



Government Information and Official Publications Section NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2003

BY THE SHORES OF THE BLACK SEA:

GIOPS EASTERN EUROPE SEMINAR AT CRIMEA 2003



The 2nd IFLA GIOPS Eastern Europe Seminar on Government Information for the People was held jointly with the 2nd International Conference on Government Information and Democracy on Wednesday and Thursday, 11-12 June 2003, as part of the Crimea 2003 regional library conference in Sudak, a gathering of 1700 professionals largely from the countries of the former Soviet Union. The seminar was chaired by Frank Kirkwood of the GIOPS Standing Committee, who had also chaired the first GIOPS Eastern Europe Seminar at the Russian State Library in Moscow in May 1999, and by Vladimir Firsov of the Russian National Library, organizer of the 1st International Conference on Government Information and Democracy in St. Petersburg in May 2000. Emma Voskanyan from the GIOPS Standing Committee and the Russian State Library also took an important part in the sessions.

There were some forty participants in the second GIOPS Eastern Europe seminar, with twelve speakers drawn from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the Chuvash Republic, Great Britain, Norway, Canada and the United Nations (New York). Three authors from India also contributed papers to the proceedings, but could not be present due to visa difficulties. The languages of the seminar were Russian, English and Ukrainian, with simultaneous or consecutive interpretation for all sessions provided by the Crimea conference organizers. GIOPS subsidized the participation costs of four of the speakers.

Presentations were diverse and interesting, with a great deal of audience involvement not only after the formal papers but in several special formats. A talk-show-style round table on the first day featured participation by Alexei Demidov from the Russian Foundation for Legal Reform and by other representatives from our sister Crimea conference section on public centres of legal

information. We also experimented on the second day with a small-group workshop on democracy-building activities of parliamentary libraries, chaired by Kirkwood of the Canadian and Komov of the Russian Parliamentary Library. And a very timely group discussion was led by Paul Sturges of Britain, soon to be chair of the IFLA Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, and Robert Vaagan of Norway, regarding the IFLA press release of 5 June 2003 criticizing the use of the U.S. Patriot Act to investigate library patrons. In all the sessions the chairs were particularly successful in provoking lively and extensive discussion across language barriers, and Frank Kirkwood was nominated as one of the three finalists for best section chair of the entire Crimea conference.

Selected papers of the seminar were published in Russian or in English in the printed roceedings of the Crimea 2003 conference, and Kirkwood and Firsov are editing a complete collection of them, to be put on the IFLA GIOPS website and on the website of the Russian State Library.

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