we have finally managed to have the IFLA General Conference be held once more in Germany. Under the new banner, „World Library and Information Congress“, the 69<sup>th</sup> Conference will take place in the old and new German capital Berlin, under the auspices of the Federal President.

The theme is „Access Point Library: Media – Information – Culture“, an attractive image and one that reflects both wishful thinking and reality. It will explore the transformation of media and knowledge management, strengthen the contents and use of information and guarantee culture and human values and, by so doing, expand libraries as cultural institutions and remind them of their social responsibilities.

The programme offered is highly interesting indeed, and we do hope many colleagues will take advantage of it, in particular younger colleagues, especially those from Germany. The conference will be flanked by an excellent exhibition at the Berlin International Congress Center. One hopes the hefty attendance fee (nearly 500 Euros) will not deter potential participants, but then again, support from public coffers that are empty can hardly be expected! This author recalls with fondness and gratitude the time when he himself was active in the IFLA, as the dream of many librarians at the time was to be able to take part in such an

international conference or, even more, to have the privilege of collaborating with the governing bodies and thus of striking up friendship with colleagues from foreign countries and cultures. Unfortunately, a pecuniary hurdle has now to be overcome, and public helping hands, such as the DFG (German Research Council), the ministries or local universities or the DBI (German Library Institute) have nothing more to add to the till, or in some instances have ceased to exist. Moreover, the successor institution we looked forward to, was nipped in the bud. One might take the view that this is not the best point in time to hold a major international conference here, when German libraries and their services are faced with ruin. Or might not the opposite be true? Is it not the case that politicians would become much more aware of librarianship in Germany and of its great achievements, were it to rise again from its ashes, or from its ruins?

In any event, for participants as well as for politicians, these achievements are extensively described in a newly published volume of the BDB (Federal Association of German Library Associations): *Portale zu Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Bibliotheken in Deutschland*. This carries forward a fine tradition instituted on the occasion of IFLA conferences in Germany: in 1968, *Bibliotheksneubauten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* was presented in Frankfurt by the ZfBB (Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen

und Bibliographie), followed in 1983 in Munich by a volume covering the years 1968-1983, both of which gave an impressive account of the achievements in building libraries in the Federal Republic of Germany. Now for the conference in Berlin, a new, even more comprehensive presentation of librarianship in all of Germany will be available.

And our magazine would also like to contribute, if modestly, to this major international event, the IFLA Congress, and welcome the participants by publishing, in English, a paper on the relations between the IFLA and German libraries by the BDB spokesperson **Dr. George Ruppelt**, followed by an interview with him. Our other features are also related to the IFLA: **Dr. Rafael Ball** on Management of Knowledge in the university, **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Ratzek**, on the Synopsis of an Information and Knowledge Society, and **Prof. Dr. Hermann Rösch** on Transmission of Library Information on the web. We of course also feature meeting and exhibition reports of the CeBIT in Hanover, the **AspB** in Stuttgart, or the **Education Fair** in Nuremberg. A series of book reviews and short news items complete what we hope will afford you highly interesting reading material for the summer months.

*Dr. Rolf Fuhlrott*

*Chief Editor*