International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

The first meeting of the IFLA Regional Council 2023-2025 was held in AHoy Rotterdam, on Friday 25 August 2023, 10:30-12:00 CEST

1. Welcome, apologies and agreement of agenda

The agenda was agreed.

2. Welcome by the Chair, including refresher on the role of the RC

The new chair, Alejandro Santa, welcomed members of the Council and observers, and set out the official mandate given to the Regional Council by IFLA’s Statutes and Rules of Procedure.

He highlighted his desire to build on the work of the previous Regional Council, and to continue to develop the regional dimension of IFLA’s work. It remained the case that IFLA still had much work to do to make itself a global organisation, with the question of language high on the agenda. He also underlined the priority that working with the SDGs should have going forwards.

IFLA President Vicki McDonald welcomed the Council, underlining the link between her theme of ‘stronger together’ and its work. IFLA Secretary General Sharon Memis also welcomed the committee, noting that for her, working to make IFLA a more global organisation was a priority. The previous chair of the Regional Council, Nthabiseng Kotsokoane thanked the outgoing members for their work, and their help in getting us to this stage. The Professional Council chair underlined her Council’s strong focus on ensuring greater diversity on different IFLA units, and a desire to find better ways to connect between the professional and regional structures.
3. Introductions – new Regional Council members

The incoming members of the Regional Council introduced themselves, and their past experience.

The Council agreed to start a process of calling for a vice-chair, with a two-week deadline. If there was then more than one candidate, there would be a election, otherwise the candidate would be automatically elected. HQ would take this forwards.

4. Handover from previous Regional Council

The document was presented, noting that it contained insights based on evaluation of the last Council. The Council agreed to note the document and draw on it in future.

5. Forward planning

5.1 Report from each region about the state of the library sector
5.2 Report from each region about the LGBTQ+ community
5.3 Report on actions around children and youth in plans for inclusion and reading promotion

The Chair presented the proposal to collect reports from each region, as part of an effort to ensure that it is possible to give a more global overview of the library field to the Governing Board on key issues. Reports would be due by the end of September. It was agreed that IFLA HQ would prepare a template for these and distribute it in order to make this task as simple as possible.

5.4 Regional Council engagement around advocacy
5.5 Regional Council engagement around supporting global outreach
5.6 Regional Council engagement around overseeing and enabling the work of Regional Division Committees (including cooperation with other units)

These items and the associated papers were presented as background for future action planning. They follow a similar model to the Professional Council in terms of focusing on different aspects of its mandate. The Council could return to these issues at a future meeting.

5.7 Agreeing a template for Regional Division Committee Action Plans

The draft action plan template was presented, with it noted that it had been approved by the outgoing Council as a draft. Members of the Regional Council welcomed the template, and would take it to their Committees.

It was noted that activities like communications and engagement with Library Map of the World would be mainstreamed. IFLA HQ would share more information about engaging in the Map as soon as feasible.
5.8 Modalities of working (planning and performing work)
It was agreed to aim to meet twice before the December meeting, with one meeting on 29 September. IFLA HQ would send out a Doodle Poll with possible times.

It was noted that means of coordinating with the Professional Council should be a regular topic of discussion in order to reach objectives in this area.

5.9 Planning for an in-person meeting in December
It was recalled that Regional Council members had already been invited to an in-person meeting on 7-8 December in The Hague. On 8 December, there would be a joint meeting with the Regional Offices. It would be important to use this opportunity well in order to advance the Regional Council’s mandate. Further proposals around planning for this would come at a future meeting.

The Council also agreed to invite Regional Offices to future meetings.

6. AOB
No other business was discussed.