



**Defending the interests of libraries and
their users**
The role of IFLA in library lobby

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of Library Associations and Institutions

- IFLA is the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, founded in 1927. It is the global voice for libraries and librarians all over the world. IFLA supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- IFLA's activities are based on three pillars: society, profession and members. IFLA's membership offers global reach: 1700 members from 150 countries including national, international & specialist library associations, libraries and information services, corporate partners and individuals. They devote their time and share knowledge to improve methods, technical means and standards. Libraries and information services serve society by preserving memory, feeding development, enabling education & research, and supporting international understanding & community well being. IFLA's work with partners include Unesco and the Telecentre Movement, and the international associations of Publishers, Museums and Archives to address shared priorities.
- IFLA focuses on the role and impact of libraries and information services in society and the contextual issues that condition and constrain the environment in which they operate across the world. These issues include the library matters related to human rights, legal issues, conservation and disaster protection and the advocacy in the [World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)](#) IFLA has invested much in this global advocacy and calls on national library associations to continue these investments by lobbying also at the national level, preparing the second phase leading up to the November 2005 summit meeting in Tunis and to the achieve the longer term goals.
- At its 75th Anniversary, IFLA proclaimed its Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom. The basis is the fundamental right of human beings both to access and to express information without restriction. Libraries and information services provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination in any medium and regardless of frontiers. They serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture, offering essential support for independent decision-making, cultural development, research and lifelong learning by both individuals and groups.
<http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/gldeclar-e.html>
- Whenever appropriate to advocate, IFLA states that libraries and information services shall protect each user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted. Library users shall have the right to personal privacy and anonymity. Librarians and other library staff shall not disclose the identity of users or the materials they use to a third party.
- During the World Library and Information Congress in Berlin, there was much debate about the US PATRIOT Act and similar legislation being enacted elsewhere around the world. The sessions organised by the IFLA Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) committee in particular dealt with the dangers posed by trends towards restricting access in the name of the war against terror. Kay Raseroka, who took office as IFLA President during the congress, said that she was very worried that the emerging democracies would take a lead from the West and use the excuse to reverse the path to free access to information.
- IFLA also drew attention to the consequences for libraries, librarians, and library users of national security legislation. In a resolution adopted in Berlin it deplores the introduction by a number of countries of legislation which violates fundamental human rights to privacy and unhampered access to information in the name of national security, and calls for the repeal or amendment of all such legislation in order to protect these rights. <http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/resolution03.htm>
- National library associations are requested to respond on this matter to the FAIFE Office of IFLA. www.ifla.org/faife/: So what is the response in the Netherlands?