

AGENDA

DAY 1: 22 September 2026

Venue: **Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels**
Master of ceremonies: **Anna Gumbau**

**EUROPEAN
LITERACY
CO:ALITION**

Sessions	Content	Speakers
12:30-13:00	Registration and welcome coffee	
13:00-14:15 SESSION 1: OPENING	Welcome, opening Keynote: <i>Redirecting the flow – How Europe can inspire a revival of literacy</i> Presentation: <i>Warsaw Memorandum A Memorandum towards building a European Literacy Coalition</i>	Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission Conor Kostick, Writer, European Writers' Council Emmi Jäkkö, Director, Lukukeskus - The Finnish Reading Centre Andreas Galanos, Teacher, Experimental Senior High School of the University of Macedonia
14:15-15:30 SESSION 2: LITERACY AS A PUBLIC GOOD AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY	Statements and panel discussion	Orlaith O'Connor, Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Youth, Ireland Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union Pierre Tardieu, Chief Policy Officer, WindEurope Thijs Berman, Executive Director, European Partnership for Democracy Tiziana Mascia, (moderator) Researcher at the University of Urbino, European Literacy Policy Network
15:30-16:15	Coffee break	
16:15-17:30 SESSION 3: LITERACY ECOSYSTEMS AS A BACKBONE OF A LITERATE EUROPE	<i>The literacy landscape in Europe – presentation of the preliminary study findings</i> Panel discussion	Loes van der Graaf, Research Manager, Verian Group Klaas Gommers, Policy Advisor, Dutch Association of Public Libraries Anne Mangel, Professor at the Norwegian Reading Centre, University of Stavanger Daniela Marmocchi, Events and International Guest Relations Manager, Bologna Children's Book Fair Maja Meissner-Filipek, Founder, Meissner & Partners, Poland Natalia Miteva, Former Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Bulgaria Valentina Stoeva, (moderator) EURead
17:30-17:45 SESSION 4: CLOSURE DAY 1		Diana Jabłońska, Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission
18:00-20:30	Dinner	

AGENDA

DAY 2: 23 September 2026

Venue: Royal Flemish Theatre, Brussels

EUROPEAN
LITERACY
CO:ALITION

Sessions	Content	Speakers
8:30-9:00	Welcome coffee	
9:00-10:00 SESSION 5: COALITION IN ACTION - INTRODUCTION	Welcome and introduction to the workshops, their content and methodology (Open Space Technology)	Maria Podlasek-Ziegler , Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission Maria Deskur , President, The Universal Reading Foundation Andrew Cranfield , Director, European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations
10:00-12:00 SESSION 6: WORKSHOPS	Group discussions	
12:00-12:30	Coffee break	
12:30-13:15 SESSION 7: HARVESTING AND PLENARY DISCUSSION	Presentations from group work and plenary discussion	Maria Deskur , President, The Universal Reading Foundation Andrew Cranfield , Director, European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations
13:15-13:30 SESSION 8: CLOSURE OF THE LAUNCH EVENT	Closure and next steps	Maria Podlasek-Ziegler , Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission Arnaud Pasquali , Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture European Commission
13:30-14:15	Lunch	

Bio notes

22–23 September 2026
Brussels

EUROPEAN
LITERACY
CO:ALITION

Mr Normunds Popens

European Commission

Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Normunds Popens has been Deputy Director-General at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture since January 2024. He previously served as Deputy Director-General for Implementation in DG REGIO. Before joining the European Commission in 2011, he held senior diplomatic posts in Latvia, including Permanent Representative to the EU.

Ms Orlaith O'Connor

Ireland

Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Youth, Ireland Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Orlaith O'Connor is Deputy Chief Inspector with Ireland's Department of Education and Youth. She began her teaching career as a teacher of business subjects in a post-primary school serving students from disadvantaged communities. She has over 20 years' experience in the Department's Inspectorate, covering inspection, curriculum and assessment policy. Her current responsibilities include the annual inspection programme, Senior Cycle redevelopment, and national and international assessments.

Ms Diana Jabłońska

European Commission

Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Diana Jabłońska is Director for Erasmus+, Education and Skills at the European Commission. She leads the strategic development and delivery of Erasmus+, supporting learning opportunities, educators, cooperation and mobility across Europe. She has more than 25 years' experience in European policy, including education, employment, cohesion, enlargement and international affairs.

Dr Conor Kostick

Ireland

Writer, European Writers' Council

Conor Kostick is a writer and historian, author of fiction and non-fiction, and a board member of the European Writers' Council. He is also Disputes Officer for the Irish Writers Union and a board member of the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency and Reading Services. He was previously a board member of the National Library of Ireland.

Mr Thijs Berman

Netherlands

Executive Director, European Partnership for Democracy

Thijs Berman is Executive Director of the European Partnership for Democracy. A former journalist and Member of the European Parliament, he has over 30 years' experience in media, politics and international development.

Mr Pierre Tardieu

Belgium

Chief Policy Officer, WindEurope

Pierre Tardieu is Chief Policy Officer at WindEurope, where he leads the Policy Department covering advocacy, market intelligence, energy system integration, industrial affairs and defence. He joined WindEurope in 2011 and has two decades of experience in shaping European policy.

Ms Emmi Irina Jäkkö

Finland

Director, Lukukeskus – The Finnish Reading Centre

Emmi Jäkkö is Director of Lukukeskus, the Finnish Reading Centre. She works on reading promotion and equal access to reading, with a focus on the role of reading in participation and society.

Mr Andreas Galanos

Greece

Teacher, Experimental Senior High School of the University of Macedonia

Andreas Galanos is an educator and teacher trainer at the Experimental Senior High School of the University of Macedonia. He is an AI-in-education expert in European initiatives on digital education and responsible AI, and a member of the Greek eTwinning National Support Organisation.

Mrs Tiziana Mascia

Italy

Researcher at the University of Urbino, European Literacy Policy Network

Tiziana Mascia, PhD, is a researcher in children's literature and literacy education at the University of Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy. She is a board member of the European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET) and chairperson of Literacy Italia.

Ms Loes van der Graaf

Netherlands

Research Manager, Verian Group

Loes van der Graaf is a Research Manager at the Verian Group. She works on research and evaluation projects in areas including education, migration and social policy, and is conducting a study commissioned by the European Commission on the current literacy landscape across Europe to inform the Literacy Coalition work in the future.

Mr Klaas Gommers

Netherlands

Policy Advisor, Dutch Association of Public Libraries

Klaas Gommers is a Policy Advisor at the Dutch Association of Public Libraries. He works on European library policy and cooperation and co-chairs the EU expert group on the multiple roles of public libraries, which produced the report *Strengthening Europe through Public Libraries*.

Mrs Anne Mangen

Norway

Professor at the National Centre for Reading Education and Research, University of Stavanger

Anne Mangen is Professor at the National Centre for Reading Education and Research, University of Stavanger. Her research examines how digitisation affects the cognitive and experiential aspects of reading. She is a member of the Norwegian government-appointed committee on screen use and previously chaired COST Action E-READ.

Ms Daniela Marmocchi

Italy

Events and International Guest Relations Manager, Bologna Children's Book Fair

Daniela Marmocchi is Events and International Guest Relations Manager at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. She oversees the BolognaRagazzi Awards, coordinates international guests, and contributes to cultural programmes and projects promoting international cooperation in children's publishing.

Mrs Maja
Meissner-Filipek

Poland

Founder, Meissner & Partners, Poland

Maja Meissner-Filipek is Founder and Managing Partner of Meissner & Partners Executive Search and Leadership Development. She is also a trustee of the Universal Reading Foundation and co-founder of the Copernicus Platform, which connects European innovation and talent with US partners.

Ms Natalia Miteva

Bulgaria

Former Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Bulgaria

Natalia Miteva is an education policy and innovation professional with extensive international experience in education. She is Government Engagement and Strategy Consultant at Google for Education EMEA and previously served as Deputy Minister of Education and Science in Bulgaria. She holds a master's degree in public policy from the University of Maryland.

Dr Valentina Stoeva

Bulgaria

EURead

Dr Valentina Stoeva chairs EURead, the European network for reading promotion. She has worked since 2008 on reading promotion, family literacy and access to reading materials, and on strengthening the role of reading in society.

Mr Arnaud Pasquali

European Commission

Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Arnaud Pasquali is a policy officer working in the Creative Europe unit at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission (DG EAC). He works with the book and publishing sector, and, in cooperation with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, on the implementation and development of the Creative Europe programme.

Ms Maria Podlasek-Ziegler

European Commission

Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

Maria Podlasek-Ziegler is a Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), European Commission. She currently works in the Basic Skills, Schools and Teachers unit. Her work has included educational research, youth policy and the Commission's work on key competences including literacy, as well as STEM education.

Mrs Maria Anna Deskur

Poland

President, Universal Reading Foundation

Maria Anna Deskur is President of the Universal Reading Foundation. A publisher and reading expert, she previously served as Managing Director of Egmont and Burda Books and co-founded the Muchomor publishing house. She is an Ashoka Fellow.

Mr Andrew Cranfield

Denmark

Director, European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations

Andrew Cranfield is Director of the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA). He has extensive experience in public library management in Denmark and previously served as EBLIDA Director from 2006 to 2009.

Ms Anna Gumbau

Belgium

Master of Ceremonies

Anna Gumbau is an international event moderator known for bringing clarity, energy and audience participation to complex conversations. A journalist covering climate, energy and European affairs, she combines sharp editorial instinct with the ability to make technical debates relevant and human. She has moderated more than 200 events for EU institutions, global companies and leading organisations across Europe.

EUROPEAN
LITERACY
CO:ALITION

