



**World Library and Information Congress:  
69th IFLA General Conference and Council  
1-9 August 2003, Berlin**

**“Librarians are awesome”**

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**Report to IFLA Council on  
FAIFE**

Alex Byrne  
Chair, IFLA/FAIFE Committee



# Creation and development of IFLA/FAIFE

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- IFLA Council in Istanbul 1995 confirmed commitment to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Executive Board constituted Committee on Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (CAIFE) - 35 members from 32 nations plus two resource persons.



# Creating FAIFE, “a platform to bark from”

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- IFLA Council Copenhagen 1997 resolved to:
  - establish a Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression that will advise IFLA on matters of international significance to libraries and librarianship in this area, including, but not limited to:
    - Censorship of library materials
    - Ideological, economic, political or religious pressures resulting in limitations on access to information in libraries, or restrictions on librarians and other information specialists who provide reference and other information services.



# Formation of the Committee and Office

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- 22 members from 20 nations appointed to FAIFE Committee
- extensions and new appointments in 2000



# The initial program

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- develop IFLA policy and practices in this area
- establish alliances
- respond to specific incidents, wherever possible in cooperation with the national library associations
- provide a clearing house of relevant information
- communicate widely
- liaise with IFLA HQ and the Executive Board
- cooperate with other areas of IFLA activity
- prepare regular reports for Council



# The FAIFE Office

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- Jan Ristarp first Director
- Carsten Frederiksen Deputy Director
- Ms Susanne Seidelin, second Director, commenced early in 2001
- Office established in the central offices of the City of Copenhagen
- Office relocated to the Royal Danish School of Library and Information Science during 2000
- reduced budgetary capacity



# Statements

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- IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom 1999
- statement on Terrorism, the Internet and Free Access to Information 4 October 2001
- IFLA Internet Manifesto 2002
- Glasgow Declaration on libraries, information services and intellectual freedom 2002
- contributions to Summits



# Making alliances

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- International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)
- Unesco
- Council of Europe
- ALA
- Article19
- Index on Censorship
- Electronic Frontiers Australia
- Transparency International
- Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression





# A developing professional program

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- visits to Cambodia, Cuba, Germany, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Mexico, USA, Zimbabwe and others
- country reports on the FAIFE website
- increasingly number and variety of FAIFE related activities at each successive conference



# A developing professional program

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- participation in conferences and seminars eg SAB 1999 & 2000, Crimea 2001, Harare Book Fair *INBADA 2001*, Mexico City 2001, Berlin 2002, Alexandria and Ankara 2003
- lectures on libraries and intellectual freedom and professional ethics given at library schools
- PhD co-project in 2001 on “libraries and free access to information on the Internet in a global perspective” - Stuart Hamilton



# Publications

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- FAIFE website
- reports on activities prepared for the Committee, Executive/Governing Board, Council and funding agencies
- many papers at conferences and articles in journals, including special issues of *IFLA Journal* and *Index on Censorship*
- *IFLA/FAIFE World Report 2001 & 2003*
- *Summary Report 2002*
- *The ethics of librarianship: an international survey* (Vaagan 2002)



# Incidents over the first six years

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- 1997
  - France- Front National control of libraries
- 1998
  - Russia - Book burning at Ekaterinburg
  - UK - Mapplethorpe photographs
  - Various - Legislative protections for access to information and freedom of expression & library association codes of ethics



# Incidents over the first six years

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- 1999

- Israel - IFLA 2000 Conference
- Cuba - Intimidation of operators of independent libraries
- USA - Cuba blockade
- Yugoslavia - Damage to libraries in Kosovo
- Indonesia - Destruction of libraries in East Timor
- USA - Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Various - Internet censorship legislation



# Incidents over the first six years

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## ■ 2000

- China - Detention of Mr Song Yongyi
- Australia - Internet censorship legislation
- Various - Pornography and libraries
- Various - Harry Potter censorship
- Zimbabwe - Closure of British Council Library
- Zimbabwe - Attempted intimidation of Mr Driden Kunaka



# Incidents over the first six years

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- 2001
  - Japan - Histories bowdlerised
  - South Africa - Removal of titles from school reading lists
  - USA - School library censorship
  - USA - September 11 attacks
  - USA - Elsevier removal of articles from full text journals



# Incidents over the first six years

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- 2002
  - Afghanistan - Damage to libraries through conflict
  - Canada - Ottawa public library staff action
  - Hong Kong - Basic Law Article 23
  - Israel - Destruction of Palestinian libraries and archives
  - USA - USA PATRIOT Act





# Incidents over the first six years

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## ■ 2003

- Cuba – Arrests of ‘independent librarians’
- USA – Extension of sanctions against professional visits to Cuba
- Iraq – Destruction of libraries and museums



# New Chair & Thanks

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- Professor Paul Sturges, UK
- Thank you to all who have done so much to assist the FAIFE program during its formative years
- Special thanks to Susanne Seidelin, Ross Shimmon, IFLA HQ and the active members of the FAIFE Committee