



Brussels, 24 April 2020

The European and International Booksellers Federation and the Federation of European Publishers, representing booksellers and publishers all across Europe, are extremely grateful of the opportunity you are giving our members to be heard by distinguished Members of the European Parliament.

As is true for most sectors, the book trade has been very severely hit by the Covid-19 crisis with bookshops closed in most countries and the turnover of publishers expected to be down by at least 25% for this year. Publishers, booksellers and also book fairs (as essential platforms for promoting books and reading, and selling rights for translations, among other activities) need to be helped financially in order to remain sustainable.

If the viability of this part of the book trade is secured, then authors will also benefit from strong partners. At the same time, we are of course supportive of additional resources being made available for authors, translators and other creators in the book sector who may also find themselves in very difficult circumstances due to the pandemic.

As trade associations, we very much appreciate that you consider exploring ways to ensure that all stakeholders in the cultural and creative sectors will still be able to defend their interests at European level, including through active representative organisations.

FEP and EIBF are jointly presenting 10 measures that need to be taken urgently to assist the book trade:

EU level

We decided to take a pragmatic approach and the measures we ask you to support are based on the current funding opportunities. However, we call for a substantial budget for culture within which the book sector should have significant financial support, as well as for prioritisation of cultural and creative industries in the negotiations of the forthcoming EC proposal for a new long-term budget, including a plan to finance the economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

1. Simplify and accelerate the procedures for **approval of projects** providing broad support to the book sector under all relevant funding programmes and launch **new targeted calls**
2. Fully finance the **Creative Europe** programme as requested by the European Parliament and within it supply adequately the **budget line dedicated to books**

3. Earmark significant funds for innovation in book publishing under **Horizon Europe** and all other available programmes and incentivise Member States to use the **structural and cohesion funds** to finance projects in the book sector¹
4. Upgrade the **Financial Guarantee** dedicated to the creative sectors so as to cover the urgent liquidity needs of enterprises in the book value chain
5. Promote a **level playing field for the book sector in the European digital market** (for example through implementation of the Copyright in the DSM Directive that uphold the remuneration of rightholders, a fair digital taxation regime, a robust ex-ante competition policy framework, rules on interoperability for platforms) and ensure that any new legislation constitutes an incentive for the sector and does not impose additional **unnecessary legal burdens or uncertainties**, for example in the framework of the Digital Services Act or the assessment of the Geo-blocking Regulation, as you have already rightly suggested.

National level

1. Launch **dialogues** between government and representatives of the book sector to understand their needs; create dedicated **task forces**
2. Consider books as **essential goods** and recognise the **special role** of the book sector in the current crisis
3. Take advantage of **all available measures of economic and financial support**, for example in the framework of state aid rules², and **tailor** them to the specific needs of the **book sector**
4. Step up public investments to **support book, ebook and journal purchasing plans** via bookshops for **institutions**, particularly public **libraries**, school libraries, university libraries and research institutions
5. Promote **book purchasing through special schemes**, including providing **tax relief** for families buying books, or **vouchers to buy books** in bookstores

¹ For example, for topics such as supporting the investment of publishers in **accessibility** for people with disabilities, facilitating the creation of a **rights data infrastructure**, strengthening the sustainability of **book fairs**.

² A €38 million Swedish scheme to compensate damages caused by cancelled or postponed cultural events due to coronavirus outbreak:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_723

“Under the scheme, those operators will be entitled to compensation for the damages suffered, in the form of direct grants covering 75% of their loss of revenue or additional costs up to SEK 1 million (approx. €90,600), and 50% for the part of the losses above SEK 1 million. Aid may be granted up to a maximum amount of SEK 10 million (approx. €906,000) per beneficiary. The compensation provided under the scheme is foreseen for events scheduled between 12 March 2020 and 31 May 2020 that had to be cancelled or postponed.



We have limited ourselves to 10 measures here, however publishers and booksellers have each worked on a list of measures that they individually support at national level. You will find those in the annex to these 10 measures.