

IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Standing Committee Report for 2011–2012

1. Midterm Meeting in Ambers

The IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Midterm Meeting was celebrated on 1st and 2nd February in Antwerp with the conference *Ambassadors of the Book: Competences for heritage librarians*, in cooperation with the Library and Information Science Department of the University of Antwerp and Flanders Heritage Library, the École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques (ENSSIB, Lyon), FARO - Flemish interface centre for cultural heritage, the LIBER Steering Committee for Heritage Collection and Preservation, and the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL).

The day after the conference, the members of the RBM Standing Committee had a working meeting dedicated to the preparation of the activities in the next Congresses in Helsinki and Singapore, and the Guidelines for the Digitization of Manuscripts and Rare Books.

2. IFLA Congress in Helsinki

The RBMS meetings in Helsinki included two Standing Committee meetings and two sessions: on 13th August, off-site session in the National Library of Finland *Marketing of rare and special collections in a digital age* and a second session on 16th August: *Cataloguing standards and special collections*.

3. Financial report

The RBM Section annual sum originally allocated by IFLA was 700 euros, it was increased up to 874 euros to cover expenses associated to the publication of Antwerp conference papers, *Ambassadors of the book : competences and training for heritage librarians*.

4. Strategic plan

The RBM Standing Committee went through the strategic plan and redrafted the priority actions:

Mission

The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information on matters of particular concern to rare book and manuscript librarians, including collection, preservation, bibliographic control of, and access to such materials, in all types of libraries.

Goals

The RBM section's vision is focused on the history of the book, and the international definition of special collections and bibliographical heritage. The strategic plan contemplates:

1. to increase the visibility of special collections
2. to increase the attention for the special collections in their libraries
3. to encourage networking for special collections and associations around the world

4. to promote the attention to the bibliographical heritage
5. to help specialist to face new problems and adapt to the evolution of the profession.

Actions

- 1) To develop a definition of "special collections" ("special collections of documentary heritage") which will allow to move forward from the concept of rare books and manuscripts into that of special collection (adapting to UNESCO's definition), helping institutions and professionals in the identification and description of special collections.
- 2) To identify and improve the new competences and skills that heritage librarians need, to help them face the changes and new demands of users and institutions. In order to achieve it, the RBMS intends to go into the specific skills that these professionals require, and compile an index of centers which offer these courses and promote cooperative training programs.