

2018-03-02

To IFLA Governing Board / IFLA President Glòria Pérez-Salmerón

The Nordic library associations wishes to express our concern in relation to IFLA's choice of venue for WLIC.

We fully agree with what Mr Gerald Leitner expresses in the IFLA statement "Spreading Library Values through Global Dialogue" that it is important that IFLA is active all over the world. IFLA can not only choose countries that already fully live up to all the high values that IFLA work for.

IFLA should instead be more outspoken and try to address the specific issues during the congress, especially with the values that can be at risk in a certain country. This can be the message from key note speakers and of course from IFLA officials. Then IFLA "empowers our members in host countries and their wider regions" as the statement so well expresses it.

But our members must feel safe and not at risk to their personal safety when attending the congress.

Many of our members are very active within IFLA and work hard in moving the IFLA vision forward. Our associations support our own IFLA-active members in many ways. By spreading information about IFLA, encouraging them to engage, in some countries with special member networks within our associations and grants to attend WLIC. Some of our members have expressed deep concern for the question of WLIC location this year in Malaysia, concerning the country's legislation against the LGBTQ-group.

In the statement IFLA comments when it chooses countries with discriminatory laws that effects the possibility for members to attend: "When IFLA decides to hold a Congress in a country where such laws are in place it respects the decision of those who choose not to travel." This is not good enough. We do not want IFLA to choose countries that has this effect. Our members should not have to choose not to attend, because they are threatened by the host country's discriminatory laws.

So with the deepest respect for the Governing Board's work to spread library values through global dialogue and the balancing act that this requires, we expect that IFLA in the future chooses countries that allows all IFLA members to feel welcomed to the World Library and Information Congress.

Yours sincerely,

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