

Report of the IFLA Division D Midterm, June 5-7, 2024

"Global Openness" was the theme and title of the IFLA Division D Midterm meeting held at Koç University in Istanbul from 5-7 June 2024. Participants from 16 countries joined the meeting and participated in lively and productive discussions.



*Topkapi Palace, Hagia Sophia, and the Blue Mosque
with the Bosphoros behind them, the Golden Horn in front
(seen from the conference center)*

The geographical setting was chosen to support the theme. The organizers aimed to review the status and look forward to the future of the global shift towards open access publishing, open science and scholarship, and open educational resources. The particular focus was on the impact and opportunity for such work in and beyond the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region and throughout what is conventionally spoken of as the "global south." While much of the power and decision-making that affects the global community is situated in Europe and North America, the impact of decisions and actions taken there is spread across the globe and affects those with economic and political challenges. We met in Istanbul to draw a wide range of participation and hold a more global perspective. The first land called "Europe" was exactly where the city of Istanbul began.

Accordingly, we were joined by numerous colleagues from Turkey, as well as from Algeria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia (virtually), Kenya, Montenegro, Pakistan, South Africa, Syria, and Ukraine (plus Europe and North America). From the iconic Anamed building dedicated to the study of Anatolian civilization where we met, we had a view of the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, and the spires of Byzantium. We could see the water traffic passing to and from the Black Sea and Mediterranean and view the Asian shore. It was bracing to be in so fitting a place for the conversations we would have. The meeting venue was on Independence Avenue (*Istiklal Caddesi*), the thronged pedestrian street at the heart of the city, well and carefully managed by the famous cats of Istanbul, who were very much in evidence and doing quite a good job keeping order, surveying the crowds, and (in one case) helping the owners of a shawarma shop test their merchandise! Another worked as lobby manager in our hotel.



Cats of Istanbul (1) – hotel manager at work



Cats of Istanbul (2): surveying the street scene

The Midterm meeting ran across three days and included four keynotes and 20 presentations selected from submissions around the world. The lead organizers of the conference came from IFLA Division D (Ann Okerson, Chair) and from Turkish colleagues (Hosts Tuba Akbaytürk Çanak, Director of the Koç University Library and Chair of IFLA's Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Section; plus Ertuğrul Çimen, Director of the MEF University Library in Istanbul and Chair of IFLA's Europe Regional Division). The Program Planning committee for the event was drawn from volunteers representing four IFLA professional units: the Academic and Research Libraries Section (ARL), Acquisition and Collection Development Section (ACD), Science and Technology Section (SCITECH), and the Special Interest Group on Library Publishing (LIBPUB).



Istanbul Midterm – group photo of (many of the) participants

The conference enjoyed generous sponsorship that defrayed costs and supported invited keynote speakers from the library vendor community, particularly Bloomsbury, Clarivate, Digital Science, DOAJ, Ebsco, Elsevier, JSTOR, Library Consulting (Ireland), OCLC, PKP, and Wiley. The meeting was made possible through their generosity and intellectual contributions.

The opening keynote was delivered by the distinguished Turkish library leader, Dr. Yaşar Tonta, who also provided summative remarks at the end, while Professor Saray Córdoba González from Costa Rica and Glenn Hampson from the US (virtually) offered keynotes describing the progress and challenges for open access around the world. Dr. Gracian Chimwaza, the dynamic founding director of ITOCA (Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa), offered the final keynote.

Presentations described in interesting, indeed often fascinating, detail the open access publishing and practices of Croatia, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, Ukraine, and the U.S. The Turkish landscape was well and carefully described through analysis of activities of the ANKOS consortium, the Tubitak Ulakbim (Turkish Academic Network and Information Center), and the universities who work with those organizations. There were also important, highly relevant presentations covering many critical international infrastructural projects addressing aspects of openness (DIAMAS, DOAJ, OAPEN and DOAB, ORCID, and the Open Book Collective), as well as institutional updates from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Ohio State University, Koç University, Kastamonu University, and the Izmir Institute of Technology, among others.



Organizers Ertuğrul Çimen, Ann Okerson, Tuba Akbaytirk

Istanbul has been a crossroads and a market for the world - our limited time at the Grand Bazaar was ample reminder of that! - and our conversations reminded delegates of the delicate balances that keep global systems of anything - including publishing - moving forward while stable at the same time. Some of the participants had attended a Fiesole Collections Retreat in Cape Town a few weeks earlier and saw resonances with presentations about that region. In Istanbul, participants talked about ways that regions differ in their needs and opportunities, and we found ourselves thinking that Latin America, Central and South Asia, and Southeast Asia are all regions with unique challenges and opportunities. One "open" size does not fit all.

IFLA's global reach is a vitally important convening function that is being used to good effect to advance conversations on these topics in some of those other regions as well. Without our delegates, our sponsors, our active IFLA sections, and our friends at Koç and MEF, none of this would have been possible. It takes a village, and we cannot close this note without thanking everyone again for their very practical support of our common vision.

Slides and photos will be available soon via the Koç website, and several presenters have agreed to write up their presentations in the form of papers, which will be available this fall in an IFLA venue. Several remote presentations were recorded and will be added to the mix. All of these resources will be freely accessible and announced when ready.

Ann Okerson/IFLA Division D Chair