



IFLA WLIC 2017 WROCLAW

IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2017

Wrocław, Poland, August 2017

I had the honour, and the pleasure, to attend the International Federation of Library Association's (IFLA) 2017 World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in the beautiful city of Wroclaw, Poland from 19 - 25 August. The conference venue was the historic and striking Centennial Hall about 3km from the city centre. The WLIC was, as usual, a spectacular gathering of librarians with more than 3,500 delegates from more than 120 countries. The programme featured a staggering array of open sessions, section business meetings and demonstrations on topics as diverse as Art Libraries and Altmetrics. Choosing which session to attend often involved difficult choices.

In addition to the standard WLIC mix of meetings, papers and exhibitions there was a particular emphasis throughout on the IFLA Global Vision. Announced at WLIC 2016, IFLA's Global Vision discussion aims to engage thousands of representatives of the library field worldwide "to explore how a united library field can meet the challenges of the future". Ahead of WLIC 2017 IFLA organised a Global Vision kick-off workshop in Athens, Greece and a series of regional workshops in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America. IFLA sections and members also worked on the Global Vision in preparation for WLIC 2017. During the Congress IFLA Secretary General Gerald Leitner led a well-attended session on the Global Vision during which over 300 delegates live-voted on a range of aspects of the Vision. The session ended with the Secretary General opening voting to library staff around the world until 30 September 2017. The feedback will inform the finalisation of the global vision. To find out more about the IFLA Global Vision and how you can get involved see <https://globalvision.ifla.org/>.

A key part of IFLA WLICs are the many networking opportunities. One of the main networking events took place on the Tuesday night, as is tradition, the cultural night. During the event delegates were treated to an enormous buffet of Polish cuisine and the opportunity to participate in Polish folk dancing. The festivities also included a wonderful music and light show, centred around the venue's lake, and the celebrations concluded with a fun, and well attended, silent disco led by three enthusiastically competitive DJs. An important networking opportunity for Irish librarians was, of course, the Irish Caucus. Started by Philip



The Irish Caucus at WLIC 2017 (l-r) Cathal McCauley (Maynooth University), Philip Cohen (DIT), Helen Vincent (National Library of Scotland), Susan Reilly (Qatar National Library), Colette O'Flaherty (National Library of Ireland) and Lorcan Dempsey (OCLC)

Cohen in 2015 this now annual event has been growing slowly but steadily since. At WLIC 2017 the Caucus was attended by six Irish librarians (see picture) and was an opportunity for us to touch base and discuss areas of mutual interest. The WLIC programme also included a range of tours and library visits catering for every interest and activity.

While Congress was, as always, great fun and professionally interesting there are also a number of important formalities including the General Assembly which took place on 23 August. During the assembly delegates, including myself representing the LAI, voted on motions and approved the IFLA Treasurer's report. The final set piece event is the closing session during which the new President of IFLA (Glòria Pérez-Salmerón) succeeded the outgoing President (Donna Scheeder). While it was known since WLIC 2016 that WLIC 2018 will take place in Malaysia in August 2018, in a break with tradition the venue for WLIC 2019 was not announced in Wroclaw. Instead delegates were advised that an announcement will be made before the end of 2017.

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