

Edizione cartacea:

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IFLA Congress in Italy for the fourth time

The Italian library community is very proud to host you all in Milan for the 75th IFLA Congress in Italy, from August 23rd to 27th. It is the fourth time that the IFLA Congress is held in Italy. The first time, in 1929, it was in Rome, Florence and Venice; the second and the third time, in 1951 and 1964, it was in Rome.

The first Plenary Meeting of International Library and Bibliographical Committee (established in Edinburgh in 1928) took place in Rome on the 14th June 1929. Some days after, from June 15th to 30th, it was held the First International Congress of the Libraries and Bibliography with the first plenary session in Rome, the second one in Florence (where the statute was written) and the last one in Venice, where the statute was approved. About 1300 delegates coming from 40 countries attended the meeting. In Rome, the delegates approved unanimously the name of this new international organization of librarians, in four languages, including Italian: *Fédération Internationale des Associations des Bibliothécaires*, *International Federation of Library Associations*, *Internationales Verband der Bibliotheksvereine*, *Federazione Internazionale delle Associazioni dei Bibliotecari*. In the morning of June 29, in the Marciana Library, in Venice, the Sweden librarian Mr. Isak Collijn, director of the Kungliga Biblioteket of Stockholm, consultant of the Vatican Library and President of the Meeting, announced the name of the Library Federation, and the Italian librarian Vincenzo Fago read the Statute in English, dated "Florence, June 25, 1929":

- 1) The name of this organization shall be the International Federation of Library Associations.
- 2) The object of the Federation shall be to promote international library cooperation.

One year after, in 1930, the Italian Library Association (AIB) was founded.

In Italy, at the beginning of the 1970s, the State transferred to the newly established Regions a series of legal powers included competences regarding archives and libraries: a new policy was developed towards a modern concept of library as a *service* with social, cultural and economic characteristics relevant to a certain territorial and user context. Thanks to this process, the number of public and

special libraries greatly increased, information and research service was considerably updated and the body of users enlarged very much.

In the same period, many institutions (MiBAC, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, universities, municipalities, provinces, dioceses, etc.) have invested in the functional restructuring of historic libraries, in opening modern libraries according to the quality standards set by IFLA, and in planning new libraries.

Over the last 20 years Italian librarians have experienced a considerable professional growth, some at a commendable level, thanks to the spread of librarianship in Italian universities, the introduction of professional courses by AIB, Regions and private agencies, the spread of LIS specialized periodicals, and the participation of an increasing number of Italian librarians in the international scientific and professional debate.

80 years after the first IFLA meeting in 1929, librarians from all over the world come again to Italy this year for the IFLA World Library and Information Congress. The Italian librarians recall grateful the colleagues who had constituted the first librarian associations in the United States and in many European countries. Following their example and thanks to the international cooperation, AIB was set up and has been working for 79 years, in order to ensure libraries development and librarian training.

Mauro Guerrini

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