

Manifesto For The 2014 European Elections

EWC, EBF and FEP book manifesto for the European elections 2014

5 February 2014

Books convey ideas, feed the mind and make freedom of expression a reality. European citizens need to have access to books in order to understand the European democratic values which are underlying the European process. Books are key to our citizens' participation in economic, social, cultural and political life. This is especially true given the emergence of the knowledge economy and the increasing demand for literacy skills this has brought about.

The Book Chain: authors - the European Writers' Council (EWC), publishers - the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), and booksellers - the European Booksellers Federation (EBF), together represent a significant cultural diversity within Europe. EWC represents 150,000 authors in the publishing sector, who write in all genres, covering 40 languages; several hundred thousands of people are working in publishing houses and bookshops. Books are also the first cultural sector in economic terms, with a turnover for the publishers of € 22.5 billion in 2012 and an annual production of 535,000 new titles. European publishers held a total of about 9 million different titles in stock (of which more than 2 million in digital format).

EWC, FEP and EBF have agreed on 4 Top Priorities

1. Balanced and fair copyright conditions for the benefit of book creators and readers alike

The need to encourage innovation by supporting Intellectual Property and copyright, so that authors can create and be rewarded, publishers can invest, and booksellers can bring the finished work to book stores for the benefit of the reading public.

2. A fiscal regime which favours wide book dissemination

A book is a book regardless of its format. We call for the application of the lowest possible rate of VAT to all books regardless of their format or means of access and delivery.

3. Fair competition on the Internet, including interoperability between the different offers and encouraging the legal offer

We call for a level playing field and for the strengthening of choice for European readers. There should be full Interoperability enabling consumers to be able to read any e-book on any device and, moreover, to have the freedom to purchase e-books from any supplier - and not be locked into one supplier's ecosystem.

4. An educational choice, taking into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials

We call for any reform of the educational systems in Europe to take into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials in guaranteeing quality, fit for purpose content, and the freedom of choice.

I. Copyright - *We call for balanced copyright and fair conditions for all.*

1. Encourage innovation by supporting copyright, so that authors can create and be **remunerated**, publishers can **invest**, and booksellers can bring the finished work to book stores for the **benefit** of the reading public.
2. Advocate **testable solutions** to confront the challenges posed by data mining, in order to find the **best answer** to the issues arising from digital data.
3. Recognise that current copyright law shows enough **flexibility to adapt** to the digital world.
4. Support creativity and ensure that authors have **fair contracts**, regardless of whether their books are in print or digital format.

II. Taxation - *A book is a book regardless of its format. We call for the application of the lowest possible rate of VAT to all books regardless of their format or means of access and delivery.*

5. Books are vehicles of education and culture; **multiculturalism and learning should be facilitated** by endorsing the **lowest possible rate of VAT**.
6. Whether a book is paper or digital, ordered online or bought in a shop, tax discrimination that leads to lower readership should be avoided. **Equal VAT** on all products of the book sector should be supported.

7. A high and discriminatory VAT on electronic publications is an **obstacle** to the **enhancement** of a knowledge economy and information society in Europe; it hampers the development of e-commerce and the digital Single Market, and hinders the digitisation of our cultural heritage. Take action: **reduced or zero rate of VAT** should be applied across all formats.

III. Fair Competition - *We call for a level playing field and the strengthening of choice for European readers, as we have concerns that this is being compromised by the behavior of certain dominant players in the retail market.*

8. Discoverability of books, choice of retailers and interoperability are three key determinants of choice and competition. A **fair market** for the book sector with a **level playing field** should be supported in order for authors and publishers to continue to create and produce books which educate, inform and entertain European citizens.

9. Make it more attractive for European readers by promoting easily available digital content and thus **improving the e-book market** - not only of file formats but also of the ecosystems in which the e-books are acquired and accessed (this includes devices, reading software, and purchase platforms).

10. Join the authors, booksellers and publishers, who are keen to promote **business models** which make digital content easily **accessible** to the customers they are in touch with on a daily business.

11. Support initiatives aimed at **increasing interoperability** (such as the development and adoption of the e-Pub open standard e-book format) and promote interoperable **choices** in public procurement.

IV. Educational Choice - *We call for any reform of the educational systems in Europe to take into account the fundamental role of professionally published materials in guaranteeing quality, fit for purpose content, and the freedom of choice.*

12. Protect educational authors by preventing anything which **endangers their right** to negotiate their contracts and receive remuneration, regardless of the means of dissemination of the content they have created.

13. Enable the **freedom of choice** for teachers and institutions: **educational materials** need to be prepared by qualified people and assessed by professional publishers.

14. Ensure that **any reform of education** is carried out involving the main stakeholders, **including educational writers and publishers**.

15. Enhancing the use of ICT and OER in education should be aimed at improving educational outcomes; the increase of **resources dedicated to education should be advocated**, rather than eliminating professionally published content in an attempt to save resources.

16. Realise the **essential value** of IPR protection and the dangers of unfair competition from publicly funded resources and state monopolies.

www.eibf-booksellers.org