

Adress to Council by the President Claudia Lux

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Dear Colleagues,

I want to address you as your new president and talk about some more aspects of my presidential theme ‘Libraries on the Agenda’.

I have chosen my presidential theme ‘Libraries on the agenda’ to foster the image of libraries world-wide.

To stand up for library and information goals and library advocacy in general has reached professional proportions in some library associations and we can use their knowledge and experience.

In my introduction to the two brainstorming sessions on this topic, last year and this year, I introduced the following focal points for the brainstorming groups – in which many of you have participated. These focal points include:

What should be the focus of our lobbying and advocacy? Should this be regionally differentiated?

Which topics are most relevant and promise success for us? (as individual libraries, as national associations, and as IFLA) What aspects should not be forgotten in our plan of action?

What lobbying and advocacy methods have already proven successful?

What is the profile of the effective and successful advocator?

How can individual librarians educate themselves and others to carry out this work? How can they know in which way to make the first contact, to present a plan, to follow up and show the right behaviour, avoid pitfalls and respect cultural diversity in advocacy?

Your input, your experiences in your own countries, cultures, and continents, were imperative for formulating the work of the next two years for my presidential theme, empowering our own profession to speak up for the cause of libraries and the values we represent.

Furthermore, I see three areas of work for placing libraries on the agenda of the governing structures and institutions:

First. What roles do libraries and library associations have for influencing decisions at the regional, national and international levels? – This affects not only decisions, legislation, financial and funding policies, but also fits in dynamically and synergetically in influencing policy standing, viewpoints and decisions in many other countries (i.e., the World Summit on the Information Society, the dynamic influence of cooperation and collaboration among regions, etc.).

Second. What advocacy role do libraries and librarians have at the local and community level? How can libraries reach local and community policy-makers, activate users and form important alliances to achieve local and community goals (which also have impact on governing and decision-making structures at the next levels up in the social and governing structures).

Third. How can libraries play a greater role in universities and other institutional structures and governance of the institutions and institutional

constituency they serve, to strengthen access to information through libraries?

As I have mentioned last year in my initial paper for discussion of this presidential topic, libraries need to have a stronger role in the planning, policy-making and policy-enforcing activities of the institutions they are part of.

This means strengthening the trust basis in librarians and libraries, indirectly expanding their scope of influence, and placing the library not only on the institutional agenda, but having it be a driving force behind the institutional agenda, institutional policy and institutional goals. And this includes not only libraries in universities and other educational institutions, special libraries in research, government and other institutions, and even school libraries, but also those libraries for special user groups, for specific media formats, etc.

The last point is inherent in all three of the above points: How can we achieve the empowerment of librarians as social and intellectual leaders, as personalities capable of convincingly representing these values and presenting solutions to important policy-impacting issues? What is the profile of the successful library advocate? What networks are necessary to support this empowerment?

I see empowerment of librarians the key to sustainability for their libraries, services and the values represented by them. The networks of empowerment can serve to maintain continuity of libraries as cultural strongholds in society and – more importantly – the population of these libraries with empowered librarians who can sustain the high quality of libraries and information services. This key to sustainability and quality enhancement of the profession

is my firm belief, and one which I want to dedicate my efforts to furthering awareness of and empowerment of the players in the coming two years!

This advocacy work – placing libraries on the agenda can draw on the expertise and contributions of each IFLA Section and Core Programme. Each Section has experience in its own area and we encourage you all to come forth to share this expertise with us in achieving these goals.

What is the overall outcome of this activity over the next two years of my presidency? I would like to see libraries and librarians empowered far beyond their current status today. I would like to see how the influence of the values we represent and the work done in our libraries attains the level of influence it deserves by nature of its importance for our global and local society. And I would like to stand here at the end of these two years and present to you and the professional world the high level of creativity and effectivity encompassed in this profession and in all of you and your colleagues at home in achieving a more information-aware, information-fair and information-equitable world to live and work in. Please join me in working for the empowerment of librarians and the sustainability of quality libraries and information services.

Thank you very much for your attention and for your support during these next two years.