



## Speech for the Annual Conference in Milan, 2009

Held at the closing ceremony in Quebec City, Canada

Mr President, Executive Committee, Professional Committee members, dear colleagues, friends and guests,

I feel pleased and honored that our next annual Conference will take place in Italy. We all still remember the excitement and the enthusiasm brought about by the announcement in Seoul, Korea, when this choice became official. It was joy and also gratitude to the IFLA for making such a gratifying decision.

IFLA in Italy: an important event but not a new one. It already happened the first time in 1929 when the Congress was hosted in Rome, Florence, and Venice, which have somewhat become a symbol for beauty and artistic expression, and the second time in 1964, in Rome. We have the pleasure to invite you in 2009 to Milan, the heart of Italian economic life as well as the seat of cultural treasures, the Gothic Cathedral (Duomo), the magnificent Opera House (La Scala), Leonardo of Vinci's "Last Supper", just to mention a few.

In Milan one can also find a wide variety of libraries, a lot of which are hosted in historical buildings, such as castles, convents, mansions, where architecture combined with rich collections of printed books, illuminated manuscripts and rare documents plays a special role and makes all these libraries well worth visiting. Our video is going to show you some of them, as the Braidense Library that holds many manuscripts of Alessandro Manzoni, and the Ambrosiana Library, the oldest public library in Milan, and the second one in the world, founded in 1604, registered in 1607, and opened on 8th December 1609, well known for its collections of Latin, Greek, Arabic and Chinese manuscripts, including Leonardo's *Codex Atlanticus*.

Milan and Lombardy boast many rich and effective libraries, that are a relevant part of the Italian library network, called SBN – Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale – and many local networks.

Architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, and ..., it goes without saying, music. Italy is also the cradle of the "Bel canto". It is no accident that the School of Music in Milan, the "Conservatorio" carries the name of Giuseppe Verdi, the swan of Italian composers, who spent a significant part of his long life in Milan, turning La Scala into one of the most symbolic stages in the world. In agreement with Milan's Conservatorio, the Italian National Committee has offered a sample of Italian Music, the *Capriccio* by Amilcare Ponchielli, for oboe and piano.

A centuries-long tradition has been attracting visitors to Italy. The *journey to Italy* has always been regarded as a turning point in the life of educated people. Italian librarians intend to persist this tradition. The geographic location, serves as a bridge between cultures and civilisations with their extraordinary values, all leading to the Mediterranean Sea. We are sure that IFLA 2009 will represent a remarkable connection between different people and culture.

This is the meaning of the "*Libraries create futures: building on cultural heritage*", the topic for the IFLA 2009 Milan. Libraries can really build the future if they improve the quality in people's life through their culture made easy to be detected in every part of the world.

See you in Italy! See you in Milan in August 2009!

*Mauro Guerrini*

President of Italian National Committee IFLA 2009 Milan

[www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/index.htm](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla75/index.htm)