



European Publishers Manifesto 2024-2029



FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN PUBLISHERS
FÉDÉRATION DES ÉDITEURS EUROPÉENS

Opening Worlds

An independent industry driven by curiosity



At the start of this new legislative mandate for the Parliament and the Commission, European publishers call on the European institutions to support a vibrant publishing sector, the leading cultural industry in Europe, ensuring that we can continue to freely publish a wide variety of books, and guaranteeing freedom of expression, a plurality of opinions and our democratic values.

It is essential that citizens can freely choose the books they wish to read, whether for pleasure, information or education. The ability of publishers to freely publish is a value essential to our democracy, cultural diversity, and freedom of expression. The right conditions, which were listed in the EP report on the Future of the European book sector (A9-0257/2023) adopted by 513 MEPs in September 2023, must be in place for the publishing sector to remain a vital and responsible actor in the democratic and cultural life of every European citizen. With a positive legislative environment, the sector will be well equipped to pursue its missions to educate, inform, and entertain European citizens.

Though we can pride ourselves on a few large publishing groups which are global leaders, most European publishers are SMEs. Existing and forthcoming legislation (on copyright, taxation, sustainability, etc.) clearly has a huge impact on the book industry. The agreed rules must encourage investment both in talent and in exercising our social responsibility. They must be fair and balanced. We count on you to make sure that Europe's readers continue to have a broad selection of quality books to choose from.

About **575,000**
new titles published
in Europe in 2022

Publishers'
net turnover

24.4 €
billion
in 2023

Print books
represent **by far**
the **largest share**
of turnover for
publishers



Books do not exist without authors and readers, and publishers play a key role

Copyright is the foundation for investment in the entire publishing value chain.

To safeguard **the specific roles of the various actors in the value chain**¹, we need strong copyright legislation with carefully balanced exceptions, as listed in the 2019 Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive. Licences, whether individual or collective, are key to enabling access to the books we publish. Educational, academic, or trade publications have different audiences and markets, and voluntary licensing enables us to find the right balance between the necessary remuneration and readers' access. This remuneration is essential if we are to invest in new authors and products. Similarly, in the emerging era of AI, it is crucial that the works used to train AI models are accessed lawfully and that rightsholders remain in a position to enforce their rights, including against AI companies.

Books need readers. The EU should encourage Member States to **develop an integrated national policy for promoting literacy skills, including through cooperation between the book and education sectors**, also for the youngest readers. FEP signed the Ljubljana Reading Manifesto and calls for its recommendations to be followed up with concrete actions **such as the introduction of 'cultural vouchers'**².

The European Union must encourage **the creation and translation of European books, in particular by enhancing public funding at national and European level so as to improve the circulation, visibility and diversity of translated books** to develop empathy across borders and a better understanding of the richness of European literature³.

The book sector has a significant role to play in protecting freedom of expression and fighting disinformation. We need our authors and publishers to be free to write and publish in all literary genres and on the broadest range of topics; freedom of expression is at the heart of our sector and is paramount to creativity⁴.

Similarly, freedom of choice is important when it comes to giving teachers the opportunity to choose from a broad range of educational material. A variety of perspectives is essential to the formation of citizens who can think critically.

United, we need to **ensure that sufficient funding continues to support the Ukrainian book sector**⁵, helping Ukraine's unique literature to remain present in the cultural life of the country. FEP has continually invited the Ukrainian Publishers and Booksellers Association to our meetings as a Guest member since 2022 and has led several initiatives to support Ukrainian authors and publishers. FEP is also coordinating an EU project, Tales of EUkraine, enabling the publishing of bilingual books for children who were displaced and are now living in EU countries.



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1. 2. Underlines the need to achieve balance in the book ecosystem by safeguarding **the specific roles of the various actors in the value chain**, such as authors, publishers, printers, distributors, translators, booksellers and libraries;
2. 1. Recognise books as essential goods and take measures at national level to further promote reading from an early age; 23. Calls for more initiatives to promote reading in the Member States, **such as the introduction of 'cultural vouchers'**, particularly for young people and marginalized groups, which could make it easier to buy books; 24. Encourages the Member States to **develop an integrated national policy for promoting literacy skills, including through cooperation between the book and education sectors**, and calls on Eurostat to provide up-to-date and comparable data on reading habits, particularly among children; 25. Calls for more support for children's books in particular, which should be promoted by establishing a 'first book programme', or similar initiatives at national level to encourage reading; 26. Underlines the importance of early childhood reading, particularly of printed books, for the development of children's cognitive and literacy skills; 27. Stresses in this regard the role of school libraries and trained librarians in providing guidance, facilitating access to knowledge and fostering reading habits; 28. Welcomes the Commission's launch of the first Day of European Authors with a view to encouraging the reading of books by younger generations, and signals its desire to be involved in continuing and strengthening this initiative so as to guarantee a long-lasting legacy; 29. Calls on the Member States to establish a network of 'reading ambassadors', consisting of respected and influential role models who would share their passion and enthusiasm in order to promote reading; 31. Stresses the role of libraries and bookshops as safe and welcoming spaces where a wide diversity of viewpoints are respected and where reading and cultural activities are brought to life; deplors all attacks against them;
3. 12. Stresses the need to support **the creation and translation of European books, in particular by enhancing public funding at national and European level so as to improve the circulation, visibility and diversity of translated books**; 13. Calls, in this context, on the Commission and the Member States to promote cultural diversity by supporting the translation of books into regional, minority and lesser-used languages; 14. Stresses the need to support the translation of European non-fiction books, particularly via the Creative Europe programme, which does not currently allow for this; 15. Underlines the importance of mobility and exchanges for authors and translators in order to facilitate their creative work and improve their opportunities to gain new professional experiences abroad; 16. Welcomes the new mobility initiative Culture Moves Europe, which is part of the Creative Europe programme and offers mobility grants to artists and cultural professionals, in particular for literary translators;
4. 36. Notes with concern the growing trends towards censorship in some Member States, and recalls that **the book sector has a significant role to play in protecting freedom of expression and fighting disinformation**, notably by ensuring that authors, including those from diverse and marginalised backgrounds, have access to support and training opportunities;
5. 37. Welcomes the various initiatives to support Ukraine since the beginning of the war, and in particular those aimed at ensuring children's access to books, facilitating the integration of refugees and protecting Ukrainian culture; 38. Calls on the Commission to **ensure that sufficient funding continues to support the Ukrainian book sector**, including artists and authors, for the duration of the war and the reconstruction of the country; 39. Underlines the role played by the Creative Europe Programme in funding some of these projects, such as the Tales of EUkraine initiative;

With ebooks and audiobooks, authors and publishers now have the opportunity to offer access to literature to all readers, irrespective of impairments.

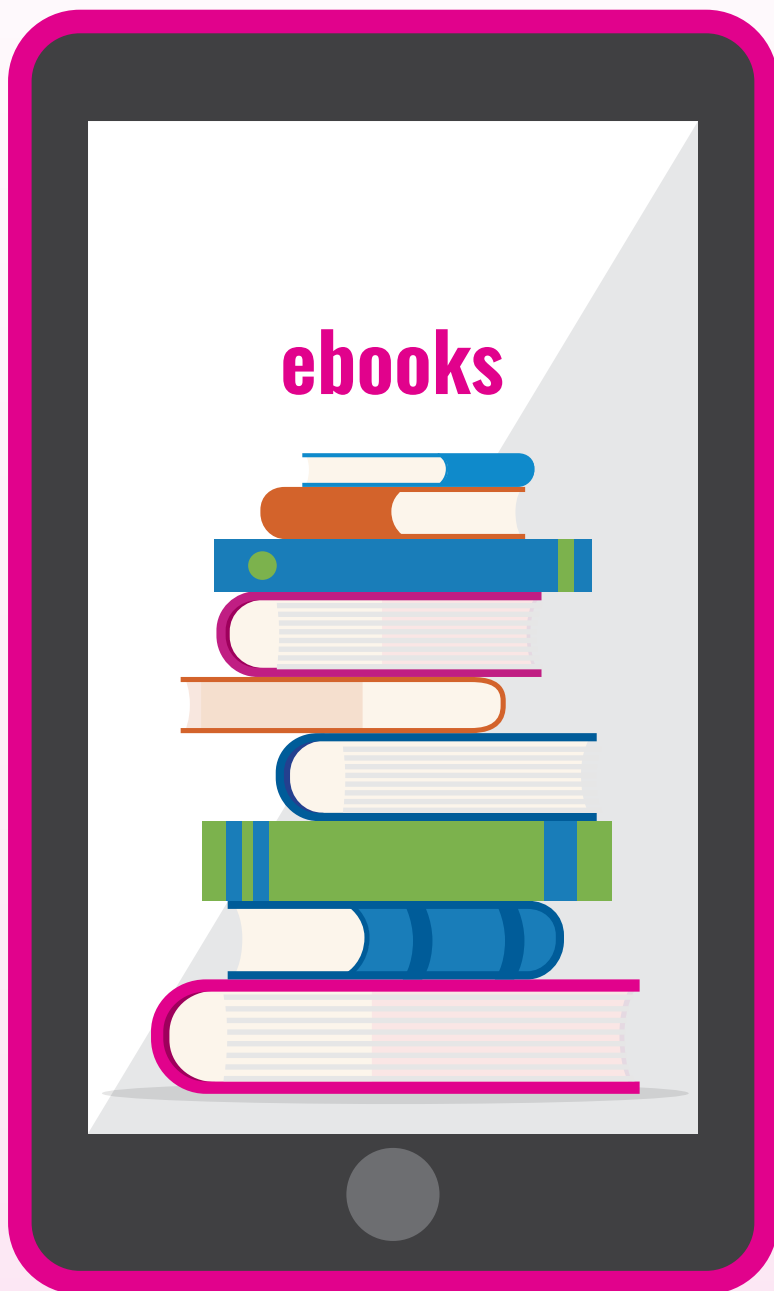
Technology supports their efforts and research in the field of accessibility is imperative to improve the tools available. Progress can be achieved through **financial and structural support to the sector, in particular to SMEs and micro-enterprises, while financing research and innovation dedicated to increasing accessibility**⁶. Everyone in the book value chain has a role to play in delivering accessibility. The rules set by the European Accessibility Act allow for derogation to the accessibility requirement in certain limited cases. To that end, clarifying that the liability for the content and the metadata lies with the publishers would ensure that more ebooks are available to a greater audience.

Research programmes must support publishers **by dedicating more funds to the book sector under Creative Europe, and by expanding support for the sector through the Horizon Europe programme for 2028-2034**⁷. There should be a dialogue with industry leaders so that the next funding cycle can be adjusted to address trends and the needs of the publishing sector. Horizon Europe has the potential to empower publishers to further harness the technological advances and become a powerful driver of growth and competitiveness.

Our sector has developed open industry standards such ePUB (an ebook file format supported by many e-readers with compatible software available for most smartphones, tablets and computers) and state-of-the-art metadata (from the International Standard Book Number ISBN to ONIX, an XML-based standard used in the book sector to communicate a wide range of information), but more research and development is needed.

For the convenience of our readers, we need **interoperability of e-books across devices, as consumers should be able to acquire their e-books from any supplier, regardless of their e-reading device, and to access, read, store and transfer any e-book in any format**⁸.

To help Text and Data Mining operators to respect their legal obligations, publishers have worked at W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) to develop a machine-readable opt out protocol. AI can be used to enhance publishers' capabilities, but **transparency related to AI training, including data collections and their sources** is essential to our sector⁹, as mentioned above. Only knowing whether our books have been used for training will allow us to enforce our rights.



The
ebook
market
is now around
13% of
the total.

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6. 8. Calls on the Member States to provide adequate **financial and structural support to the sector, in particular to SMEs and micro-enterprises, while financing research and innovation dedicated to increasing accessibility;**
9. Invites the Commission in its mid-term review of the Creative Europe programme 2021- 2027 to introduce measurable goals for how funding is used to improve the accessibility of books for people with disabilities;
7. 10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase the budget for the Creative Europe programme for 2028-2034, in particular **by dedicating more funds to the book sector, and by expanding support for the sector through the Horizon Europe programme for 2028-2034;**
8. 58. Calls for the **interoperability of e-books across devices, as consumers should be able to acquire their e-books from any supplier, regardless of their e-reading device, and to access, read, store and transfer any e-book in any format;**
9. 47. Acknowledges the use in the sector of artificial intelligence (AI) such as automated text analysis, metadata tagging, online discoverability and professional translation automation tools; 48. Stresses the importance of **transparency related to AI training, including data collections and their sources;**

For a better future

Whether physical or digital, books, like all products, consume energy.

Publishers are working at company, national and European levels to improve the carbon footprint of the sector, from the use of raw materials to sustainable packaging and transport needed for the production and distribution of books. They need **financial incentives, research and collaboration between all actors in the supply chain**¹⁰. Publishers are committed to achieving greater sustainability under fair rules which encourage the sector to invest. We need to have clear guidelines when it comes to guarding against deforestation and call on the Commission to ensure that the application of the legislation in this area is workable for all parties.

Bookshops, especially **independent bookshops (which) are cornerstones of local communities**, are our indispensable partners¹¹ in promoting books and reading. The proposal for a Regulation on late payment must take into account the specifics of the book sector. We welcomed the adoption by the European Parliament of an amendment excluding the book sector from the scope of the Regulation and call on the legislature to retain this important protection for the book ecosystem.

The role of book fairs is also pivotal to **promoting reading and authors (and) fostering the circulation of European books**¹². The same can be said of libraries, which need to be supported **by increasing the acquisition budgets of libraries so that they can expand the range of their books and collections and meet the needs of their communities**. Libraries must complement the role of bookshops, not replace them. The sector **urges the Member States to support local bookshops and safeguard the investment capacity of publishers**¹³. Libraries should be able to rely on robust budgets especially for the acquisition of new books. Exceptions to copyright cannot replace sound library funding. For trade books (fiction, non-fiction, children's books, travel guides, etc.), the sector relies on sales to individuals (95% of the revenues).

Taxation is also a tool for Member States to support the sector: notably, books should be **zero-rated for VAT, irrespective of their format or how they are accessed, in order to support the knowledge economy, encourage reading and promote its lifelong benefits**¹⁴.



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10. 40. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the sector in its green transition, in particular through **financial incentives, research and collaboration between all actors in the supply chain**, including on the use of raw materials, sustainable packaging and transport needed for the production and distribution of printed books; 41. Emphasises the prevailing paper-based nature of the book industry and calls on the Commission to take this into account in the design and implementation of green transition policies; 42. Welcomes the sector's efforts to produce printed books in a greener and more sustainable manner through the use of certified and recycled paper, as well as various related initiatives, such as carbon footprint calculators and green labels which help consumers understand and minimise their environmental impact; 46. Calls on the Commission to establish clear guidelines for the implementation of the Deforestation Regulation, taking into account the specific nature and complexity of the book sector chain so as to ensure that the obligations of the various actors remain proportionate and feasible;
11. 33. Underlines that **independent bookshops are cornerstones of local communities**, offering a differentiated customer experience and often supporting emerging and local authors; 34. Calls, therefore, on the Commission to create a label for independent bookshops in the EU in order to boost the visibility of local bookshops and promote the diversity of European books; 57. Underlines the role played by the free or low delivery charges offered by some dominant online platforms to lure consumers and the impact this has on fair competition, particularly with regard to independent bookshops;
12. 35. Underlines the positive role of book fairs in **promoting reading and authors, fostering the circulation of European books** and sharing good practices within the sector;
13. 11. Urges the Member States to promote diverse works of significant cultural and societal value **by increasing the acquisition budget of libraries so that they can expand the range of their books and collections and meet the needs of their communities; urges the Member States furthermore to support local bookshops and safeguard the investment capacity of publishers;**
14. 55. Calls for books to be **zero-rated for VAT in the Member States, irrespective of their format or how they are accessed, in order to support the knowledge economy, encourage reading and promote its lifelong benefits;**



FEP Members

Federation of European Publishers *Fédération des Éditeurs Européens*

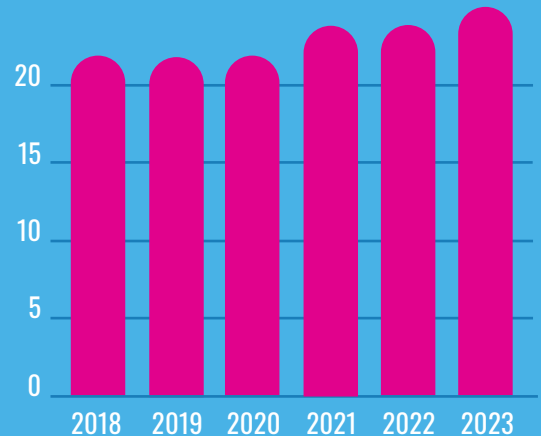
FEP is an independent, non-commercial umbrella association of book publishers' associations in Europe. FEP represents 29 national associations of publishers of books, learned journals and educational materials, in all formats, in Europe, and is the voice of the great majority of European publishers.

AUSTRIA	Hauptverband des Österreichischen Buchhandels
BELGIUM	Groep Algemene Uitgevers & Groep Educatieve En Wetenschappelijke Uitgevers - Association Des Editeurs Belges
BULGARIA	Асоциация „Българска книга“
CZECH REPUBLIC	Svaz Českých Knihkupců A Nakladatelů
DENMARK	Danske Forlag
ESTONIA	Eesti Kirjastuste Liit
FINLAND	Suomen Kustannusyhdistys
FRANCE	Syndicat National de l'Édition
GERMANY	Börsenverein Des Deutschen Buchhandels
GREECE	Συμπραξη Σωματειων Εκδοτων Βιβλιου Ελλαδας
HUNGARY	Magyar Könyvkiadók Es Könyvterjesztők Egyesülete
ICELAND	Felag Íslenskra Bokautgefenda
IRELAND	Publishing Ireland
ITALY	Associazione Italiana Editori
LATVIA	Latvijas Grāmatizdevēju Asociācija
LITHUANIA	Lietuvos Leidėjų Asociacija
LUXEMBOURG	Federation Luxembourgeoise Des Editeurs De Livres
NETHERLANDS	De Mediafederatie
NORWAY	Den Norske Forleggerforening
POLAND	Polska Izba Książki
PORTUGAL	Associação Portuguesa de Editores e Livreiros
ROMANIA	Federația Editorilor Din România
SERBIA	Српско Удружење Издавача И Књижара
SLOVAKIA	Združenie Vydavateľov a Kníhkupečov Slovenskej Republiky
SLOVENIA	Gospodarska Zbornica Slovenije
SPAIN	Federacion de Gremios de Editores de España
SWEDEN	Svenska Förläggare Föreningen
UNITED KINGDOM	The Publishers Association

/// Facts and Figures

A resilient industry

After years of stagnation and despite recent crises, **European publishers' net turnover in 2023 was up 2.3% compared to 2022, reaching 24.4 billion €** (data: FEP). Book publishing is the biggest cultural industry in Europe!



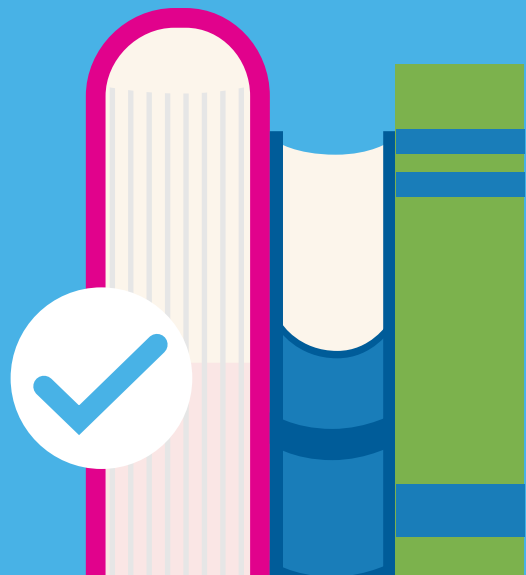
Sustainability at the core

According to a survey launched by FEP, **a majority of publishers use certified paper for at least 90% of their books.** Many of them are actively working to further improve their environmental sustainability, but they need financial support, technical tools and guidance from the EU (data: August 2023).



An affordable cultural good

Book prices have evolved consistently below inflation for the last 20 years. Despite the rising costs that publishers face during their daily work, **books remain an affordable cultural good in the EU** and in the European Economic Area (data: Eurostat elaborated by FEP).



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