

Bibliosuisse's position on the call of the Ukrainian Library Association to the IFLA Governing Board regarding the exclusion of the members of the Russian Federation

We have followed the mail exchanges on the IFLA mailing-lists with a feeling of deep sadness. As all those who have participated in the discussion on the IFLA mailing lists, we stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and colleagues who are suffering from the consequences of war.

Bibliosuisse is aware of the dilemma that the appeal of excluding members from the Russian Federation poses for the profession, as the issue of freedom of expression and access to information is central to IFLA, when in the same time, it would be of human necessity to maintain a space for discussion with information specialists on the ground.

Bibliosuisse has understanding for those who defend the right of our Russian colleagues to continue their participation in IFLA, with regard to their individual lengthy and courageous engagement for the values of our profession and with regard to the very mission of our institutions and associations globally that makes them natural bridge- and peace-builders and not agents of exclusion.

However, Bibliosuisse considers that the global profession has to accept that, as a matter of fact, IFLA can no longer maintain its collaboration with representatives of the official Federation of Russia if they are proven to be unable to act accordingly to IFLA's statutes, in the context of a country having severely violated international laws and being very officially and very explicitly forbidding freedom of speech in a new set of national laws. This is in total contradiction with the mission of IFLA and according to the statutes of the association, this is a reason for the Governing Board to exclude a member (2.3 and 5.3).

Therefore Bibliosuisse advises IFLA to examine the possibility for its members to actually act in respect of its statutes, that is to endeavor any possible efforts to serve its community with access to information and to suspend the membership of any member who would be proven to not be able to respect the statutes.

Even if it is a symbolic action regarding the actual course of the events, such a suspension based on proven facts would be an unquestionable and strong action with a strong meaning in terms of reaffirming our professional values here and now and in an attempt to preparing our future together.

Finally, Bibliosuisse encourages IFLA and all the professional associations and libraries in the world to offer their services in order to enable a global exchange of ideas in a perspective of long term peace-building efforts and to improve access to information, in this very context of war, but also in other contexts where access to information is endangered.



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