

## **Joint EBF and FEP Contribution to the European Commission Consultation on the future EU Culture Programme**

*Register of Interest Representatives FEP: 398541467-53*

*Register of Interest Representatives EBF: 9031106115-62*

The European Booksellers Federation - EBF - is a non-commercial umbrella organisation representing national Booksellers Associations in the European Union within the EU and the EEA. Through its members, EBF speaks on behalf of more than 25,000 individual booksellers. Depending on the country, booksellers represented include independent booksellers, national bookshop chains, supermarkets, internet retailers and other cultural or general outlets selling books.

The Federation of European Publishers - FEP- is an independent, non-commercial umbrella association of books, journals and databases publishers associations in the European Union. FEP represents 26 national associations of book publishers of the European Union and of the European Economic Area. FEP is the voice of the great majority of publishers in Europe.

Both organisations very much welcome the opportunity to take part in the consultation on a new EU Culture Programme, which is to replace the current programme after 2013, and to share with the Commission some suggestions to support the book sector.

### **A healthy European book chain**

The European book sector, the first cultural sector in Europe, has always been a vital sector of the economy, and remains so in the knowledge economy. Writers are the fundamental element of the book chain without whom nothing would be possible. Publishers play an indispensable role in the selection, edition, publicity of published works and take financial risks to make creators' works available to European readers on the printed and online market. Meanwhile, booksellers disseminate varied content which educates, informs and entertains European citizens. It is this diverse and creative content that they are looking for when buying from a physical or an online bookshop. A significant number of national booksellers' and publishers' associations have been investing time and money in the setting up of online distribution platforms for e-books, in partnership with aggregators and publishers. The book sector has fully engaged in ICTs and their commitment has certainly given economic and cultural added-value of Internet Service Providers (ISP's).

This is why it is crucial to preserve a healthy book chain in Europe, as writers, booksellers and publishers are essential in promoting cultural diversity and high quality content. It is therefore crucial to support a sustainable environment, fighting online piracy which is increasingly having a serious impact on the book sector. Publishers and booksellers are cultural actors as much as they are commercial operators. All EU initiatives should support this '*raison d'être*' of the creation, production and distribution of books.

## **A European Book Office**

EBF and FEP are proud to be involved, together with the European Writers' Council (EWC), in the organisation of the European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL) set up by DG EAC of the European Commission. This initiative is very laudable and constitutes a first step towards an ambitious policy to support the book chain. It is crucial to keep support for the EUPL in the future Culture programme.

In this regard, and in order to help publishers and booksellers to better fulfil their role of trusted mediators in the production and dissemination of the rich European cultural heritage written by our gifted writers, our organisations suggest that the future Culture programme provides the framework for the setting up of a **European Book Office** (EBO), on the same ground as the European Music Office (EMO).

The role of the EBO (European non-profit association) would be to facilitate access to information on the Culture programme to the book chain, to promote specific lines related to books, such as grants for translation, to facilitate applications to calls, to enable cooperation projects between the different stakeholders.

More essentially, the EBO would play a key role in promoting cultural diversity and European literature. Its essential mission would be to make sure that the work of emerging authors celebrated by the EUPL, as well as high quality literature would reach as many European citizens as possible, with the collaboration of authors, publishers and booksellers representatives. It goes without saying that the umbrella organisations involved in the EBO would have equal governance responsibilities in its management.

For more information, please contact [eurobooks@skynet.be](mailto:eurobooks@skynet.be) and [info@fep-fee.eu](mailto:info@fep-fee.eu)