

Press release
17-09-2020

FEP elects a new President during its first ever virtual general assembly

Outgoing President Rudy Vanschoonbeek had the privilege to chair the first ever FEP virtual general assembly this Thursday 17 September. In the first session, FEP members shared their experiences from these troubled last months and their expectations for the future. The fruitful exchange of views will help FEP to update the comprehensive report on the consequences of COVID-19 for the European book market released before the Summer.

Members voted for candidates for the Board during the second session. During that session, the FEP team also presented the main topics they had to deal with over these past few months. Members elected Peter Kraus vom Cleff as President for a term of two years. The Managing Director of Rowohlt publishing house and vice chairman of the Publishers' Board of Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels will be supported by Ricardo Franco Levi, the current President of the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) as Vice-President; Benedikt Föger, the President of the Austrian Publishers and Booksellers Association (Hauptverband) as Treasurer as well as Catherine Blache (Syndicat National de l'Édition), Michiel Kolman (De Mediafederatie) and Sakari Laiho (Suomen Kustannusyhdistys) as Board members.

FEP's outgoing President Rudy Vanschoonbeek said of his two years at the helm of the association: *'Once the vote in March 2019 of the Directive on copyright in the digital single market, on which we had all worked very hard, had passed, I thought; the worst or at least the most complicated part is behind me. Now I can concentrate on welcoming new MEPs and Commissioners, reminding them of the importance of the role of publishers in the creative chain, in a word; the normal job of a President. Then, the most unpredictable thing happened: Europe and the world was hit by the pandemic. Most countries faced lockdowns and the book sector was hit severely, notably due to the closure of bookshops for weeks or months on end. So much for the expected uneventful second year of my mandate! I wish Peter a quieter term, and every success as President of this important organisation. I am proud of the work we have done together for our sector'.*



FEP's outgoing President Rudy Vanschoonbeek and FEP new President Peter Kraus vom Cleff

FEP's incoming President Peter Kraus vom Cleff thanked Rudy for his work and kind words: *'Thank you very much for your dedication to our cause, dear Rudy. together with all colleagues today gathered virtually and the team, FEP is a well-established organisation in Europe. Our voice counts when it comes to regulatory matters affecting our sector. During your time as President, European countries have been allowed to reduce VAT on ebooks after years of lobbying the European institutions. We all know how important this is for the economy of the sector and I wish all countries will seize that opportunity as Germany did. Your contribution to this has been extremely valuable, not to mention your work on the Copyright Directive and your multiple visits to MEPs and politicians. I will do my utmost to follow in your footsteps together with the newly elected Board and the highly engaged and professional FEP team in the Brussels office. I am delighted to welcome Ricardo Levi as Vice-President, Benedikt Föger, our Treasurer for the third term, and the three new Board members: Catherine Blache, Michiel Kolman and Sakari Laiho.*

New FEP Vice-President, Ricardo Franco Levi, stated: *My election as Vice-President constitutes an acknowledgment for the entire Italian publishing sector, which received a heavy blow from the Coronavirus and is now on the road to successful recovery. Protecting copyright, promoting books and reading, fostering education for all, supporting digital innovation and the green revolution in the industry are some of the tasks we have to face in all European countries: I will give my contribution and offer my experience to carry out those goals in the best possible way.*



FEP new Vice-President Ricardo Franco Levi (©Musacchio&Ianniello&Pasqualini)

FEP's next meetings are:

- 15/10 – FEP Rendez-Vous during the Frankfurt Book Fair with the participation of Commissioners Gabriel (confirmed) and Breton (tbc);
- 16/10 – FEP & IPA Accessibility Seminar during the Frankfurt Book fair: *European Accessibility Act (EAA): a chance for publishers, All you need to know from international accessibility experts* (Seminars' Publishing Insights - Friday 16th October 2020- 11.30-12.30).