CDNL MEETING AT THE IFLA WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS

In August 2026 the annual IFLA World Library and Information Congress was held in Busan, South Korea, bringing together more than 3,000 librarians from around the world. As part of the Congress, the annual meeting of the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) took place on 11 August. It was chaired by Dr. Tomasz Makowski, Director General of the National Library of Poland, who was elected Chair of CDNL in 2025. The meeting was hosted by the National Library of Korea and attended by directors of national libraries from more than 40 countries.

The main theme was the role of national libraries in the age of artificial intelligence, with discussions focusing on the reliability and authenticity of information, new ways of accessing knowledge and the responsibility of national libraries in a changing information environment.

The meeting was preceded by two keynote presentations. Professor Sung-Hyon Myaeng of KAIST spoke on "Libraries in the Age of AI: A New Intersection of Humanity and Technology", highlighting the opportunities and limitations of AI and identifying new roles for libraries as "guardians of trust", "grassroots educators" and providers of reliable data for AI systems. He also stressed the continuing importance of libraries as spaces for human interaction. The second keynote, "Twins and Minions: Libraries in the World of Agentic AI", was delivered by Professor Marek Kowalkiewicz of Queensland University of Technology. He focused on AI systems capable of independently carrying out tasks and pursuing defined goals, raising questions about human control and responsibility. For libraries, he stressed the need to focus on users' needs and the changing role of library services. The presentations provided an introduction to the discussion of the draft Busan Declaration, presented by Professor Young-Joon Nam, Director of the

National Library of Korea. Participants expressed different views on the document and on the timing of its adoption. It was agreed to allow a period for comments and establish a working group to prepare a revised draft.

Representatives of IFLA, President Leslie Weir and Secretary General Sharon Memis, discussed current activities of the Federation and areas for closer cooperation with CDNL. Presentations by the National Library of Australia, the National Library of Türkiye and the British Library provided an opportunity to exchange experience on common challenges. The organisation of CDNL's work and preparations for the Busan meeting were coordinated by CDNL Secretary Julia Konopka-Żołnierczuk, Deputy Director of the National Library of Poland and member of the IFLA Governing Board. Since Tomasz Makowski became Chair in 2025, the CDNL Secretariat has been based at the National Library of Poland in Warsaw.