

BERLIN 2003

Evaluation of the IFLA World Library And Information Congress

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1. Introduction

This report is the evaluation of the participants' perceptions of the IFLA - conference in Berlin, 2003. It is the 7th evaluation report conducted by the Department of Library and Information Management at Royal School of Library and Information Science in Denmark.

It has given the author the rather unique opportunity to reuse data and make comparisons over time. This comparison over time is a bit more complex this year due to a change survey structure.

Doing the evaluation gave the author the opportunity to participate in the conference. This participation is important, because it gives a framework for interpreting both the marks and the verbal statements put forward by the attendees.

The response rate during the former evaluations has been around 10 %. It is a rather low figure. The main problem with the response is not its size but the self-selectiveness of it. We were working with a self-selected sample. This was due to the distribution of the questionnaire.

This year we decided to execute the survey in a different form. We have based the evaluation on two different questionnaires. In every participant's conference bag we placed the short questionnaire consisting of only thirteen questions. The thirteen questions are a selection of some of the important issues from the earlier evaluations. Then, it is possible to compare the evaluation of the conference at least in respect to some of the dimensions.

We got 659 usable forms. This is the biggest number of respondents yet. It implies, that people are more inclined to answer a short form. The response rate is over 20 %.

We also made a longer questionnaire and asked about 10 % of the participants to fill it out. The sample was asked by e-mail to fill it out. 500 respondents were randomly picked out of the registered participants a couple of weeks before the Conference started. They received the questionnaire as an attached file and were asked to send it in immediately after the Conference. It was impossible to reach all 500 due to the fact that app. 70 of the 500 e-mails bounced back. Immediately after the Conference, 135 participants registering on - site were picked, also on a random basis. The total sample was just a bit over 505 and the number of usable returned questionnaires was 213. In other words, the response rate was around 40 %.

It is important to emphasise that more than 213 people answered, but around 65 of the returned forms were blank or not filled out. It means that many of the people forget to save the form before they returned it or gave wrong commands to their word - processing system.

The response rate for the short questionnaire is rather good, but a response rate of only 40 % - or 50 % if you count the empty returned forms - for the long questionnaire is a bit disappointing because the sample was asked by e - mail to fill it out. However, the total number of evaluations is the largest so far.

The new way of conducting the evaluation has been interesting. The long questionnaire was attached a cover letter. It is obvious that many people have written longer comments than they would do on a paper form. It is also important that we give clearer instructions in the future for returning a usable form.

The administration of the forms has been rather difficult. Some of the forms were send to IFLA HQ and forwarded to the author. Some respondents forwarded the form directly to the author.

Some forms came in both duplicate and triplicate. It gave quite a lot of controlling and cleansing the data file.

A draft of the long questionnaire was send to the members of the Professional Board. Members of the Professional Board came up with many very useful comments and suggestions. Most of them are incorporated in the questionnaire.

The new questionnaire was really a joint effort and the author of this report is rather satisfied with the resulting form.

The evaluation report differs from the previous reports. The previous evaluation reports emphasised comparison with earlier conferences. Due to the change in questionnaires, it is impossible to make a lot of comparison with previous IFLA – conferences. This report is probably a bit more demanding for the reader because of the employment of two questionnaires.

It has been more complicated to write this report because of the administration of the forms and the interpretation of two sets of data. On the other hand, I am convinced that the high total number of respondents gives a better picture of the participants' perception of the whole experience.

As usual, the cooperation with the staff at the IFLA HQ has been smooth, effective and friendly.

I hope that the evaluation report is useful in relation to the planning of future events.

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2. A quick glance at the congress

This chapter only reports the findings from the short questionnaire consisting of 13 questions placed in all participants' conference bags. We got 659 usable forms returned. It is a response rate over 20 % and it is much better than the previous years. Together with the over 200 detailed responses from the long questionnaire we have every possibility to elicit rich and detailed information about the evaluation of the conference.

In this short chapter, we will present the main result from the evaluation of the Berlin Conference and we will also compare the results with data from the previous conferences.

A look at the participants reveals that 32 % are male and 68 % female. Compared with previous conferences the picture is much the same. Not all respondents state their gender.

Table 1: Conference year and gender

		Conference Year					
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gender	Male	35,7%	33,3%	30,4%	28,6%	30,6%	31,6%
	Female	64,3%	66,7%	69,6%	71,4%	69,4%	68,4%
Total		459	417	270	532	399	648
		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

We also got information about the age of the participants. The mean and median age are 46,4 and 47. The first and third quartiles are 38 and 55 years. Compared to previous years, the following picture emerge in the next table:

Table 2: Conference year and average age of the respondents

Age		Conference Year					
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Mean		48,51	45,85	49,42	49,42	47,46	46,38
N		450	417	262	493	373	550

It is evident from table 2 that quite a lot of delegates find it unnecessary to answer the question about their age.

It is encouraging that we find a slight tendency to a decrease in the average age.

It is of course not possible to list the number of participants from every country. We have only listed the countries with more than 5 or more respondents in the sample. The figures are:

Australia 9 - Austria: 5 - Belgium 7 – Canada 14 – The Czech Republic 13 - Denmark 17 – Egypt 11 - Finland 9 – France 34 – Germany 112 – Greece 5, India 10 – Israel 6 – Italy 15 – Mexico 5 – Netherlands 5 – Norway 12 – Pakistan 5 – Poland 13 – Russia 14 – Senegal 7 – Serbia 13 – South Africa 7 – Spain 22 – Switzerland 5 - Turkey 5- United Kingdom 46 – USA 66

96 different countries are represented in the sample. It is obvious that many countries only have the possibility to send a small delegation.

In the questionnaire, we elicited information about the number of IFLA – conferences the single respondent had attended. 35 % of the respondents from the Berlin conference were first – timers. This percentage has varied between 30 % and 40 % during the previous conferences.

We will now turn our attention to the overall evaluation of the Congress. The evaluation is compared with the previous conferences by the average marking on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 as the best value.

Table 3: Overall evaluation of the Congress and conference year

	Conference Year						
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
The conference as a whole	3,99	4,15	3,89	3,47	4,20	4,00	4,09
The different sessions	3,94	3,93	3,94	3,80	3,95	3,92	4,02
Service level before			3,97	3,93	4,08	4,34	4,29
The Service facilities	4,03	4,22	4,02	3,47	4,27	4,05	4,03
Internet Bar						4,14	4,35
Cultural and social events	3,84	4,31	3,75	3,61	4,21	4,09	3,92
Location	3,89	4,54	4,04	3,63	4,70	4,37	4,60
conference center			3,88	3,60	4,52	4,24	3,93
Quality of accommodation	3,54	3,95	4,38	3,52	4,08	3,78	4,12

It is obvious that the Berlin congress has received a very positive evaluation. Only 2 out of 9 values are below 4. Especially the evaluation of the different sessions is high. This is the important figure in relation to the conference. The respondents also rated Berlin as a conference city very high and we find a very high satisfaction rate in relation to the service level before the conference and at least a very good evaluation of the Internet access at the conference centre.

3. The participants

In this chapter we will take a closer look at the demographic characteristics among the delegates. We merge a few of the variables from the short and the long questionnaire. This means that results can differ a bit from the information in the previous chapter. It has the advantage that we have information about 872 respondents in total.

Let us take a look at the delegates at the conference. We will start to look at the gender. There is a minor difference compared to table 1.

Table 4: Gender at the Berlin Congress (merged sample)

Gender	Number	%
Male	284	33
Female	571	67
Total	855	100

About one third of the participants are male. This figure is very similar to previous years. The next information we provide concerns the age distribution of the respondents.

750 out of 872 respondents gave information about their age. In the merged sample the average age is 46,3. It is very similar to the average age emerging from the short questionnaire indicating a similarity between the two samples.

The next table shows how many conferences the respondents have participated in.

Table 5: Number of IFLA conferences in numbers and %. (Merged sample)

Number of conferences	Number	%	Cumulative %
0	295	36	36
1 - 2	230	28	64
3 - 5	144	18	82
6 - 10	95	10	92
11 -	53	8	100

Over one third of the respondents from the Berlin conference were first – timers. This figures fit very well with the figures from the previous chapter, again indicating the similarity of the two samples. Only 18 % of the respondents have participated in six or more IFLA – conferences indicating a good renewal of the group of attendees.

Table 6: Indicate the types of IFLA – activity in which you are involved %.

Activity	%
National IFLA committee	6
Standing committee member	24
IFLA – officer	5
IFLA Governing Board Member	1
IFLA member	40
Engaged in IFLA projects	12
Conference speaker	17
Conference attendee	73
Total N	213

Table 6 shows the activity the respondents are involved in at the IFLA – congress. The percentages come to more than 100 because a lot of respondents are involved in more than one activity.

The next table is answers relating to the respondents professional function. The most striking feature of the table is the rather low percentage of teachers and researchers. In the sample, it is just 5 %. In some of the previous evaluations it has been around 10 %. We have seen a slightly decreasing trend in this category the last couple of years.

Table 7: The professional function of the respondents. In %.

Profession	%
Librarian	50
Library Director	29
Teacher or researcher	5
Library Association	5
Private Company	6
Student	1
Other	5
Number N	213

We also used the opportunity to ask if people participated in one of the satellite conferences. 15 % of the respondents declared that they participated in one of the satellite conferences.

In earlier reports, we asked about participants' perception of their language skills. This year we asked the respondents to answer the following statements concerning command of English and the importance of interpretation and translation.

Table 8: Respondents' evaluation of their language skills and needs. Row %. (Long questionnaire)

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
My command of English is excellent	7	4	3	8	1	3	3	20
It is very important for me that simultaneous interpretation is available	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	20
It is very important for me that the papers are translated	4	3	4	4	0	1	3	
	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	19
	2	1	6	3	5	7	6	

14 % indicates that their English is not that good and over 55 % says that it is important that simultaneous translation is available at the Congress. Nearly the same proportion finds it important that papers are translated. From a more detailed analysis it appears that female delegates express a greater need for interpretation and translation.

This chapter contains information based on both the long and the short questionnaire. The following chapters will only contain information from the long questionnaire. As a frame of reference for interpreting the following it is important to take a look at the profile of the people responding to the long questionnaire.

4. The professional content of the congress

This and the following chapters contain information from the long questionnaire based on statements or items respondents had to answer on a seven – point scale indicating their degree of agreeing with the single statement.

We present the information in three different ways. Each chapter will have a table showing the distribution of answers in relation to the seven – point scale. We will also have some tables using bivariate analysis of the statements in relation to background variables like gender, age and other issues. These tables will be presented using the means of the distribution. These tables will only include the statements where one can detect significant differences in relation to the background variables. Finally, we will quote comments from the questionnaires. Some of the statements and quotes are rather long and focus on several different issues. It means that some of the quotes concerns matters presented in different chapters of the report. I found that it was important verbatim to present the whole argument.

The first of the next two tables shows the distribution of gender and age in the long questionnaire. The second shows the distribution of gender and number of conferences attended. I judge that these two tables are important interpreting the following analyses.

Table 9: Gender and age in the long questionnaire.

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	-45	30 40,5%	68 54,4%	98 49,2%
	46-	44 59,5%	57 45,6%	101 50,8%
Total		74 100,0%	125 100,0%	199 100,0%

14 respondents have not answered one of the two questions. It is important to note that female respondents are younger than male respondents.

Table 10: gender and number of conferences attended in the long questionnaire.

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Number of IFLA conferences	first-timer	23 29,5%	59 46,5%	82 40,0%
	1-5	37 47,4%	56 44,1%	93 45,4%
	6-	18 23,1%	12 9,4%	30 14,6%
Total		78 100,0%	127 100,0%	205 100,0%

Table 10 shows the distribution of gender and number of conferences attended. Only 8 persons have not answered both questions, indicating that the age question is the one that people tend to skip. It is also interesting to compare the figures with the similar figures in the previous chapter. We do see small deviations but overall, the two different samples are rather similar. We find

proportional more female participants among the first-timers. The male participants are the ones that have participated in most conferences.

We will now turn our attention to the analysis of the data.

The professional content of the congress is of vital importance. The overall picture presented in the table is very positive.

Table 11: Evaluation of the professional content of the congress. In row %

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
Overall, the presentations had a very high standard	3	2	7	13	29	36	11	207
The mix of academic and professional papers was very good	0	3	4	18	34	28	14	203
Overall, the lectures were relevant for my work	2	1	12	16	18	32	20	192
Too many papers were purely descriptive	6	18	18	26	15	12	6	197
I think there are too many low – quality papers presented	19	23	18	21	11	5	3	182
I found the Poster Sessions very interesting	1	5	9	28	14	24	19	182
I found the programme of the sections very rewarding	1	1	8	6	24	33	27	185

76 % agreed that the presentations had a very high standard and that the mix of academic and professional papers was very good. The overall picture is that the respondents evaluate the papers very well, but it is also evident that some people find that the poster sessions could be more attractive and there is also a slight tendency that some people find that many papers are maybe a bit too descriptive.

We will now turn our attention to the evaluation of the professional content of the congress in relation to gender and age. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 12: Evaluation of the professional content in relation to gender and age. Means.

	Male	Female	- 45	46 -
Overall, the presentations had a very high standard	4,82	5,37		
Overall, the lectures were relevant for my work	4,80	5,50	5,52	5,03

Only two of the seven statements in this section give evidence of a significant difference in relation to gender. The female respondents evaluate the overall quality higher than the male and they found the lectures more relevant. In relation to the last statement we find that younger people are more prone than older to see the relevance of the lectures.

The third background variable we present is the number of IFLA – conferences the single respondent has participated in.

Here we see a huge difference in evaluation in relation to this background variable.

It is evident that the first – timers overall have a higher evaluation of the lectures and presentations than persons with more conference experience.

Table 13: Evaluation of the professional content in relation to the number of IFLA – conferences. Means.

	First-timer	1 – 5	6 -
Overall, the presentations had a very high standard	5,41	5,12	4,50
The mix of academic and professional papers was very good	5,53	4,99	5,07
Overall, the lectures were relevant for my work	5,52	5,17	4,67
I think there are too many low – quality papers presented	2,79	3,02	4,11
I found the Poster Sessions very interesting	5,18	5,03	4,36
I found the programme of the sections very rewarding	5,82	5,57	5,11

Below are some of the comments on the questionnaires:

The activities, meetings, workshops and open sessions of the sections are very important to the members and other people who are interested in these particular areas. I suggest that these activities, meetings etc are given space in the program at the main conference venue so attendance is helped. The offsite workshops were probably under - attended because of difficulties in registering and finding the venue.

The opening and closing sessions should be more fun and exciting. Attempts must be made to ensure, as many participants are present. These two events must be seen as key events of the conference.

The meeting for the First Timers was very useful but if there is something like this inside each section - it may help me twice.

The 'brainstorming' session was valuable in helping the groups within the Divisions to develop some cooperative activities – I also think that collaboration with groups in other Divisions is important to prevent 'silos' of separate activity and duplicated efforts – I suggest that the brainstorming session could be expanded for this purpose.

This was my first IFLA conference and a wonderful experience for me, because of the broad international aspect and the contacts from so many countries. I'm an academic and this is more a practitioner's conference, but I plan to keep coming to it now, because I hope to expand my career more internationally. I wish I had discovered this conference 30 years ago.

Conference was very informative and provided exposure to technology and practices in other libraries. Also allowed an insight into library activities in different parts of the world. Provides a basis on which libraries can evaluate themselves and move forward.

I think that IFLA acts weakly on theoretical and new subjects like digital and electronic libraries in recent years. The subjects, which have been presented in these connections, are too preliminary and needs to basic revision.

However having said these negative comments I would also like to add that I have really enjoyed the conference and found the standing committee work inspiring and exiting". "The conference was an excellent learning opportunity. Thanks". " To me personally it has been wonderful experience and time well spent". "Generally, the conference has been well organised.

5. The delivery and the delivery context of lectures

From the next table it is obvious, that most of the presentations were perceived as very satisfying. According to the evaluation, the moderators did a very good job in a physical setting that was good also in relation to equipment. It is also encouraging to see that the participants found that the important timetable was kept.

Table 14: Evaluation of the delivery of lectures

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
Most of the presentations were delivered in an interesting way	1	1	10	14	28	32	14	204
Overall, the speakers had very good communication skills	1	3	8	20	35	25	8	204
There was not enough time for discussions after the lectures	8	18	17	16	12	18	11	203
The equipment worked in a satisfactory way	2	2	1	7	13	34	41	204
The lecture rooms were pleasant	2	3	5	7	17	30	36	205
The moderator gave a good introduction to the session and to the speakers	1	1	3	9	16	42	29	203
The moderator was able to keep to the timetable	0	2	2	7	16	39	35	198

Many participants would have like more time for discussion. Obviously, it appears that the overall evaluation of the delivery of lectures went very well.

From the next table we see the differences in evaluation according to age and the number of conferences. We did not find any significant differences in relation to gender of the evaluation of the presentations as form and the delivery.

Table 15: Evaluation of the delivery in relation to age and the number of conferences. Means

	- 45	46 -	First-timer	1-5	6-
Most of the presentations were delivered in an interesting way			5,58	5,10	4,50
Overall, the speakers had very good communication skills	5,24	4,67	5,21	4,82	4,47

Again, we see a more positive evaluation from the first-timers in relation to twp statements and in relation to one statement age plays a role.

The important picture is that there seems to be an overall and widespread positive evaluation of the delivery of the lectures and also a positive assessment of the way the moderators did their job.

We illustrate it again with comments:

The overall conference was very good and useful to strengthen my knowledge and also my skills. The method concerning dividing the conferences into some chambers or parallel is also very good. The thing is that some of the good program is conduct on the same time, so we have to choose what is more relevant to us. So what I am thinking of is that in the future the speakers should submitted their paper first, so then participants could have and take the information even though their not attending the class. As far as I know, not all of the speakers submitted their papers. I bought the CD-ROM but still only few papers there. So it is very important to have speakers' papers.

The conference booklet could have been clearer with regard to the room numbers and should indicate what the primary languages spoken will be. At the opening session it was important to know that many speeches would be in German so as to obtain headphones. I was told the speeches would be mostly in English.

6. The communication regarding the Congress

Overall, the respondents express a very high degree of satisfaction with the communication regarding the Congress. Very few respondents express dissatisfaction with confirmation of accommodation and registration and it also appears that both the structure of the conference and the conference booklet has been received well.

Table 16: Evaluation of the communication regarding the Congress. In row %.

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
The confirmation of my accommodation was satisfactory	3	2	0	16	4	19	55	173
The confirmation of my registration was satisfactory	4	0	1	5	4	17	68	205
The Programme booklet is very well organised	1	1	4	5	9	27	52	211
The organisation and structure of the congress was very good	1	1	5	8	20	27	37	209
I think that the Congress is too long	19	14	14	14	13	13	11	208

We find very divided opinions in relation to the statement: “ I think that the Congress is too long”. Nearly 50 % disagree with the statement and 40 % agree.

In relation to gender, there is only one statement with a significant difference. In relation to age, there are three statements and we see again that the younger participants have a slightly more positive evaluation than the older.

Table 17: Evaluation of the communication regarding the Congress in relation to gender and age. Means,

	Male	Female	- 45	46 -
The confirmation of my registration was satisfactory	6,04	6,45		
The Programme booklet is very well organised			6,35	5,88
The organisation and structure of the congress was very good			5,96	5,56
I think that the Congress is too long			3,19	4,34

We will now turn our attention to the third back – ground variable which is the number of IFLA – conferences the respondents have participated in.

In relation to number of conferences attended, there appears to be no significant differences among the respondents.

Some comments follow below:

The conference is definitely too long. And, having one section meeting at the very beginning of the conference –before the official opening, and the next meeting at the end or after the official closing is very bad. This means that those needing to or wanting to attend both section meetings need to stay extra hotel nights—very expensive. The conference should be arranged so that the more important meetings for those involved fall somewhere in the middle of the conference so as to minimize hotel nights that someone must spend.

I fear that Berlin was the last real IFLA conference. The idea of restricting active sections to just two hours of programming in future conferences is a very bad one, as it will drive them out of IFLA. The IFLA conference should be a chance for like-minded professionals to meet and

pursue their own specific professional interests at length, rather than a quick congress driven by the Governing Board's agenda.

The conference itself was well organized and delivered, but I found the layout of the building very difficult to navigate, even with the signage. It turns out I missed an entire section of the exhibition because I didn't realize until too late that there was an additional area on another level! It was excellent to have a transit pass as part of the conference package, but it would have been most helpful to have also had a transit map and a basic map of Berlin. I had to find these myself, which I did at the train station Euraide office. It meant an extra trip for me, and time lost, although once I had these two maps, I could make good use of Berlin's excellent transportation system. The greatest value for me in attending IFLA conferences has been to gain a good sense of what is happening in libraries around the world, and of course to meet my colleagues. I currently work in the Middle East, and IFLA provides a good opportunity to keep informed of developments both "back home" in North America, and elsewhere. The translation services are excellent, and much needed by someone like me, whose language skills are limited! Thanks for yet another very good conference experience!

7. Berlin, Congress Centre, library visits and cultural events

We know from the previous evaluation that both the City and the Conference centre are of paramount importance for the whole experience of the IFLA – conferences. Also, the cultural and social events are something people appreciate.

The overall evaluation of these aspects of the congress emerges from the table below.

Table 18: Evaluation of the City, ICC, hotels and events. Row %.

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
Berlin is an excellent congress city	2	1	2	2	8	18	66	208
Overall, the Congress Centre was very good	1	3	9	10	19	20	39	210
Overall, I really enjoyed the social events	1	3	3	15	18	20	40	207
My hotel was in a convenient distance from the Congress Centre	6	1	7	12	12	16	47	197
The exhibition at the Congress Centre was very useful for me	2	6	10	13	22	22	26	207
I found the library visits very rewarding	2	1	4	23	15	17	39	168

Berlin was a very good choice as only 5 % of the respondents had reservations or disagreed with the statement, that Berlin is an excellent congress city. The congress centre did not receive glowing evaluations in this evaluation, but is also obvious that overall, the respondents were rather satisfied with it. There is also a high degree of satisfaction with the social events and with the library visits.

It is surprising that most of the participants found that the ICC was in a convenient distance from the hotels. Most of the participants had to take public transportation to get to the Congress. The positive evaluation is probably due to the travel pass and the good transportation system. Many commended very positively on the travel pass. I have to mention, that some respondents found it annoying that accompanying persons did not receive a travel card.

The following table shows that there exists an agreement in the evaluation in relation to gender and age. For each of the two background variables there is only one statement that turns out significant different.

Table 19: Evaluation of the City, ICC, hotels and events. In relation to gender and age. Means

	Male	Female	-45	46 -
Berlin is an excellent congress city	6,17	6,54		
Overall, I really enjoyed the social events			6,07	5,46

In the next table we see that the number of conferences attended play a greater role than age and gender.

We find significant differences in relation to three of the statements. Again it is obvious that the first – timers have a much more positive evaluation than especially the veterans.

It is important not to overemphasise this factor. As stated before, one has to bear in mind the composition of the sample when interpreting. We know that the average age of male participants are higher and that there are more female first – timers.

Table 20: Evaluation of the City, ICC, hotels and events in to number of conferences. Means

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	First - timers	1 -5	6 -
Overall, the Congress Centre was very good	5,99	5,32	5,21
Overall, I really enjoyed the social events	6,04	5,60	4,79
I found the library visits very rewarding	5,78	5,60	4,32

Some comments are:

The Opening Party was poorly organized. The lines were much too long and those, like myself, who waited until the lines were shorter, did not get any –or much—food. All the hot foods were gone and I only had salad to eat. Others left and went to restaurants. The location was lovely and the dancing looked like fun but there was a serious problem with the food service.

For me, as a vegetarian, it was very annoying that it was impossible to get cheese-sandwiches. (or any other vegetarian food.) Cheese-sandwiches were usually sold out quickly. When I had the time to eat, they were already gone. The caterers were not helpful at all and also very unfriendly. (I am German and so were they, so there was no language barrier.) On my first day, I waited in a line-up for 30 minutes only to be told that there were no more cheese-sandwiches left. I asked for alternatives and there were none. Waiting in line with me were vegetarians from the UK and other countries who were also left without food. The caterers at the ICC should be quite embarrassed not to be able to cater to the needs of an international audience

In particular, I found the signage at the Congress Centre to be poor. It was hard to find the rooms, and it was frustrating having escalators out of service so frequently. The exhibition space was also poorly organized. It was hard to find exhibitors.

As we exhibited only, questions about presentations, tours, etc are not relevant to us and have been left blank. Overall, we thought the quality of organisation at the conference was very high and that it was very productive for us in terms of the people we were able to meet. Our only real complaint was that the signage for the exhibition area was quite confusing, and inadequate in places, so that not as many people realised there were stands in Hall H2 as there might have been.

“The conference centre was somewhat confusing when it came to finding rooms and where the exhibition was”. “Poorly designed conference centre; not easy to find one’s way around it; poor signing”. “While the conference centre is very good, surprisingly there are not drinking fountains in the ICC”.

Did not think that all exhibition areas were satisfactory. Some booths were hard to find because they were tucked away on a balcony. It would have been better to have all exhibitors in one area.

The ICC was an interesting building but it was hard to find the right escalator or corridor to get to the right rooms.

Exhibition hall was really difficult to navigate and IFLA reception was very crowded.

I find the program offered for accompanying persons is not worth the sum of money paid. Information about hotel prices is misleading: people get the same room at same hotel for less if applying direct. Social event at Palais Funkturm was absolutely inadequate in terms of food provision

Overall it was a very successful conference – the Berlin Secretariat under Barbara and Christopher did an excellent job. The Conference Centre itself was not of international standards – lack of air-conditioning, signage was poor and the separation of exhibitors over three levels was not convenient. The café facilities in the conference centre were very poor – actually unacceptable with inadequate staffing, no means to handle peak periods and lack of variety of food.

The conference programme, support for accommodations and travel, conference venue and host city were all excellent! A number of the rooms were a bit crowded. My first IFLA conference was a rewarding experience!

The numbering system of the Lecture Rooms in the Conference Centre is confusing; participants wasted some of their precious time in locating the rooms.

Overall, I was extremely pleased with the conference, and this was the first IFLA conference I have attended though I did attend an IFLA satellite conference prior to the IFLA conference in Boston.

The conference organisers need to find better prices with hotels as I know that people who booked through the internet later got much better deals at hotels. Also the Saturday tour I went on was a disaster, too much planned for the day, the guide trying to cope with people with many languages, one elderly Canadian woman almost being left behind, she did miss the highlight of the tour. There appeared no flexibility in any of the planning. I would like that the organization of the library visits were better because I couldn't participate in so I had to do it on my own.

I also took the optional tour on Aug. 9 to Meissen and Dresden. I was extremely disappointed in this tour. Too much was attempted, and a colleague and I ended up not seeing Dresden at all and paying to take a train back to Berlin from Dresden. The tour did not reach the city centre of Dresden until after 17:00, and the tour guide did not anticipate arrival in Berlin until sometime between 22:00 and 23:00. I was extremely disappointed in that tour and felt that I had wasted my money. On the other hand, the Berlin city tour was excellent. I am looking forward to next year's conference.

Some rooms at the conference centre were very difficult to find, the signage could have been better. There were some unfortunate time conflicts, like having a reception during the time of the first council meeting.

The architecture of the ICC Centre was a real problem. It was impossible to see well where the conference halls were. The spreading over several halls and floors for the exhibition was catastrophic. I was unable to find and get in touch with several exhibitors. I preferred the way it was in Boston: one big hall for all the exhibitors. The food was a real problem at the receptions: there was not enough to eat. Although, we did queue for 45 minutes (6h15-7h pm), we did not get anything to eat and the buffets were closed! That should not happen in such a manifestation (that happens on the 4th August: Opening party). I would prefer that all the activity of the Congress, included the Standing Committee of the section should take place during the week (Monday-Saturday). I appreciate the conferences that I attended.

8. The informal interaction between participants

There is no doubt that the social informal interaction with other participants is one of the most important aspects of international conferences. The IFLA congress offer ample opportunities in

this respect having participants from much more than 100 different countries and several thousands people.

The success in this respect is clear from the table below. Most of the respondents find that it is very rewarding with informal talk with colleagues and nearly the same proportion find that it is easy to come in contact with other people.

Table 21: Evaluation of the informal contact. Row %.

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
I found it easy to come in contact with delegates from other countries	1	1	3	11	12	28	43	209
The informal talk with colleagues is a very rewarding aspect of the congress	1	1	0	2	6	26	64	210

We do not find any difference in relation to gender or age. More important, there is no difference in relation to the number of conferences the respondent have participated in. this simply means that first – timers find that they have no trouble communicating with other participants. This is probably a very important aspect in relation to future success.

A few comments follows:

...I have met a lot a very professional colleague in others countries and I have discovered this big "machine" IFLA and how its work AND commitment is very important for our future

It was an experience of high quality; wonderful to be one of all these colleagues from 143 countries. It gave me new perspectives on my role and my possibilities in a global network. In view of this we ought to do miracles with all our resources!!!

9. The staff and services

From the table below it appears that only two things caused some annoyance among participants. The satisfaction with the food services at the ICC was rather limited and nearly a quarter of the participants found that the directional signs at the ICC were less than good. Apart from that we find a very high rate of satisfaction with staff – related issues.

In relation to most of the staff – related issues less than 5 % of the respondents express dissatisfaction.

Table 22: Evaluation of staff and services. Row %.

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
It was easy to come in contact with the IFLA Head Quarter - staff	1	2	2	11	14	25	46	189
Overall, the staff at the congress were courteous and helpful	2	0	2	3	8	26	59	211
I found the food services very good	17	9	15	25	17	12	5	209
The registration at the Congress Centre went smoothly	3	1	1	2	6	22	64	208
The staff at the information desk was very helpful	1	1	2	4	4	25	63	208
The tour desk worked very well	1	1	2	18	10	25	45	177
The directional signs at the Congress Centre were good	6	8	10	11	14	15	36	211
The volunteers did a great job	2	0	1	5	10	20	62	209

In relation to gender, there is only a significant difference in the evaluation of the statement concerning the food services. The male participants rate it 4,36 and the female delegates rate it 3,38. In relation to age we also found just one difference and that is concerned with the statement about the directional signs in the ICC. The younger group rate it 5,59 and the older 4,63.

In relation to the number of conferences we there is just one significant difference and it is related to the statement about the directional signs. The first – timers rate it 5,90. the delegates with 1 – 5 conferences behind them rate it 4,73 and the veterans with 6 conferences or more rate it 3,90.

“The food at the exhibition opening was only average. The opening function on Monday night was very disappointing. Many of us did not get any buffet food at all, despite queuing for an hour. On the other hand the cultural evening was excellent – better food and organisation. The transport pass for participants was marvellous, however increasing the registration fee a little to include accompanying persons in this would have been appreciated as it would have made for ease of travelling without worrying about a Day-card”. “The orientation tour was really excellent – a real highlight of the week”.

The comments represents two complaints that many participants gave. The crowded opening reception with food problems and the inconvenience of the lack of transportation card for accompanying persons were themes recurrent in many of the comments.

As usual, the food services and the catering at the conference centre are matters important to delegates. I did not find many positive comments on the food services at the conference centre.

“The range of catering facilities and the quality of food available from there was very poor particularly for vegetarians”. “Catering staff quite unfriendly”. “Expensive catering; insufficient non-meat sandwiches; lack of decent restaurants in the vicinity”. “The food services of the conference for lunch was awful – too limited selection and not enough serviced areas. Lines were

terrible during breaks". "The food service on the entrance level was very poor and there was no place to sit in the food area. The range of food and drink was very limited and the food was often stale and the queues were long".

The volunteers deserve big congratulations. Their work was exceptionally good and helpful, as was the work of those responsible for organising the volunteers. Since there were so many of them, I never had to wait for help or information, and they never made me feel like I was imposing on them. This made the conference run very smoothly, from my point of view. It was a fine model of how such events should be organised.

The volunteers were excellent, especially when they formed a "human chain" to show the way to the TU Berlin. This gave IFLA a human face.

10.Support functions

The last area of evaluation concerns the different support functions like Internet access, interpretation and printing facilities.

In relation to earlier years we find a widespread satisfaction with the supply of Internet access. 75 % express their satisfaction. From the numbers of people answering the statement about printing facilities it is possible to deduct that many of the respondents did not find the need for this function. It is also obvious that it worked very well.

As usual, we get a very diversified picture in relation to the translation.

Table 23: Evaluation of support functions. Row %.

1 = totally disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree and 7 = totally agree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N
The supply of Internet access was adequate	2	7	4	11	15	22	38	205
I found it difficult to follow the simultaneous interpretation	23	10	10	26	9	18	6	175
The technical quality of the simultaneous interpretation was excellent	4	8	5	32	8	21	23	171
I found the printing facilities at the Congress Centre good	1	1	3	44	6	17	27	157

Male and female participants evaluated the supply of Internet access differently. Male participants gave the score 5,12 and female delegates gave the score 5,74.

In relation to age there is only one difference and it is related to the statement concerning the technical quality of the simultaneous translation. The younger delegates gave it a score on 5,25 and the older gave it 4,39.

In relation to the number of conferences attended there is no difference in relation to the statements concerning the support functions.

Some comments follows:

I liked the on-line message board, but feel a place to pass papers to individuals would be useful. Despite the good signage the top exhibition hall seemed to elude many people and 2 or 3 people told me after that they had not realised its existence and had missed stalls they needed to see. My general comments, are that the conference itself was well organised. I was really disappointed with some of the administration, eg no pens in the conference bag, no notice that you could not register until Friday afternoon, when many of went out mid morning and then had to just stand about. The trade fair was really badly organised and \i missed many important stands.

The Internet access and e-mail facilities were superb. The conference content was good. Well done to the many teams who worked so hard – it was a successful conference.

*Internet access was fine, but no real structure was given to "lining up" and the persons there to help came to ask you to leave because others wanted to use the computer when you weren't aware they were waiting. ** The conference centre was difficult to find rooms and to use.*

Internet access was GREAT! I think we need to look at creating smoking areas.... especially in the exhibit area....cigars and pipes are hard to deal with....

Escalators went in only one direction in most areas. Signage was difficult to follow and meeting rooms were difficult to find. It is always difficult to stand in food lines but these were even more horrendous. Copenhagen with its many locations rather than a single table with long lines coming from two directions to collide in the middle was tiring and annoying. Less food in more locations, perhaps soup one place, desserts another, and lots of filling foods that aren't as expensive somehow served in smaller portions. It is not good when early people in a line take more than they will eat. Finally, please factor bus transportation for accompanying persons into the fee if they must use transportation to another site for their tour. The extra cost was a very unpleasant surprise.

11. Summing it all up

The table below condense the whole evaluation by descending means.

Table 24: The evaluation of all statements by means.

	N	Mean
The informal talk with colleagues is a very rewarding aspect of the congress	210	6,4286
Berlin is an excellent congress city	208	6,3365
The confirmation of my registration was satisfactory	205	6,3073
Overall, the staff at the congress were courteous and helpful	211	6,2891
The registration at the Congress Centre went smoothly	208	6,2788
The volunteers did a great job	209	6,2775
The Programme booklet is very well organised	211	6,0900
It was easy to come in contact with the IFLA Head Quarter - staff	189	5,9365
The equipment worked in a satisfactory way	204	5,9363
The moderator was able to keep to the timetable	198	5,9293
The confirmation of my accommodation was satisfactory	173	5,9191
The tour desk worked very well	177	5,8757
I found it easy to come in contact with delegates from other countries	209	5,8612
The moderator gave a good introduction to the session and to the speakers	203	5,8276
The organisation and structure of the congress was very good	209	5,7273
The lecture rooms were pleasant	205	5,6927
Overall, I really enjoyed the social events	207	5,6715
I found the programme of the sections very rewarding	185	5,5946
Overall, the Congress Centre was very good	210	5,5762
I found the library visits very rewarding	168	5,5298
The supply of Internet access was adequate	205	5,5024
My command of English is excellent	209	5,5024
Overall, the lectures were relevant for my work	205	5,2439
The mix of academic and professional papers was very good	203	5,2266
Most of the presentations were delivered in an interesting way	204	5,2059
Overall, the presentations had a very high standard	207	5,1498
The exhibition at the Congress Centre was very useful for me	207	5,1353
I found the printing facilities at the Congress Centre good	157	5,1146
The directional signs at the Congress Centre were good	211	5,0995
I found the Poster Sessions very interesting	182	4,9945
Overall, the speakers had very good communication skills	204	4,9216
The technical quality of the simultaneous interpretation was excellent	171	4,8655
It is very important for me that the papers are translated	196	4,6224
It is very important for me that simultaneous interpretation is available	203	4,5320
There was not enough time for discussions after the lectures	203	4,0542
Too many papers were purely descriptive	192	3,8229
I think that the Congress is too long	208	3,7308
I found the food services very good	209	3,7081
I found it difficult to follow the simultaneous interpretation	175	3,6000
I think there are too many low - quality papers presented	197	3,0711

Table 24 is a digest of the whole evaluation report showing the assessment by descending means. Interpreting the table one has to remember that the value 4 is a neutral category indicating neither agreement nor disagreement. The values from 4 and up are an indication of agreement with the statement. Values below 4 indicate a disagreement with the single statement. The

table also gives a clear view of the number of respondents answering the single statement. The possible maximum number is 213.

Looking at table 24 we find an extremely positive evaluation of all aspects of the Congress in Berlin. There is only one aspect of the Congress with a low score and it is the food services at the Conference Centre.

Seven statements received mean scores over 6, which is very flattering for the Congress and its organisation. It is evident that the Berlin Congress was a success.

Reading the evaluation report gives in some way a more differentiated picture because many of the comments contain criticism. We find that many respondents criticize aspects of the conference and still mark this aspect positively on the scale. I really do not find this fact confusing. It indicates that the participants care about the Congress and that the mood in which the comments are written is constructive. People do not criticize in an angry mood but they are simply trying to be helpful to make the next conferences even better.