



Report to the General Assembly

11th Bibliotheca Baltica Symposium, Tallinn, 25th and 26th October 2012

Since the last Bibliotheca Baltica Symposium 2010 in Helsinki the Board has placed particular emphasis on

- strengthening its network of cooperation
- maintaining its current areas of expertise and developing new fields of activity
- improving communication between the Board and its members and between the members themselves
- publicizing the work of Bibliotheca Baltica, emphasizing the benefits of being active in Bibliotheca Baltica and thus encouraging new members to join and
- the organization of a highly professional and ambitious Symposium 2012 in Tallinn.

Strengthening the network

As a small organization Bibliotheca Baltica needs partners in order to achieve its aim of strengthening and improving cooperation between libraries and of supporting librarianship in the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. These partners are of course first of all the member libraries, which also support Bibliotheca Baltica's work by providing its Board members. For some time now Bibliotheca Baltica has collaborated intensively with the Virtual Baltic Sea Library Project and its creator, Klaus-Jürgen Liedtke, from Berlin. We hope that during this Symposium further steps will be taken to put this project in the form of a Baltic Sea Cultural Portal on a more permanent footing and to create the preconditions for applying for further grants from the Nordic Council with the ultimate aim of winning European Union funding for the project in 2013 or 2014. The possibilities of further cooperation with other bodies, e.g. the Council of Baltic Sea States or Ars Baltica, will have to be explored by the new Board.

Maintaining current areas of expertise and developing new fields of activity

In January 2012 Bibliotheca Baltica and the National Library of Lithuania jointly organized a workshop aimed at creating the basis of a Bibliotheca Baltica Think Tank as a driving force for further common projects and initiatives that will help Bibliotheca Baltica in becoming a stronger force and partner in international project work. Thanks to support from Ernst & Young this first meeting was a huge success and has created further links to organizations actively involved for example in promoting e-inclusion on the European scene. This work will have to be continued and ways of actively and practically applying this initiative to concrete projects will have to be found.

Improvement communication

To this end a moderated mailing list was established. This gives both members and the Board the possibility to communicate more quickly than through the traditional newsletter. Thanks to the extraordinary commitment of Catharina Melldahl the frequency of the newsletter has also been doubled in comparison to the years before and it is now published twice a year. Member libraries are strongly encouraged to provide articles for the newsletter, especially with regard to new developments, and to publicize activities at short notice through the mailing list.

Publicizing the work of Bibliotheca Baltica

In August 2012 Bibliotheca Baltica used the good luck of having a second IFLA Conference in the Nordic Countries within two years – after 2010 in Göteborg this time in Helsinki – to organize an event promoting Bibliotheca Baltica. With strong assistance from the National Library of Finland it was possible to have an extremely well-attended event in the Helsinki Convention Centre immediately after the Opening Ceremony, which was also used to promote the 2012 Symposium in Tallinn.

In addition to that many libraries and library associations were personally approached with a view to winning them as new members. This proved in many cases successful and Bibliotheca Baltica is happy to have won new members in Sweden, Finland, Germany, and Belarus. The new Board will however have to concentrate further on recruiting new members and thus stabilizing the membership base of our comparatively small association. Furthermore it will be important to involve the current members more strongly in the work of Bibliotheca Baltica.

The Symposium 2012 in Tallinn

Thanks to the Organizing Committee here in Tallinn and to the Programme Committee consisting of Michal Bron from Södertörn, Mari Kannusaar and Mihkel Real from Tallinn as well as Jürgen Warmbrunn from Marburg we are very pleased to have more than 70 participants at this Symposium, which focusses on the very important question of how libraries can safeguard their future role by taking more account of their users' needs and requirements. I would like to stress especially that Bibliotheca Baltica is proud to have been able to continue its policy of offering Bibliotheca Baltica grants in memory of Boris Volodin which make it possible for young colleagues to attend the symposium. This year we were even able to finance two grants, which have gone to Sweden and Russia respectively. It is too early to sum up the conference yet but I am very sure that the choice of topics, the choice of speakers and the choice of venue have all been very fortunate.

As the out-going President I would like to thank all who have supported Bibliotheca Baltica's work during my term of office and to wish you all you just as much commitment and dedication for our common activities in support of librarianship and the cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea area in the future.

Gunnar Sahlin, President of Bibliotheca Baltica