As President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, I would like to convey my congratulations to the Zagreb City Libraries on the occasion of their one-day international expert meeting on “Audiovisual material and heritage”.

IFLA is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession. IFLA has 1700 Members in 150 countries and celebrates its 80th anniversary this year.

The Audiovisual and Multimedia Section of IFLA is a relatively small, specialised section of this large organisation. AVMS is the international forum for persons working with non book media in every kind of library and information service.

During the course of the past year, AVMS have published the *IFLA Guidelines for Audiovisual and Multimedia Materials in Libraries and other Institutions*, which have now been translated into Croatian, and also into Arabic, Bahasa Melayu, Catalan, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Italian, Korean, Latvian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Spanish – all of which are online at: http://www.ifla.org/VII/s35/pubs/avm-guidelines04.htm

Sound recordings and moving images in any form are vulnerable, and easily discarded or deliberately destroyed. Too much of the world’s 20th century audiovisual heritage is now lost, and much more is slipping beyond recovery because of neglect, natural decay and technological obsolescence. Unless public awareness of the importance of preservation is increased, this trend will continue. That is why we are delighted that this year, UNESCO has declared 27th October to be the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage.

IFLA is happy to support this international expert meeting as a contribution to the celebrations surrounding the launch of the World Day, and I wish you all a very successful meeting in Zagreb.

Alex Byrne
President

1 June 2007