



European and International Booksellers united with American colleagues at Annual Conference in New York

New York 29-05-09. Over 30 booksellers from around the world gathered on 26 and 27 May in New York to attend the joint annual conference of the European and the International Booksellers Associations. EBF is the umbrella organisation of the national booksellers associations in Europe; IBF is its international equivalent comprising individual booksellers as well as some wholesalers.

“Let’s stay positive” was the theme of the opening address of the EBF President introducing the 2008 Annual Report, and on this key note the conference addressed the challenges the book trade is currently facing. Recognising the immense value of learning from each others’ experience and sharing knowledge, the booksellers were eager to listen to the presentations on the most significant trends currently defining the American book market. Digitization was the central theme of the conference and the insights provided by Len Vlahos, Chief Program Officer of the American Booksellers Association, Mark Nelson, Digital Content Strategist for the National Association of College Stores and Michael Smith, Executive Director of the International Digital Publishing Forum all underlined the importance for booksellers of embracing the digital challenge and turning from brick-and-mortar to “brick and click” bookstores.

Impressive and inspiring for EBF and IBF conference participants was also the presentation on the multiple and far-reaching actions of the *Indiebound* programme launched by the American Booksellers Association last year, which offers to ABA members a vast range of promotional material to stress the vital importance for local communities of independent and locally-owned bookstores.

EBF and IBF also held their respective General Assemblies in New York. EBF held a partial election of the Executive Committee which is composed of 11 Members and chaired by EBF President John Mc Namee. Newcomer to the Executive Committee is Christian Riethmüller of the family-owned bookstore chain Osiander in Germany. IBF approved the nomination of Marina Kameneva from Trade Book House as IBF Associate Member.

The IBF plenary session also unanimously adopted a Declaration in favour of a book-friendly VAT taxation in Latvia, following the Latvian government’s decision to raise VAT on books from 5 to 21%. The statement is joined in attachment to this press release.

The EBF and IBF conference continued on 28th May at the premises of the Book Expo America Fair ground (Jacob Javitz Center), with the full-day ABA Educational Programme prior to the opening of the BEA on 29 May. The International and European booksellers happily mingled with their American colleagues and benefited from the many seminars, panel discussions and presentations given during the day. In the evening, they met up again with their American colleagues to wish farewell to Avin Domnitz, ABA CEO and IBF Council member, who will be succeeded by Oren Teicher, current COO of ABA. For further information, contact: eurobooks@skynet.be