

European Publishers Manifesto for the 2024 elections



FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN PUBLISHERS
FÉDÉRATION DES ÉDITEURS EUROPÉENS

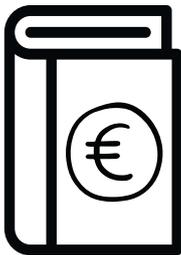
Opening Worlds

An independent industry driven by curiosity

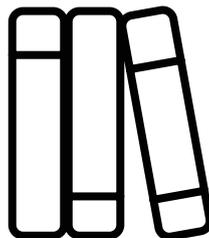
Create - Innovate - Sustain

At the eve of the 2024 elections, European publishers call on the European Parliament to uphold a vibrant publishing sector, the largest cultural industry in Europe, ensuring that we can continue to freely publish a wide variety of books, guaranteeing freedom of expression, a plurality of opinions and our democratic values.

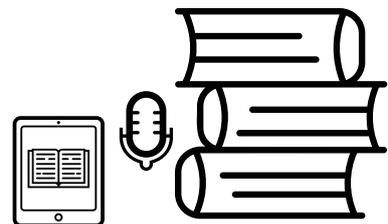
It is essential that citizens can freely choose the books they wish to read, whether for pleasure, information or education. The ability of publishers to freely publish is an essential value to our democracy, cultural diversity, and freedom of expression. The right conditions must be in place for the publishing sector to remain a vital and responsible actor in the democratic and cultural life of every European citizen. The European Parliament in September 2023 adopted a [Report on the Future of the European Book Sector](#) which lists many measures that would support books and reading in Europe. Some of them are listed in this Manifesto.



Net publishers' turnover
23.9 € billion in 2022



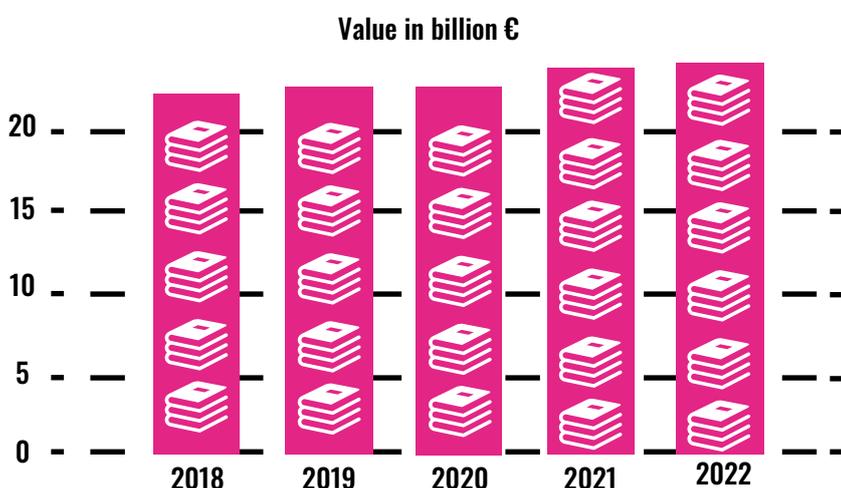
About 575,000 new titles
published in Europe in 2022



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

Facts and Figures

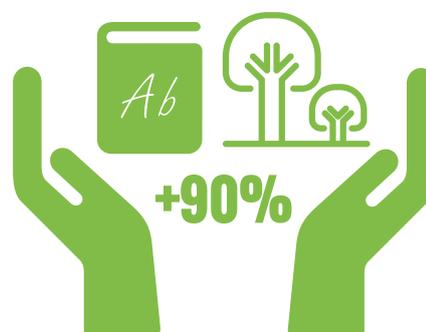
A resilient industry



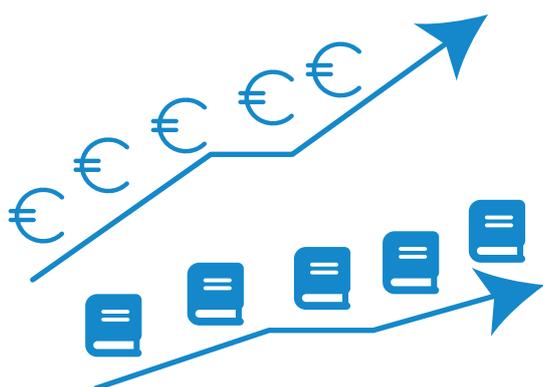
After years of stagnation and despite recent crises, European publishers' net turnover in 2022 was up 1.3% compared to 2021, reaching 23.9 billion € (data: FEP). Book publishing is the biggest cultural industry in Europe!

Sustainability at the core

According to a survey launched by FEP, nearly 2/3 of publishers use certified paper (PEFC/SFC) or recycled sources in over 90% of the cases. 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 raising 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).

FEP Members

Federation of European Publishers - Fédération des Éditeurs Européens

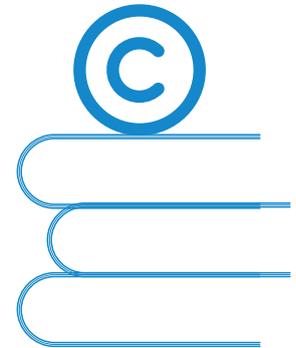
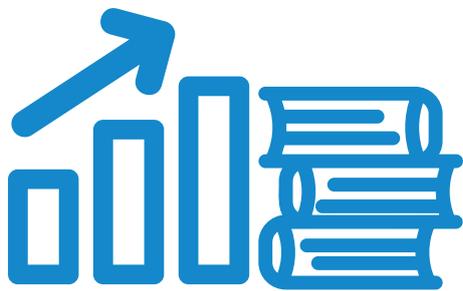
FEP is an independent, non-commercial umbrella association of book publishers' associations in Europe. FEP represents 29 national associations of publishers of books, learned journals and educational materials, in all formats, in Europe, and is, thus, the voice of the great majority of European publishers.

- 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 Könyvkiadok Es Könyvterjesztok Egyesülese
- 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
- THE 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 Kníhkupcov Slovenskej Republiky
- SLOVENIA** - Gospodarska Zbornica Slovenije
- SPAIN** - Federacion de Gremios de Editores de España
- SWEDEN** - Svenska Förläggare Föreningen
- UNITED KINGDOM** - The Publishers Association

Create

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

Although copyright does not appear in the Report, it is the foundation of investment by 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. Licences, whether individual or collective, are paramount to facilitate access to the books we publish.



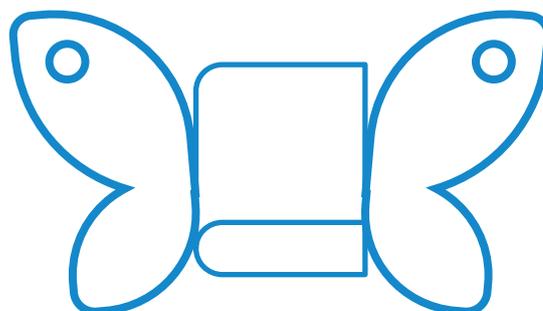
These books need readers. Initiatives must **develop an integrated national policy for promoting literacy skills, including through cooperation between the book and education sectors** from an early age^[2]. FEP signed the [Ljubljana Reading Manifesto](#) and calls for its recommendations to be fulfilled by actions.

EP Report on the Future of the European Book Sector

- [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; deplores all attacks against them;

By calling for support actions **such as the introduction of ‘cultural vouchers’, particularly for young people**, Europe encourages demand and supports the whole sector.

We need to read each other’s books which requires supporting **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 and a better understanding of the richness of European literature^[3].



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 all literary genres on the broadest topics; freedom of expression is at the heart of our sector and is paramount to creativity^[4]. Giving the choice to teachers to choose educational material is also essential to the formation of citizens who can think critically.

Finally, united, we need to **ensure that sufficient funding continues to support the Ukrainian book sector**, helping them and their literature to remain present in the life of their compatriots^[5].

EP Report on the Future of the European Book Sector

[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;

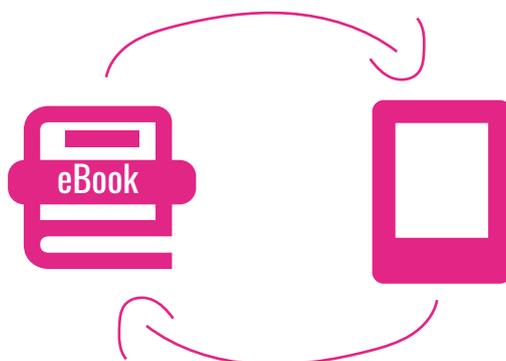
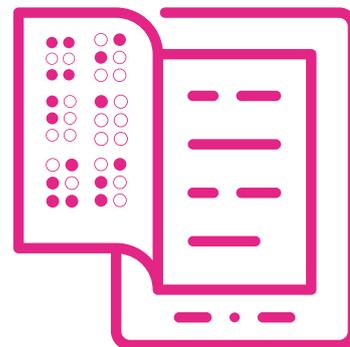
38. Calls on the Commission to **ensure that sufficient funding continues to support the Ukrainian book sector**, including artists and authors, for the duration of the war and the reconstruction of the country;

39. Underlines the role played by the Creative Europe Programme in funding some of these projects, such as the Tales of EUkraine initiative;

Innovate

For all

With ebooks and audiobooks, authors and publishers have now a unique chance to offer access to literature to all readers, irrespective of impairments. Technology will support their efforts and research in the field of accessibility is imperative to improve the tools available. This can be done 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].



Publishers' collective efforts in terms of research should be encouraged **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].

EP Report on the Future of the European Book Sector

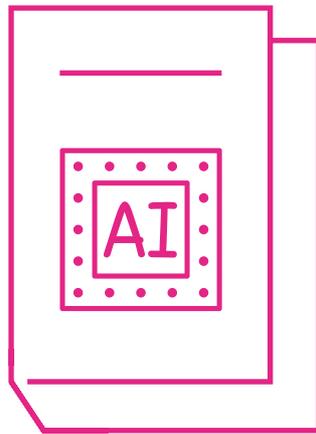
[6] 8. Calls on the Member States to provide adequate **financial and structural support to the sector, in particular to SMEs and micro-enterprises, while financing research and innovation dedicated to increasing accessibility;**

[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 to expand **support for the sector through the Horizon Europe programme for 2028-2034;**

50. Calls on the Commission to support research and innovation projects on the use of AI in order to enhance the efficiency of the sector, notably with regard to environmental sustainability and accessibility, for example through Horizon Europe;

Innovate

Our sector has developed open industry standards such ePUB (an ebook file format supported by many e-readers and compatible software is available for most smartphones, tablets and computers) and 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 comfort 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 companies to respect their legal obligations on copyright, publishers have worked at W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) to develop an opt out protocol in case of mining activities. Artificial Intelligence can be used to enhance publishers' capabilities, but **transparency related to AI training, including data collections and their sources**^[9] is essential to our sector.

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[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;**

Sustain

For a better future

Whether physical or digital, books, like all products, use energy. Publishers are working at company, national and European levels to improve the carbon footprint of the sector, from the use of raw materials, 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].



Electronic commerce is a complement to bookshops, especially **independent bookshops (which) are cornerstones of local communities**^[11] promoting books and reading. An industry can only thrive when competition on the market is fair. Therefore it is crucial **to monitor the effective implementation of the Digital Markets Act by dominant online market players and their compliance with the obligations**^[12].

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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;

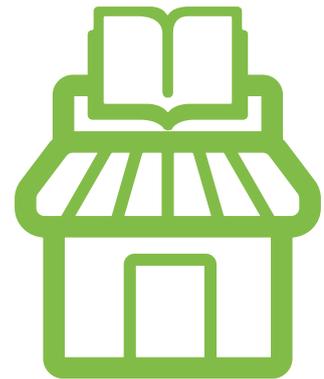
[12] 60. Calls on the Commission and the Member States **to monitor the effective implementation of the Digital Markets Act by dominant online market players and their compliance with the obligations**;

Sustain

The role of book fairs is also capital to **promoting reading and authors, fostering the circulation of European books.**^[13]

The same can be said of libraries which need to be supported **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.**

Libraries must complement the role of bookshops, not replace them. The sector **urges the Member States furthermore to support local bookshops and safeguard the investment capacity of publishers**^[14]. One of the conditions for a successful book market is the wide availability of books in bookshops. Returns of unsold copies is an issue which the sector is addressing with new technologies.



The book chain employs hundreds of thousands of skilled workers and supporting **education and training programmes dedicated to the various actors of the book sector**^[15] is a plus.

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**^[16].

EP Report on the Future of the European Book Sector

^[13] 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;

^[14] 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;**

^[15] 19. Underlines the fact that the Commission designated 2023 the European Year of Skills and, in this context, calls on the Member States to support **education and training programmes dedicated to the various actors of the book sector;**

^[16] 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;**



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