

MANIFESTO FOR THE 2014 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The book chain: authors, European Writers Council (EWC), publishers, Federation of European Publishers (FEP) and booksellers, European Booksellers Federation (EBF), representing a true European cultural diversity with 150,000 authors in the text-sector who write in all genres, totalling 40 languages, several hundred thousand people working in publishing houses and bookshops, plus many more servicing the sector. Books are also the first cultural sector in economic terms, with an estimated turnover of 40 billion euros.

Equally important in our opinion, is the fact that books convey ideas, feed the mind and make freedom of expression a reality. European citizens need to have access to books in order to understand the European democratic values which are underlying the European process. Books are key to citizens' participation in economic, social, cultural and political life. This is especially true given the emergence of the knowledge economy and the increasing demand for literacy skills this has brought about.

Our sector would like to remind you of its 4 Top Priorities

1. Balanced and fair copyright conditions for the benefit of authors and publishers and readers alike

Encourage innovation by supporting copyright, so that authors can create and be rewarded, publishers can invest and booksellers can bring the finished work to book stores for the benefit of the reading public.

2. A fiscal regime which favours wide book dissemination

A book is a book regardless of its format. We call for the application of the lowest possible rate of VAT to all books regardless of their format or means of access and delivery.

3. Fair competition on the Internet, including interoperability between the different offers and encouraging the legal offer

We call for a level playing field for all stakeholders and the preservation of choice for European readers, as we have concerns that this is being compromised by the behavior of certain dominant actors in the retail market.

4. An educational choice, taking into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials

We call for any reform of the educational systems in Europe to take into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials guaranteeing quality, fit for purpose updated content, and freedom of choice.

I. Copyright - *We call for balanced copyright and fair conditions for all.*

1. Encourage innovation by supporting copyright, so that authors can create and be **remunerated**, publishers can **invest**, and booksellers can bring the finished work to book stores for the **benefit** of the reading public.
2. Advocate **testable solutions** to confront the challenges posed by data mining. This is in order to find the **best answer** to the issues arising from big data.
3. Recognise that current copyright law shows enough **flexibility to adapt** to the digital world and technical advances – but if changes are needed then they should be based on **evidence** and should not endanger creativity and **innovation**.
4. Support creativity and ensure that authors have **fair contracts**, regardless of whether it is in print or digital format.

II. Taxation - *A book is a book regardless of its format. We call for the application of the lowest possible rate of VAT to all books regardless of their format or means of access and delivery.*

5. Books are vehicles of education and culture; facilitate **multiculturalism and learning** by endorsing the **lowest possible rate of VAT**.
6. Whether a book is paper or digital, ordered online or bought in a shop, avoid tax discrimination that leads to lower readership. Support **equal VAT** on all products of the book sector.
7. A high and discriminatory VAT on electronic publications is an **obstacle** to the growth and **enhancement** of a knowledge economy and information society in Europe; it hampers the development of e-commerce and the digital Single Market, and hinders the digitisation of our cultural heritage. Take action: **reduced or zero rate of VAT** should be applied across all formats.

III. Fair Competition - *We call for a level playing field for all stakeholders and the preservation of choice for European readers, as we have concerns that this is being compromised by the behavior of certain dominant actors in the retail market.*

8. Discoverability of books, choice of retailers and interoperability are three key determinants of choice and competition. Give the book sector a chance by supporting a **fair market** with a **level playing field** in order for authors and publishers to continue to create books which educate, inform and entertain European citizens.
9. Make it easier for European readers by promoting easily available digital content and thus **improving the e-book market** – not only of file formats but also of the ecosystems in which the e-books are acquired and accessed (this includes devices, reading software, and purchase platforms).
10. Join the authors, booksellers and publishers, who are keen to promote **business models** which make digital content easily **accessible** to the customers they are in touch with on a daily business.
11. Support initiatives aimed at **increasing interoperability** (such as the development and adoption of the e-Pub open standard e-book format) and promote interoperable **choices** in public procurement.

IV. Educational Choice - *We call for any reform of the educational systems in Europe to take into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials in guaranteeing quality, fit for purpose content, and the freedom of choice.*

12. Enable the **freedom of choice** for teachers and institutions: **educational materials** need to be prepared by qualified people and assessed by professional publishers.
13. Ensure that **any reform of education** is carried out involving the main stakeholders, **including educational publishers**.
14. Enhancing the use of ICT and OER in education should be aimed at improving educational outcomes; advocate more **resources dedicated to education**, rather than eliminating professionally published content in an attempt to save resources.
15. Realise the **essential value** of IPR protection and the dangers of unfair competition from publicly funded resources and state monopolies.
16. Protect educational authors by preventing anything which **endangers to their right** to negotiate their contracts and receive remuneration, regardless of the means of dissemination of the content they have created.



EWC – <http://www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu/>
EBF - <http://eibf-booksellers.org/>
FEP - <http://fep-fee.eu/>