

**2nd Meeting of the UNIMARC Users Group**  
**Florence, 14th March 2008**  
*Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*

## **Opening speech**

### **Dr. Maurizio Fallace**

*Director-General for Library Heritage, Cultural Institutes and Copyright of the Ministry for National Heritage and Cultural Activities*

I am happy to introduce and attend this Second Meeting of the UNIMARC Users Group from various countries, together with the Permanent UNIMARC Committee (PUC) being held this year in Italy.

Italy has been involved for many years in the work of the UNIMARC Committee, through a representative who works at the Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries and Bibliographic Information in Rome (ICCU).

The Direzione Generale per i Beni Librari, gli Istituti Culturali ed il Diritto d'Autore del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali (Directorate-General for Library Heritage, Cultural Institutes and Copyright of the Ministry for National Heritage and Cultural Activities) has a special interest, amongst its functions and duties, for the protection and promotion of library patrimony as well as the programs and projects on studies, research and initiatives concerning the cataloguing of the national published heritage, and therefore promotes the development of bibliographic standards and formats in Italian libraries.

The policy of our Ministry, especially in recent years, because of the development of the Italian library network towards a greater interoperability, has promoted an increasing compliance with international standards to permit a greater access at the national and international level to Italian published heritage. The institutional objectives in this field have been achieved thanks to the work of the National Central Libraries of Florence and Rome.

Italy since 1958, has chosen and applied the UNIMARC bibliographic exchange format for the production of the BNI bibliographic records which is edited by the BNCF. Furthermore, the UNIMARC format has been used in the SBN (which is the first Italian bibliographical network founded in 1986) as well as in the export and exchange of bibliographic data and also in the national OPAC.

The Italian participation in international projects has encouraged the application and development of the UNIMARC exchange format and its extension to various bibliographic formats. The Italian presence on the Committee denotes the continuing interest the Directorate-General for Library Heritage has, towards the common work between institutions involved in the development of shareable communication languages at an international level.

Italy, through the ICCU, has worked on the Committee, for the coordination at a national level of requests and suggestions by Italian users, disseminating thus the Italian experience particularly in the area of early printed books and manuscripts as well as printed music.

The coordination between various national institutions in the field of standardization and application of bibliographic formats, is one of the priorities of the Directorate-General to favour a wider knowledge together with the sharing and uniformity of tools conceived for the information exchange between bibliographic systems.

The cooperation and harmonization between information systems for cultural heritage is one of the major objectives to be followed to offer coherent bibliographic services and the observance of standards is the necessary condition for effective interoperability.

I will follow up the work of this Conference which has been preceded by the annual meeting of the UNIMARC Committee organized to discuss priorities and objectives of IFLA UNIMARC Core Activity. I will ensure the continuing involvement and collaboration of Italy to the work and initiatives of this international programme.

This Conference represents also an evidence of the BNCF's involvement in activities at an international level. The engagement to research and disseminate common principles and practices for reducing costs but improving the information services is more necessary than ever.

The BNCF, as a bibliographic agency, since its origins has established comparison with other national libraries in the world concerning the procedures of producing the Italian national bibliography as well as the elaboration of cataloguing tools, such as "Soggettario per i cataloghi delle biblioteche italiane", "Nuovo Soggettario" and the Italian edition of the Dewey decimal classification. Nowadays the cooperation opportunities have increased thanks to the information technology development in the field of cataloguing as well as in the development and implementation of suitable strategies to collect and preserve the digital products, essential element for the transmission of the our time memory for generations to come. These future perspectives will be the 2009 IFLA Conference theme on "Libraries create future: building on cultural heritage", which will be held in Milan.

For our country and for the Directorate -General for Library Heritage, Cultural Institutes and Copyright be extremely important to welcome librarians from all over the world which will be discussing and exchanging experiences, in order to build a real knowledge society as a basis for future time of social development and peace.