



Booksellers on learning trip to the Netherlands

Amsterdam 14-06-08. Booksellers from around the world gathered this week in Amsterdam to attend the joint annual conference of the European and the International Booksellers Association. EBF is the umbrella organisation of the national booksellers associations in Europe; IBF is its international equivalent regrouping individual booksellers as well as some wholesalers.

Under this year's theme of "From Basic to Virtual Bookselling", the conference addressed the challenges the book trade is currently facing and the need for booksellers to adapt to changing business models and increased digitization. Some of the seminars and working sessions took place at the Centraal Boekhuis, a book distribution facility jointly run by booksellers and publishers, which stocks around 40 million books and also provides its customers with a whole range of ancillary information and logistic and financial services. Since the beginning of the year, Centraal Boekhuis has started to invest in RFID technology and the EBF/IBF delegates were presented with a solid business case in favour of the adoption of the chip based tag system (already fully implemented in several Dutch book shops and libraries), which allows bookshops to significantly save on time and costs. The conference participants were also visibly impressed by the focused campaigns of the Dutch Foundation for the collective promotion of the book trade (CPNB) and in general by the efficiency and the good cooperation between all the partners in the Dutch book trade chain.

EBF and IBF also held their respective General Assemblies. EBF members held a partial election of the Executive Committee which is now composed of 11 Members: John Mc Namee was re-elected as EBF President for another three years, as well as Tim Godfray (U.K), Lars-Erik Linder (Sweden), Luc Tessens (Belgium). Newcomers to the Executive Committee include Javier Camara, a bookseller from Spain, Kyra Dreher from the Boersenverein in Germany and Randi Ogrey from the Norwegian Booksellers Association. Iakovos Kokkalis (Greece, Vice-President), Olaf Winslow (Denmark, Treasurer), Ari Doeser, (the Netherlands) and Manfred Keiper (Germany) are still appointed until the statutory meeting of spring 2009. The IBF plenary session adopted a statement on freedom of expression underlining the importance of books as a means to peaceful dialogue and condemning any neglect or disregard of this fundamental human right – including restricted Internet access - by governments and authorities. The statement is joined in attachment to this press release.

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