



REPORT
on the 100th Bibliothekartag 2011 in Berlin
(7th – 10th June 2011)

Daniela Skokovic
Children's librarian
Pozega Public Library
Serbia
skokovic@ptt.rs

My journey to Berlin started on that happy day in May when Ms Tina Baumgart (BI-International) contacted me by e-mail informing that my application for a grant to attend Bibliothekartag 2011 was successful. I was looking for all available online information about Congress and libraries in Berlin to prepare for such a great opportunity in my professional life.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my "German sister librarian" Mrs Susanne Brandt from Westoverledingen, because she invited and informed me about Congress and possibility that BI-International could give me financial support for visiting Bibliothekartag 2011 in Berlin. It had been a great honour that I was invited and could meet her for the first time at such a great event. Both of us were involved in IFLA Sister libraries project for almost a year and half ("Sister Libraries" connection between Pozega in Serbia and Westoverledingen in Germany exists since January 2010). We built a very successful partnership between our two libraries. We have been organizing and developing joint programs and activities in our libraries, exchanging ideas and views about librarianship in our countries, share ideas about library programs for children that we were managed in our libraries, had the possibility to bring our different talents and ideas in this project.

I would like to thank the Library&Information International (**BI-International**) for their financial support that made possible my librarian's dreams came true. Participating in a such well-organized and jubilee congress, meeting Susanne for the first time in person and visiting incredible Berlin was really invaluable experience for me.

I registered for the Congress on the first day, 7th June so that was the beginning of my adventure as a newcomer. Attendance at the 100th Bibliothekartag broke all records this year. About 5000 participants came to Berlin from Germany and almost 500 were from all around the world. I was the only one participant from Serbia but I didn't feel lonely at all. I moved around the halls of the Estrel Convention Center trying to choose carefully what sessions and

workshops I would like to attend. It wasn't an easy task at all because programs took place in 16 conference rooms simultaneously. Regardless of such large space at Estrel it was not unusual that you could see librarians were sitting on the floor carefully listening lectures they were interested in. During the breaks I used to ramble around exhibition halls where 176 exhibitors had been presenting the latest innovations in librarianship - e-readers, multitouch systems, gaming devices, self check solutions for libraries. I have to say that I have really enjoyed the atmosphere, sometimes I was just sitting and silently observing librarians passing by in a hurry for their sessions. It is not usual to be amongst 5000 librarians when you are coming from a quite small public library as it is one I am working in so I enjoyed every moment of that festive atmosphere of jubilee congress .

On that first day I found the place where I attended the most of the sessions – "ZukunftsWerkstatt" in Raum Paris. There I learnt about the latest communications technologies and devices that I could try myself, gaming in the libraries and multitouch systems (DOK, Netherlands). Susanne and I also attended together the session "Facebook and Libraries" because both of us were interested in the topic and later we discussed our thoughts on what might work for libraries in Facebook. During our cooperation we have been using social media to exchange photos and other interesting information and to connect our patrons.

I was really impressed by "Cycling for libraries" presentation. Two of the organizers of that unconference, Mace Ojala and Jukka Pennanen were interviewed on *This Week in Libraries* live. I met there some of the participants, Claudia and Patrick, and it was interesting to talk about their adventurous trip and memorable experience. We could see a great set of beautiful photos and videos so I was inspired to write an article about that unconference to present "Librarians on the move" to my colleagues in Serbia.

Later in the evening the official Opening session was held at the Concert Hall in Berlin Mitte. I felt proud to be a part of a global community of librarianship on the red carpet.



Konzerthaus building had first opened in 1776 as the French Comedy Theatre. One of the three spectacular buildings on the Gendarmenmarkt, the harmonious ensemble, including the German and French Dome, is revered as a treasure of German neoclassical architecture. Severly damaged during the war, the Konzerthaus only reopened in 1984. Here, on Christmas day 1989, Leonard Bernstein conducted Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with its famous Ode to Freedom.

Greetings to participants have been told by Susane Riedel, the Chairman of German Professional Association of Libraries and Ellen Tise, the President of IFLA.

The next evening I attended a reception for the international participants at the Berliner Rathaus sponsored by the Mayor of Berlin and hosted by Ingeborg Junge – Reyer. It was a great opportunity to meet librarians from other countries and have a good time talking about different aspects of global librarianship. During that evening I tried to visit at least two of 40 libraries in Berlin that were open till midnight for the first "Long night of the libraries".

The program has been very well organized with exhibitions, concerts, readings and performances. I walked to the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek - Unter den Linden) which is in renovation. On my way to the hotel I visited the other Staatsbibliothek building in Potsdamer Strasse. I made an improvised library tour carried out by a very kind librarian so I had opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere and beautiful interior of the library. I picked the leaflet about book orders and lending at the information desk so later I have noticed what are the differences on borrowing books, online catalogue (StaBiKat) etc. Between the National Library of Serbia and German State Library. One of the similarities is that our national library is also in reconstruction.

I was looking forward the next day because it was the day when my „sister librarian“ Susanne was expecting to come to the Congress. Our first meeting seemed as we knew each other for a very long time. It happens sometimes in a real life that you could share positive and creative energy, same professional attitudes and work with same enthusiasm, with a colleague with whom you are communicating only by social media. I found one sentence in IFLA Sister libraries project's description that you have to be a little bit lucky to find appropriate partner for your library as it is happened when you are looking for someone who could be your friend in a real life. Successful pairing of our two libraries brought a great satisfaction to our patrons through different programs and activities we made together. In Berlin we had a great opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas about all aspects of our partnership and plans for future actions. On Thursday I have got the chance to talk about our partnership at KiBa lounge during the presentation about Sister libraries project that was made by students of Prof. Kerstin Keller-Loibl who is also involved in Project as „godmother“ for paired libraries. They stated partnership between our two libraries as a good example within the project.



Prof. Kerstin Keller-Loibl and her students



Presentation of IFLA Sister libraries project

Friday was the last day of Bibliothekartag 2011. I attended the session that I was most interested in – about projects and programs for children that were implemented in German public and school libraries. Susanne was one of the speakers. I wrote down some notes that I heard about very successful projects – Schu:Bi, Projekt Lesestark (Dresden) and Lesesommer. I will be able to implement some of the ideas in my library and present them to my colleagues in Serbia.

I felt a little bit sad upon the Closing session of the Congress. Those four days were incredible experience for me. My conference bag was full of materials that I planned to read upon coming back home. My heart was also full with incredible memories that I will cherish forever.

I spent two more days after the Congress enjoying sightseeing in Berlin and Potsdam. Anyone who has ever been to Berlin knows that it is a city that is constantly changing and never stands still! I was fascinated by mixture of people and the way of their living that makes my stay completely unforgettable. I will repeat a common sentence, you can really feel like

a world's citizen in this city. Berlin is a paradise for everyone who loves the beginning more than the end.

I would like to thank once again to **Bibliothek & Information – International** for funding my visit and making this opportunity a reality. I am proud to count myself among their grant recipients.



Bibliothekarsportal birthday, Susanne and me