



and exploitation of networked resources to the benefit of all, while able to deliver innovation and new strategies cost-effectively.

Those practical applications were described in detail by a number of speakers presenting a broad variety of examples of digitisation of cultural heritage and dealing with the process of establishing national programmes and plans for digitisation. Focus was on the need for coordinated action across institutions, on selection of material, on standards and copyright. Also the dissemination of digitised material and the perspective in international cooperation in the field underlined.

The conference sessions addressing issues to do with multiculturalism, highlighted the priority that is being placed on the role of libraries as mechanisms of integration in many countries. Case studies were presented on projects in the Republic of Croatia and the Czech State and they were followed by a strong debate on the need for public libraries to share their expertise and experiences with colleagues through NAPLE and other relevant fora.

## THE INITIATIVE PROPOSED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

At the end of the first day of the Conference there was a debate about a document provided to all participants by the host organisation. This proposed a number of important steps to increase European co-operation and exchange, both of human skills and of access to information and knowledge on the management and development of public library services in support of the Knowledge Society.

The country representatives at the Conference welcomed this challenging proposal, but some suggested that it would require significant co-ordination and planning to achieve all that was proposed. Furthermore, there would need to be careful consideration of the extent to which some of the proposals might overlap with existing organisations and their work; the Calimera Guidelines and the work of the International Standards Organisation were cited as examples.

Several of the proposals were considered to be more easily achievable. These were:

- organization of guest visits and exchanges of cultural events that are related through content to public librarianship (exhibitions, projects, expositions)
- assistance in the implementation of research in the field of public librarianship
- support for minority programmes
- exchange of information on cultural events, library and information programmes related to public libraries and their joint presentation to the European public.

There were others that would require further consideration by all members of NAPLE if they were not currently being done by another organisation:

- a) publication of guidelines, books and other literature in the field of public librarianship
- b) production and exchange of information contents amongst media providers in the field of public librarianship
- c) formatting of information mediums (web pages, publications)
- d) digitization of cultural heritage (libraries, museums, archives)

It was agreed that the Initiative and the debate would be summarised and presented for consideration by all NAPLE members in the next edition of the NAPLE Newsletter. Further discussion would then take place.

The Conference thanked the representatives of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia for their work in developing and presenting the Initiative.