Mediterranean virtual library

IFLA and UNESCO join forces in the Mediterranean region

An ambitious program is under way in Europe which should pave the way for accessibility to the catalogues of Mediterranean libraries through a central gateway.

IFLA has signed a contract with UNESCO, as part of the MEDLIB program, aiming to establish a virtual library for the Mediterranean region.

Initially, IFLA will conduct a survey of catalogues of Mediterranean libraries available on the internet.

Sjoerd Koopman, IFLA's co-ordinator of professional activities, welcomed the initiative, commenting that 'it will eventually enable a large group of our colleagues in the Mediterranean area — including of course an important part of the professionals and end users in the Arab world — to benefit from electronic means of communication'.

The survey will be undertaken by the IFLA Office for Universal Availability of Publications at Boston Spa, UK. The results should be available during May 2001. ■

IFLA 2003 patron

German Federal President agrees to become patron to 2003 IFLA Conference

A bookseller for nearly 20 years, with an interest in the promotion of reading, Germany's Federal President Johannes Rau has agreed to be patron to the 69th General Conference of IFLA, to be held in 2003 in Berlin.

IFLA Executive Board member, Claudia Lux, said: 'IFLA is proud that Germany's President has honoured us with his patronage for our conference. It demonstrates the importance of the role of libraries in the knowledge age.'

The decision to have the conference in Berlin was taken by IFLA's Executive Board after an invitation from Berlin's mayor, Eberhard Diepgen.

Over 3500 librarians and information professionals from all parts of the world are expected to gather in Berlin for the 69th annual conference, to be held 1–9 August 2003.

IFLA conferences in 2001 and 2002 will be held in Boston and Glasgow respectively. ■

Safeguarding African documentary heritage

UNESCO and IFLA organise workshop in Cape Town

Within the framework of UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' program and the Slave Trade Archives Project, a five-day workshop 'Safeguarding the African Documentary Heritage' will be held 26 February — 2 March 2001 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Intended for archivists and librarians with managerial responsibility for preservation, the workshop will include presentations by experts from Europe and South Africa, covering topics such as standards and best practices with regard to preservation, reformatting and digitisation.

Sjoerd Koopman, IFLA's co-ordinator of Professional Activities, commented: 'UNESCO provides a number of African archives and libraries with another excellent opportunity to update their knowledge of best practices for safeguarding their rich national heritage'. ■