

Welcome to IBBY World Congress 2008 in Copenhagen

As Danish Minister for Culture, I am very pleased that Denmark has been elected host for the IBBY World Congress in 2008. Denmark is a country that has a strong tradition of supporting children's culture and reading.

This is proven by for instance the fact that IBBY's Hans Christian Andersen Award is named after the most famous Danish children's author and that Her Majesty, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, is the Patron of the award - the highest international recognition given to an author and an illustrator of children's books.

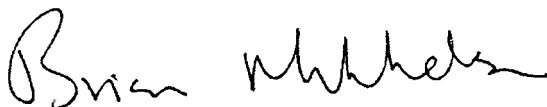
Personally I am deeply engaged in children's literature and reading. As reading is a fundamental skill in any society, and as the book is in sharp competition with other media, I find it of great importance to support children's reading skills and reading habits. For this reason the Ministry of Culture in Denmark has initiated a national reading campaign to encourage children and young people's meeting with literature of good quality as well as literature with utility value and relevance for children and the young.

The campaign funds many new reading activities all over the country. This is mainly possible because Denmark has a long-standing tradition of presenting literature of quality and variation to children and adolescents. All municipalities have well-functioning public libraries with large collections of books for children and young adults, and all Danish primary and secondary schools have school libraries with fine collections of literature for children to enjoy in their spare time.

In addition Denmark has many writers of children's books which are translated to a large number of languages, and also Danish illustrators of children's books enjoy world-wide fame.

An exposure to this rich cultural environment for children is waiting for the participants of the IBBY World Congress in 2008!

With these comments I invite you all to have a pleasant stay in Copenhagen during the IBBY World Congress. The chances of turning it into a unique experience are great, since The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2006 rated our capital as the second best city in Europe for business trips.



Brian Mikkelsen

Minister for Culture