

**The European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) react to the reintroduction of copyright protected material in the proposed geo-blocking regulation as the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopts its report**

Brussels, 25 April 2017

Today the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament adopted its report on the proposed geo-blocking regulation.

EIBF and FEP note with great satisfaction that the Committee supported the safeguards proposed by the European Commission (recital 23 and article 4.3), so that this regulation may not be used to circumvent fixed book price regimes.

However EIBF and FEP note with deep regret the fact that despite numerous representations and contacts with Members of the Committee on behalf of the book industry in the last months, they voted to reintroduce copyright protected material in the scope of the regulation.

The inclusion of copyright protected content has been one of the most contentious elements of the proposal, and a source of major concern for the book industry. In a market that is still at an early stage of development and whose future is highly unpredictable, publishers and booksellers aim to offer their e-books to as many readers as possible. In a context of low cross-border demand and where profitability has yet to be demonstrated, a growing number of booksellers are nevertheless investing in the e-book market.

However, if European booksellers are forced to offer e-books across borders, in the current situation, many of them will not be able to make the required investments and many could, in turn, exit the e-book market. This will be highly detrimental for cultural diversity and European consumers, confronted with reduced choice, and to the only benefit of major platforms and the internet giants such as Apple and Amazon.

Commented **Fabian Paagman**, EIBF co-President, and owner of Paagman Boekhandels, The Hague and **Jean-Luc Treutenaere**, EIBF co-President and President of the SDLC, Syndicat des distributeurs de loisirs culturels: *“Our companies are present on the e-book market, selling e-books respectively in the Netherlands and in Flemish-speaking Belgium, and in France & in French-speaking Belgium, in spite of the fact that it is not a profitable activity, at least for the moment. As European SMEs, we face a series of challenges: expensive technology upgrades, payment facilities issues, and above all low consumer demand. Booksellers can’t be forced to sell across borders. It is a company choice, in line with the evolution of the market, and booksellers’ first concern is to keep their business afloat.”-*

EIBF and FEP are keen to pursue their dialogue with decision makers involved in the trilogue between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, for the promotion of the rich European literary heritage and to the benefit of European consumers’ choice.