

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS IN THE EUROPEAN BOOK SECTOR 2020

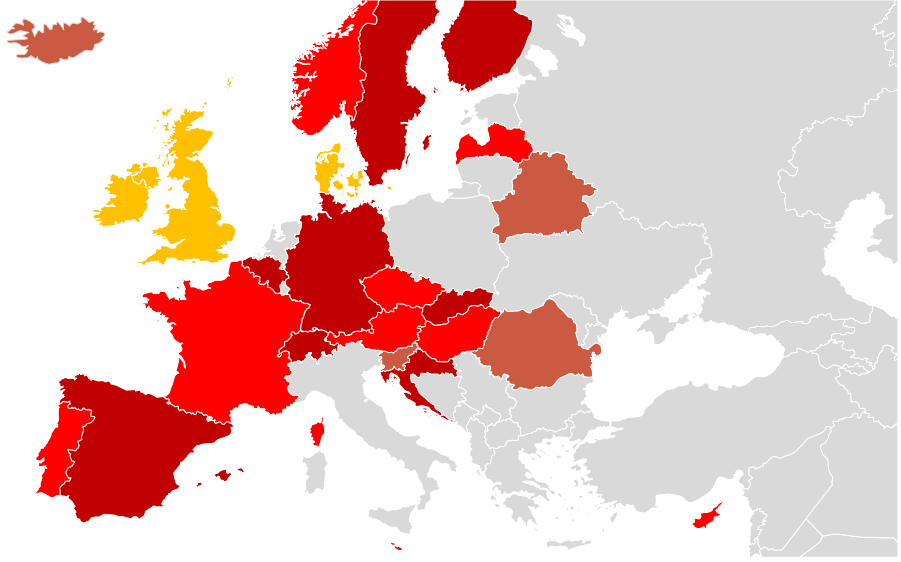


EUROPEAN WRITERS' COUNCIL
SURVEY

www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu



EUROPEAN WRITERS' COUNCIL
SURVEY



The European Writers' Council conducted the survey "**Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Writers and Translators in the European Book Sector**", from March 30 to April 24 2020.

33 writers' and translators' organisations from 24 countries (including the non-EU countries Belarus, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the EEA countries Iceland, and Norway), representing 128,000 authors of all genres and writing in 27 languages, participated and contributed 70 pages in total of figures, proposals and testimonials on ten specific questions proposed online.

The aim of the survey is to obtain a more in-depth description of the loss of income of writers and translators, its consequences for them and the book sector as a whole, as well as to obtain concrete proposals for the support of writers and translators, as they are the origin and source of the whole book value chain.

In addition, an overview of functioning or non-existing national support schemes (until to 21 May 2020), positive new developments and negative effects across the book sector was obtained.

These figures and insights, together with the proposals and national reports of 33 organisations of writers and translators, form the basis for a 37 points-catalogue of recommended short, middle and long term measures, as well as upcoming proposals for the EU and for national legislation.

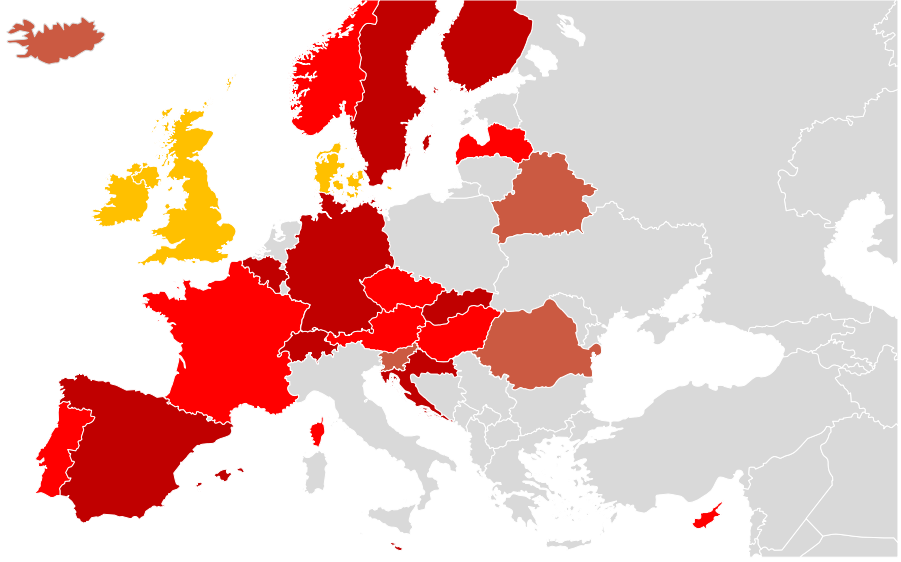
Nina George
President

Myriam Diocaretz
Secretary-General

The European Writers' Council (EWC) is the federation of 41 national organisations of professional writers and translators in 27 countries including the EU, as well as Belarus, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Montenegro, altogether writing in 31 languages and in all genres. The EWC represents over 150,000 individual authors.
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SURVEY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During April 2020, 33 writers' and translators' organisations from 24 countries, including the non-EU countries Belarus, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the EEA countries Iceland, and Norway, representing 128,000 authors of all genres, responded to a survey by the European Writers' Council on the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis on writers and translators. The respondents were able to provide information on areas of losses, severity of the crisis and its consequences, on emergency aid measures, positive developments, negative effects, future prospects, and proposals. The survey is concluded with 37 recommendations to decision makers of the European Union and national governments.

The three key points:

- (1) The consequences for the entire book sector are seen as very serious, and will hit the authors in a second wave and will directly threaten the diversity of European literature.
- (2) Online activities and digital distribution need support not only through funding but also through a much more author-friendly legislation and remuneration.
- (3) Freelance full-time authors and translators have a significant loss due to events that are cancelled until the end of the year and fall through most national aid programs.

Losses and economic impact on writers and translators in the book sector

- 64 % expect losses because of postponed publications of their planned titles
- 40 % expect losses because of postponed contracts and reduced royalty advances
- 97 % of writers and translators experience a high loss of income mostly because of cancelled lectures, workshops and readings
- 60 % estimate the effects as very to extremely severe on the income situation of authors

Actions, positive and negative developments

- the world of books moved online: readings, lectures, podcasts – but without remuneration schemes for writers and translators, since there are no portals with payment functions, direct licensing options for authors or legally binding conditions
- significant increase of e-book-piracy, increase of price dumping, increase of e-lending and low-priced subscription models without fair remuneration for authors
- in a regular year 500,000 to 600,000 new titles are published in Europe. Understandable projections assume 150,000 fewer titles in 2020 and 2021

National emergency funds: writers and translators are left behind

- there was hardly a country where tailor-made support for the book sector was available
- nine countries reported no support or very belated aid measures by the national government
- most of the national emergency aid schemes are NOT available for writers and translators

A selection of the 37 recommendations of proposed measures

- full implementation of Chapter 3 of the DSM directive on copyright
- compensation fund for past and future losses
- remuneration schemes for online activities for authors and support of portals with pay-functions
- national increase in budgets for educational materials
- sustainable actions against e-book and audio book piracy
- harmonising the working conditions and social insurance systems
- regional development to preserve cultural venues
- sustainable funding for the European wide exchange of literature
- a book for every child – supporting reading promotion



PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS

IG Autorinnen Autoren	Austria
IG Übersetzerinnen Übersetzer	Austria
Union of Belarusian Writers	Belarus
Flemish Writers' Association	Belgium
Croatian Writers' Association	Croatia
Croatian Writers' Society	Croatia
Literature and Criticism Association	Cyprus
Czech Writers' Association	Czech Republic
Danish Authors Society	Denmark
The Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers	Finland
Society of Swedish Authors in Finland	Finland
Société des Gens de Lettres	France
Syndikat – Association of German Language Crime Writers	Germany
German Writers' Union	Germany
VDÜ – German Literary Translators' Association	Germany
The Society of Hungarian Authors	Hungary
Writers' Union of Iceland	Iceland
Irish Writers' Union	Ireland
Latvian Writers' Union	Latvia
Association of Writers of Maltese	Malta
The Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association	Norway
Portuguese Society of Authors	Portugal
Writers' Union of Romania	Romania
Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity	Slovakia
Slovak Writers Society	Slovakia
Slovene Writers' Association	Slovenia
ACE – Spanish Writers' Association	Spain
ACE Traductores	Spain
Association of Catalan Language Writers	Spain
Swedish Association of Educational Writers	Sweden
Swedish Writers' Union	Sweden
A*dS Swiss professional association of authors and literary translators	Switzerland
The Society of Authors	United Kingdom

Furthermore, facts and figures from the following
EU countries are partly included:

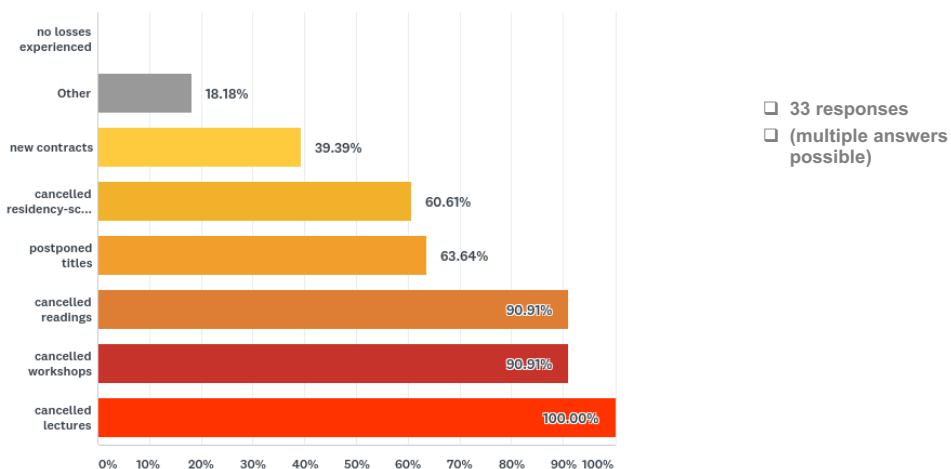
Estonia
Italy
Netherlands
Poland

SECTORS OF INCOME LOSS

Very few full-time authors make their living from sales alone. They often have multidimensional fields of income, including editing, teaching courses, moderating panels and events, giving lectures and readings or leading a book club. Other sources of income are grants, prizes and invitations to transnational festivals. Many writers and translators work as scouts or critics or as organizers of festivals and projects. Here the crisis has hit them simultaneously at all levels:

- **97 % of writers and translators experience a loss of income mostly because of cancelled lectures, workshops and readings (often until September 2020)**
- **64 % expect losses because of the postponed publication of their titles**
- **nearly 40 % expect losses because of postponed contracts and the resulting delay in royalty advances, or cancelled commitments. This will affect translators in particular during the upcoming year**
- **other losses:**
 - applications for grants and also literary prizes are postponed with uncertain schedules
 - transnational projects and festivals are cancelled
 - pre-investments in local festivals and projects are non-refundable
 - sales drop in general in every book market because of the European-wide, two months shut down of the bookshops
 - performance stop: cancelled poetry engagements, theatre plays

The return on the various stages is unclear. Locations, book shops, book fairs are expected to postpone most of their events in 2020 to avoid cost and risks. The anticipated sanitary measures will lead to a situation where there will be no occupancy or a limited presence and any event without funding will be a loss-making business.



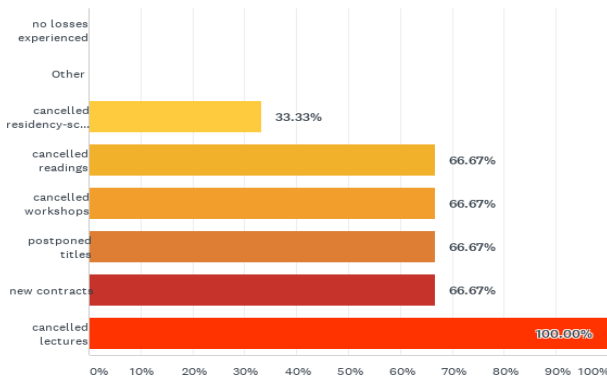
Special circumstances apply to several genres: translators will be hit with a delay by the crisis, while the authors of children's and young adult's books are currently suffering particularly severely from the loss of readings in 2020; also poets and non-fiction writers are particularly affected.

ESPECIALLY AFFECTED GENRES

Translators facing the danger of the second wave

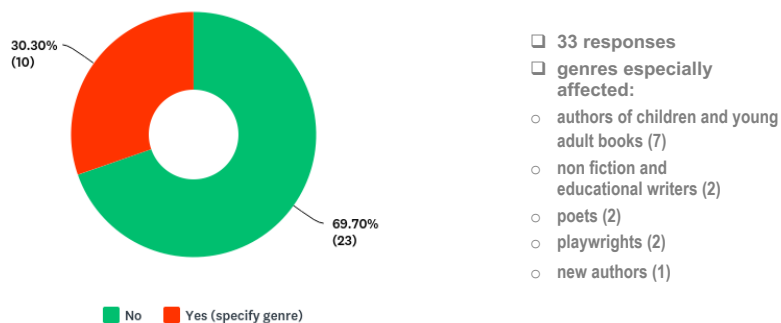
Translators often spend the time they work on a book unpaid before they receive any remuneration. The uncertainty of the next contract and the absence of collective agreements or remuneration rules lead to a consistently fragile income situation. Therefore, many translators opt to have side jobs in order to survive, for example by giving lectures, animating panels and moderating or working as editor and literary scout. This is where the Covid-19 crisis will hit them, especially in its consequences in a second wave in late 2020 and early 2021, when publishers will postpone and downsize their programs, will purchase fewer foreign rights for translations and may reduce the fees and editing assignments overall.

- **66 % of the responding translators' organisations reported to have and to expect losses because of fewer new contracts**



Writers of children's books, poets and new authors under pressure

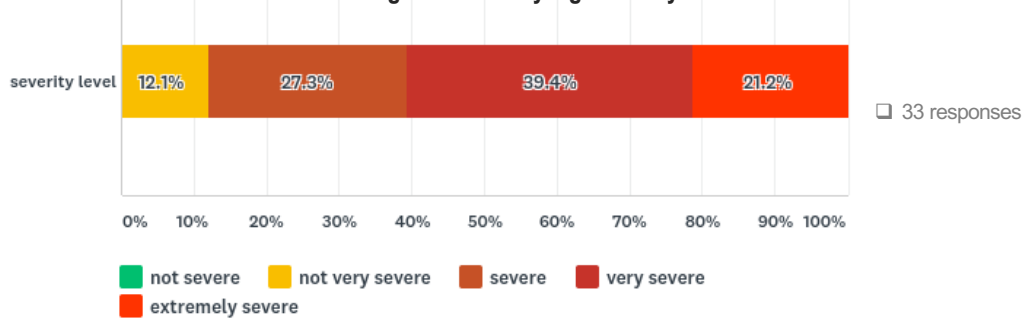
- **30 % of all respondents consider the writers of books for children and young adult particularly affected because of readings and workshops in schools cancelled for the rest of the year. Children's book authors often earn up to three quarters of their annual income from readings or workshops**
- **poets, non-fiction writers and playwrights have to deal with cancelled events, festivals, lectures, panels and theatre performances**
- **for debut authors with invisibility in the market, postponed literary prizes and postponed longlists and shortlists lead to an undeserved pre-end of the career**



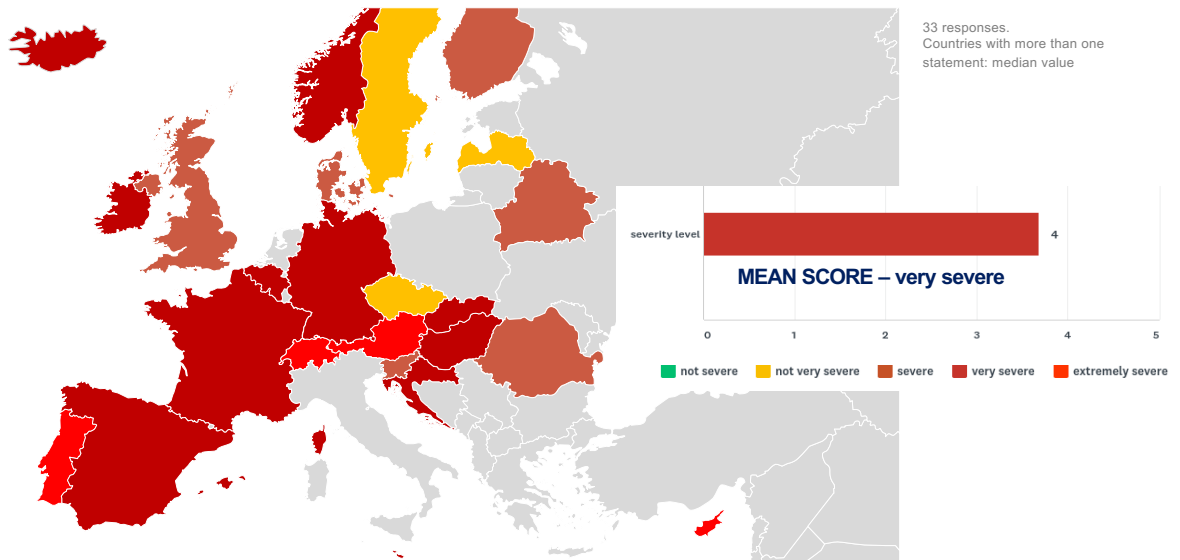
ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE INCOME OF WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

The situation for authors is very serious. Apart from the high loss of revenues of cancelled events, an important factor are the expected losses during 2020 and 2021 from the consequences of the shutdown in sales, postponed contracts and downsizing of programs, reduced royalty advances and suspended payments for the sales of their books.

- **60 % of the respondents estimate the effects as very severe to extremely severe on the income situation of writers and translators, 30 % as severe**
- the expected loss due to lower sales, lower fee payments and downsized programs
- translators indicated on average an extremely high severity of the losses



MAPPING: ANSWERS BY COUNTRY

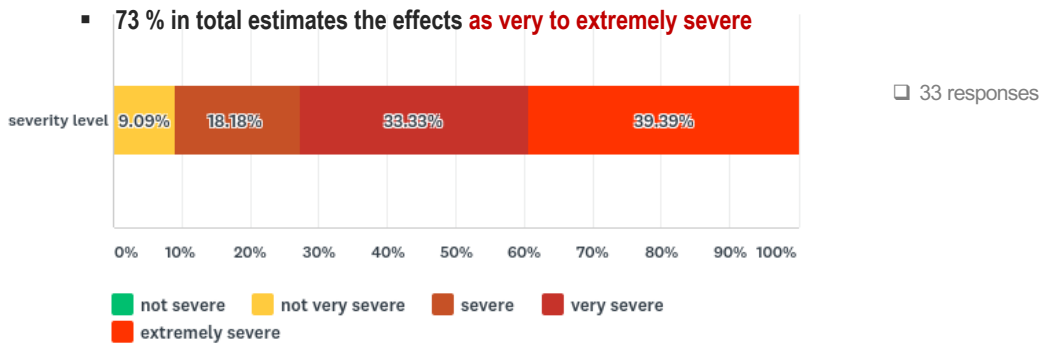


- Czech Republic: the losses are currently assessed as less severe, since the low income of authors usually forces them to pursue another profession or job for their main income anyway
- Latvia: the very severe losses – between 25 % and 75 % – are expected to be revealed mainly in 2021
- Norway: this answer reflects the income of non-fiction and academic authors, who often pursue an academic career as their main profession. For professional full-time authors in the entertainment and fiction genres on the public market in Norway, the situation is considered serious

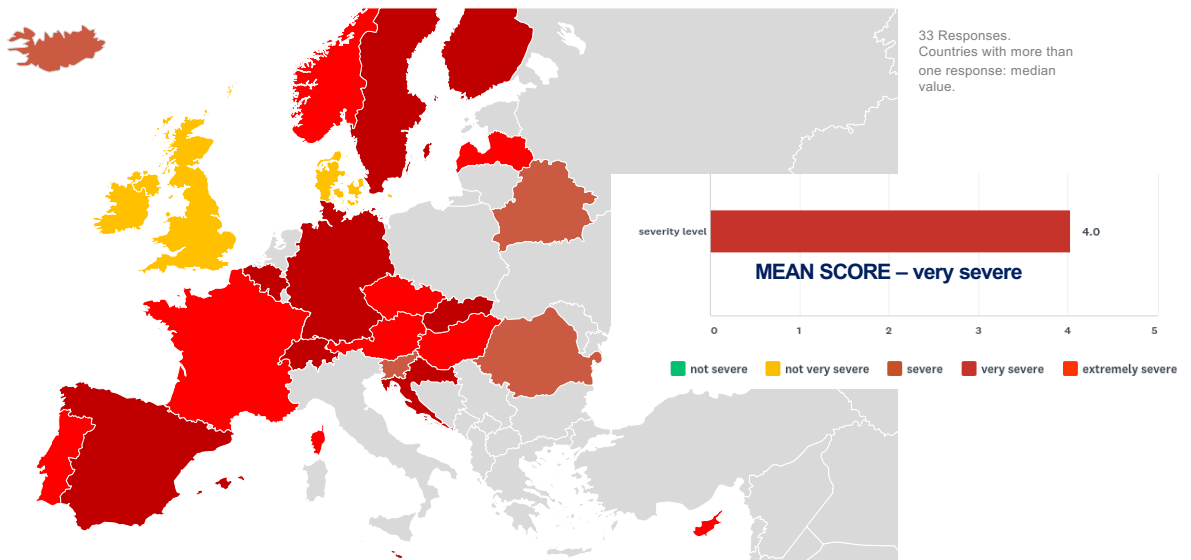
ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE EUROPEAN BOOK SECTOR

European book markets have lost from March to May their most important sales channels due to closed bookstores, while Amazon has stopped deliveries. Even the partial reopening did not lead back to everyday life and the usual turnover. Continued sanitary restrictions will continue to make sales more difficult. All events and fairs are suspended. Digital distribution models and marketing do not compensate for these losses. On the contrary: due to the emergence of subscription and e-lending models, revenues from e-books for authors have been falling steadily for years, in parallel with the consistently decreasing shares in this sub-segment. In order to reach an audience, some publishers have distributed e-books at reduced prices or given text works away for free. At the same time, the e-book piracy has increased.

The estimates by authors for their part of the book sector are correspondingly worrying:



MAPPING: ANSWERS BY COUNTRY



- Denmark: since mid of May there is a more specified package for authors and artists to compensate for losses and for reconstruction, so there are hopes of reducing the impact
- Ireland: trust in the book lust of the Irish remains unbroken, although State aid measures are often not available for writers and translators (see page 26)
- United Kingdom: book shops closed in late March 2020. Consequences: UK fiction sales climbed by a third in these weeks during the EWC survey (source: BBC Report, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-52048582>, consulted 4 May 2020), readers set up a reading stock. This needs a follow-up monitoring

THE DISRUPTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Fewer new original titles and translations: European diversity of literature under threat

In a regular year, according to a FEP-FEE-Survey around 575,000 to 600,000 new original titles are published in the European book markets.¹ Up to 30 % overall of every year's fiction programs are translations. It can be assumed understandably that many titles of the 2020 plans will be in the first step postponed to the next season and the year 2021. In the second step, the general reduction in the programs and the focus on well-known names instead of niches and beginners can be assumed. In addition, small sized publishing houses may close in many countries. The foreseeable consequence is that 100,000 up to 150,000 fewer new titles will be published in Europe – which means an impact on around 100,000 existing authors, including new voices, who will experience a more difficult market access than in the pre-Corona era. There is another aspect that worries us: valid samples already show that female authors are published much less frequently and reviewed even less often.^{2,3} The crisis hit them doubly, because their income and savings are in average lower than what their male colleagues have in stock. Here too, we fear a decline in female voices in literature in particular. A further consequence will be, as it is observed in Italy, France and Germany, that translations will decrease in acquisitions and sales.⁴ Overall, this is quite a demise of the European diversity of literature.

Writers and Translators: the sources of the book value chain are unprotected

It is apparent that writers and translators have not been able to build up reserves for such a crisis for longer than three months, due to the insufficient remuneration caused by:

(a) weak contractual laws (b) no collective agreements for remuneration (c) limitations and exceptions without proper compensation schemes (d) shifts in the market, i.e. from print to e-books with declining shares and decreasing remuneration and (e) absence of social security systems for full-time freelance authors (existing in only a few countries, such as Germany and France). These disadvantages are evident in the crisis. EWC Member Organisations reported postponed or reduced payments, cancelled contracts and commitments. Royalty advances are expected to be cut down. In this way, fewer writers and translators will still be able to afford to write and translate. Access to create literature is thus made more difficult for less solvent authors.

Our respondents have observed these further developments during the crisis:

E-book-piracy and the downward spiral of price structures in the digital market

- the rising of e-book piracy and copyright infringements in some countries has tripled (Spain)
- e-book dumping prices or free online distribution by some publishers in order to reach audiences during lockdown or to support home schooling
- in countries without a Fixed book price (FBP) system retailers lowered the book prices – which means also a lower share for authors
- dependence on Amazon's cut-down delivery services led to an extreme decline in sales. This led to cancelling publishing dates and stopped projects, postponed payments to third parties, new titles published in March, April, May and June are released as e-book-only or as digital first, often with dumping price models or in subscription models with a lower share for authors
- currently there is no existing remuneration scheme for the online readings of authors

1 <https://fep-fee.eu/The-Federation-of-European-844> consulted on 16 May 2020

2 http://www.womarts.eu/upload/WOMARTS_REPORT.pdf consulted on 21 May 2020

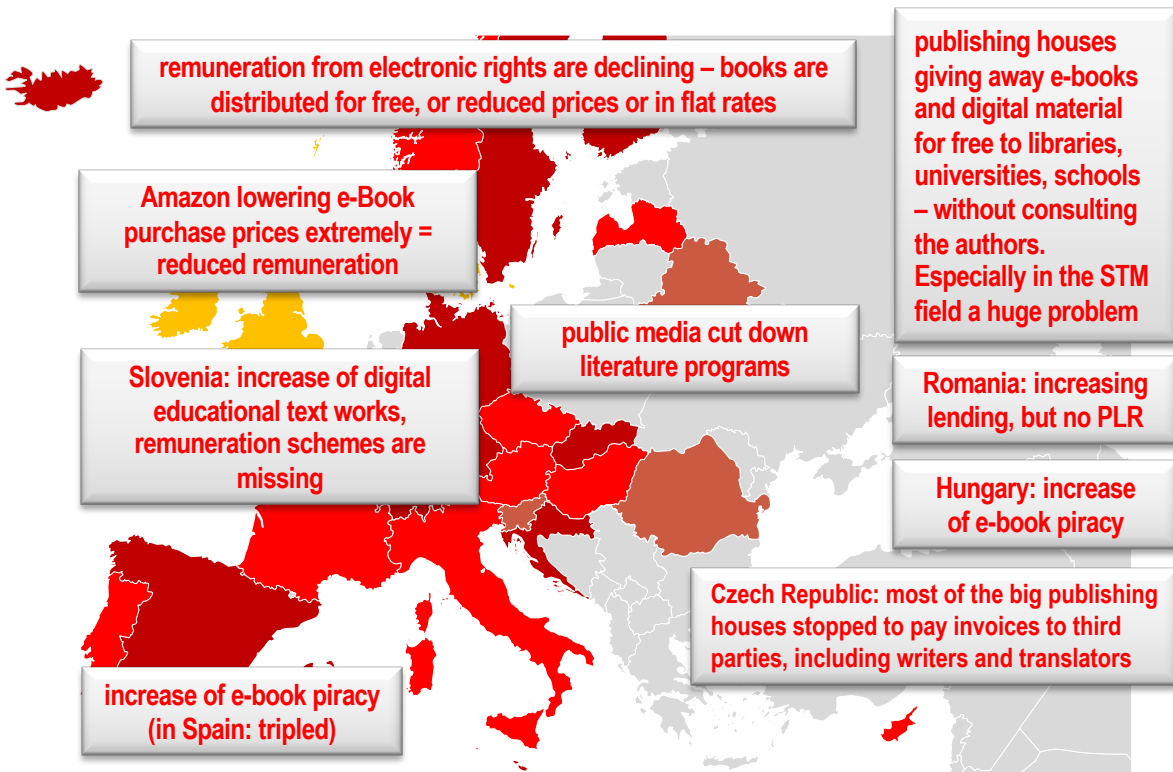
3 <http://www.counting-women.com/studientext.html> consulted on 16 May 2020

4 https://www.boersenblatt.net/2020-03-28-artikel-18.600_titel_weniger-coronaauswirkungen_auf_die_italienische_buchbranche.1839265.html consulted 25 April 2020

MAPPING BY ANSWERS FROM COUNTRIES: THE DISRUPTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE

The EWC survey respondents quoted these developments during the crisis:

Overall: freelance writers make an income with multidimensional works – writing, translating, teaching, reviewing, editing. They are hit on several levels simultaneously	Overall: Amazon stopped delivering, while promoting free e-books	Overall: strong increase of e-book piracy
no remuneration for online readings or other digital activity	Overall: postponed contracts and release dates, postponed or reduced royalty payments	Overall: shutdown of small and middle sized indie-publishers to be expected. High loss of unusual literature and lesser known languages to be expected
State aid often not available for writers and translators	new titles published as “digital only” – with low prices and invisibility in the bookshops	
bookshops sell books online with extreme discounts. Consequences: lower royalties for writers		



ALTERNATIVES, DEVELOPMENTS AND SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Authors on the move for readers in lockdown: An increase of digital activities

Two thirds of the respondents reported about the vital activity of authors. The activities covered four main areas: (a) support for authors whose titles have become invisible, (b) support for the "buy local" movement, (c) support for families in lockdown to provide them with digital entertainment, and (d) creating new digital formats around a life with books and authors.

- **incredibly new formats online: authors got immediately active, with online readings (often children's book authors, to help parents), lectures, reviews, literally games, talk shows, pod casts, ceremonies, master classes, book clubs, teaching workshops, digital symposiums but: all so far unpaid, except for some better practice examples in i.e. Norway**
- **the promotion of reading via social media, motivating people to engage with books and authors**
- **authors supported local booksellers promoting "buy local" in the social networks**
- **public and mass media cut down literature programs and reviews, which leads to less visibility – this activated also new voluntary formats by authors and translators, to present in ad hoc journals, columns or pod-casts reviews of books and offer talks with writers and book people**
- **book-launch parties via Zoom with famous writers – getting in touch more personally**
- **inspiration for the future: hybrid event formats, both analogue and digital**

Currently there is no European wide reliable platform or portal on which fixed or voluntary payment methods can be carried out for the online performances of authors. It is understandable that, in the course of the general economic crisis, voluntary donations or payments on the Internet are not to be expected and that this concept on a voluntary basis or crowdfunding is correspondingly not economically stable or sustainable.¹ There must also be a reliable legal framework covering the services of writers and translators guaranteeing their remuneration.

Authors act with solidarity and support for a society in lockdown – but how will authors be supported?

The digital e-lending and audio book subscription has increased disproportionately, either via lending through public libraries or via low-priced subscription models. What both systems have in common is that the remuneration share for authors is disproportionately low or non-existent. In some countries the Government had increased the budgets for e-lending – Denmark, Norway and Estonia, for example, to indirectly support authors as well as society and to allow free digital access to public libraries.

The survey respondents reported that in order to support universities and teachers, publishing houses opened up free access to educational material and digital text works for pupils.² Several academic publishers have made many resources related to Covid-19 available for free; trade publishers made e-books available for free or at reduced prices and lifted licensing restrictions for readings online.³ These altruistic gestures towards social solidarity is to be highly appreciated. But these generous gestures also need to consider the question whether writers and translators of these text works given away for free will receive appropriate back-up in aid packages and further programs – for their support to society during the crisis.

1 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14xCJO3cW6tFJ-IT2LG8WZ9NIYvGuZAuf/view> consulted on 14 May 2020

2 <https://www.internationalpublishers.org/covid-19-reaction/168-covid-19/966-publishers-act-amid-covid19-pandemic> consulted on 19 May 2020

3 <https://us5.campaign-archive.com/?u=914a89e2e13ccd381d1c47e5d&id=57b4f33b61> consulted on 19 May 2020

MAPPING: ACTIONS AND SUPPORTING PROJECTS FOR READERS AND SOCIETY IN LOCKDOWN

virtual book festivals & book launch parties

online award ceremonies

writers' diaries on Corona

promotion campaigns for e-books

Authors and writers' unions organize performances and talks on digital platforms

children's book authors create reading videos for exhausted parents

overall livestream readings

Norway: digital events with voluntary payment from viewers

Switzerland: reinforced presence of literature in radio and tv and new ad hoc-journals

Belgium: websites on how to support local authors

Bologna Book Fair Online!

Instagram poetry readings

Spain: authors' unions launched bookshop campaign

famous writers review and praise lesser known new authors online

social media campaigns #stayhomereadabook #behindeverybook

house delivery by bookshops and libraries

Finland, Belarus: online lectures, writing courses

Austria: e-lending by public libraries for free, free access to educational text works

Germany, Denmark: campaigns to support booksellers – i.e. websites to look up local bookstores offering delivery of books

Slovenian authors have joined the humanitarian action to make theirs works available to the most vulnerable in hospitals for free

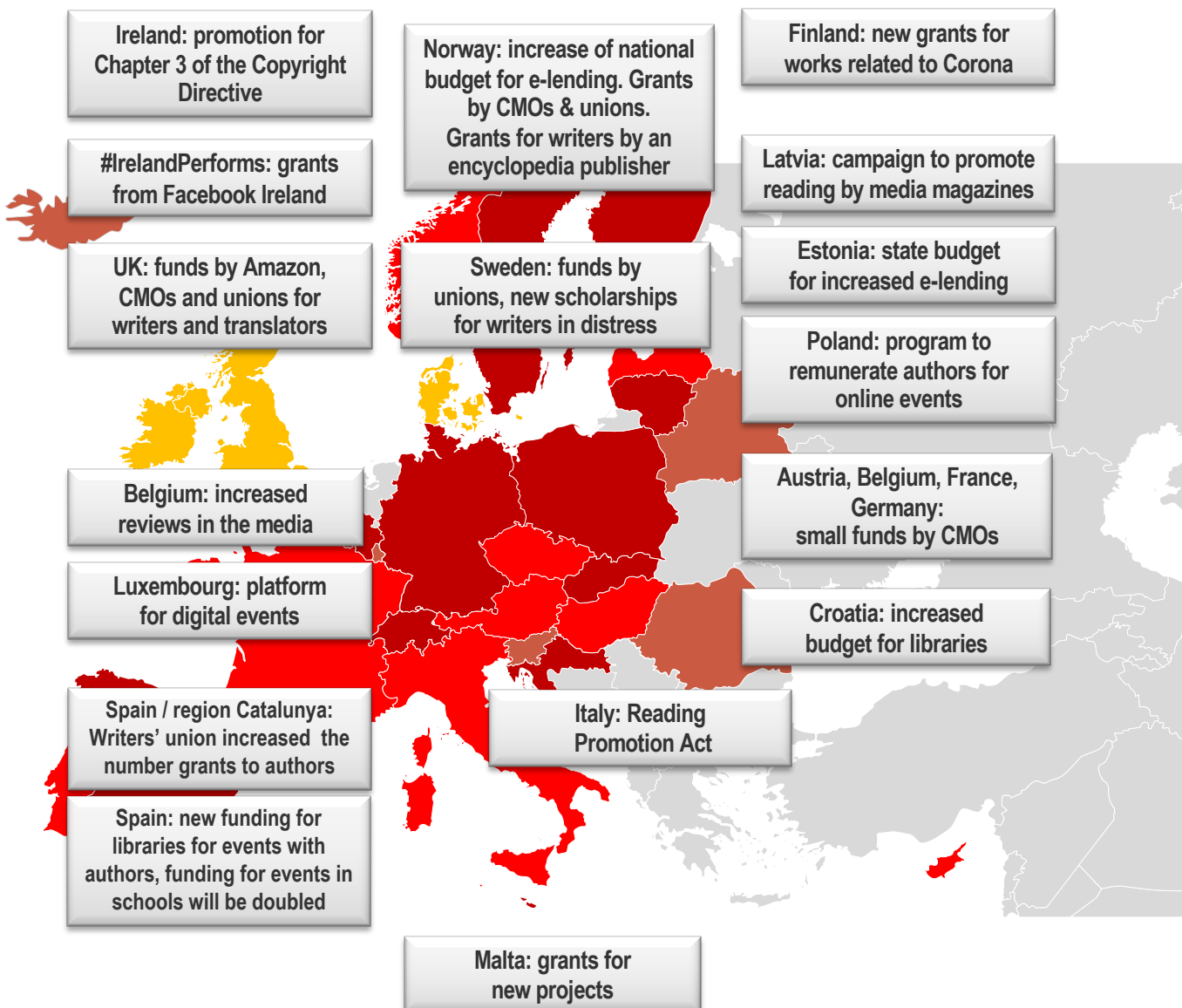
Cyprus: increase of self publishing

Literature projects on Corona, sales for charity issues

31 responses.
22 organisations reported newly taken actions, mentioned by frequency, 9 reported that there are no measures or alternatives

MAPPING: INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS TAKEN FOR WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS IN THE EU BOOK SECTOR

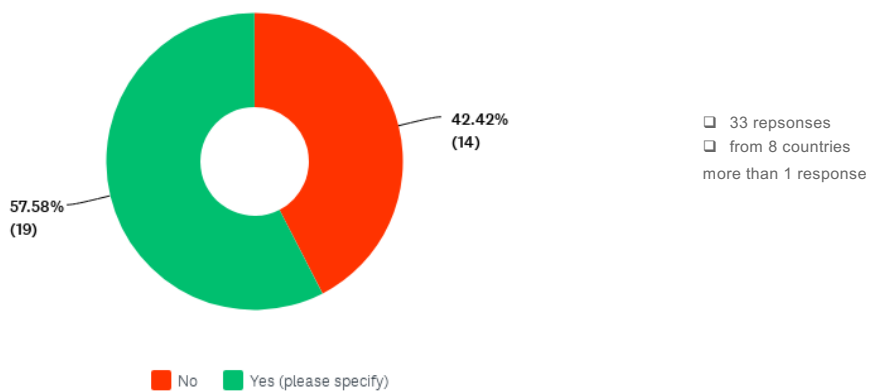
It is obvious that tailor-made support for the European wide ca. 500,000 professional authors and translators is limited at national levels. In particular, authors' unions (in Norway, and in the United Kingdom) and some collective management organisations offer short-term, small-scale financial support (in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and Spain). However, there have been few examples where the state has provided a specific action, such as funding for online activities, or where the public media accepts the challenge to make authors more visible. Italy's commitment to promoting reading certainly points the way forward.



Sources: EWC Query.
Further informations on the actions taken in Italy, Estonia, Luxembourg, and Poland had been consulted on 2. May 2020 on:
<https://www.eunicglobal.eu/news/how-is-the-european-cultural-sector-responding-to-the-current-corona-crisis>

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUNDS: WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS ARE LEFT BEHIND

Is there a special first aid package or any other customized measure dedicated to the cultural and / or the book sector in your country? Yes, said 57,6 % of the respondents (19) – but in fact, a first aid scheme, dedicated or available for the cultural sectors is only provided in 14 of the 24 participating countries (see next page). Only in four countries so far, Denmark, France, Italy, and Spain there is a support package specifically for the book value chain and a sort of dedicated set of measures for writers and translators. In the details the situation is overall mostly disillusioning.



A closer view in the details: no tailor-made measures for writers and translators

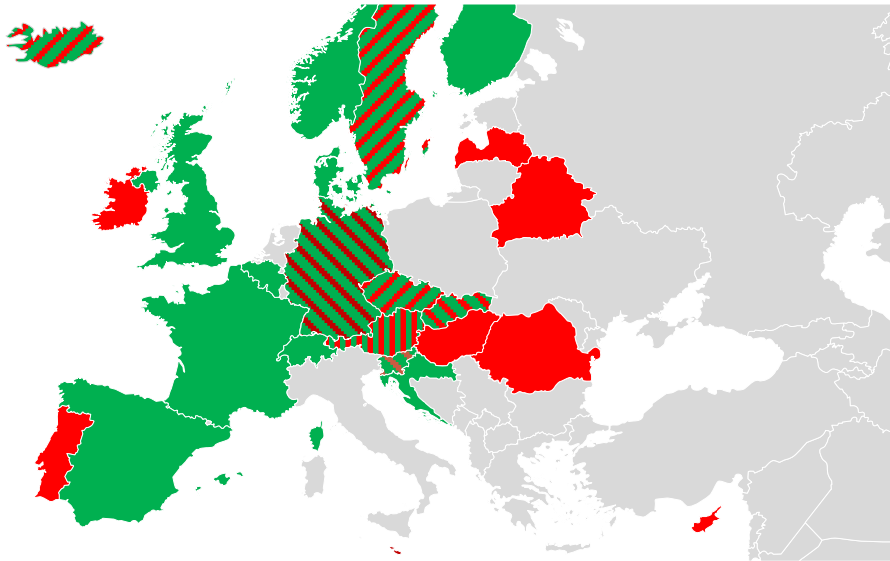
Often the so-called immediate state aid is not accessible to freelance authors and translators, for example, it does not cover either the cost of living, health insurance, concrete loss of earnings – or is only a short-term measure (a small one-time payment or three months help), or only given on condition that all savings are used up first. Likewise, the losses still to be expected from the annual royalty payments, which do not take place until next year, have not been taken into account. In some countries, lump-sum payments by the State are made, amounting to thirty percent of the income of a month, or a short-term unconditional basic income for authors in distress (Croatia, Slovenia). In Norway, writers and translators could receive under certain conditions, up to 80 % of their losses.

Overall, there is a two-class support: it divides employees and self-employed persons into different categories. The European book sector is characterised by the significant high number of freelance people – authors, editors, designers, proofreaders; and as the introduction to this report showed, writers and translators are highly dependent on various event formats. In view of the development of sanitary pandemic precautions, there will be no more events in 2020 that are economically viable. Here the entire free cultural scene has to overcome a dry spell for which most have neither reserves nor hope of any funding by the States.

The economic pressure on authors and translators will increase in 2020 and 2021, as the findings of this survey have clearly shown. Here, authors fall currently through every net and are particularly dependent on well designed, long-term measures on several levels – in legal, culture and market policy. They need a strong commitment from all policy makers.

MAPPING THE MEASURES

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR CULTURAL SECTORS



33 Responses.
14 countries replied with
yes, 10 with no.

■ State aid package for culture
 ■ no State aid package for culture
 ■ "it's complicated"

■ "it's complicated"

In these cases, freelance writers and translators are for example treated like solo-employees with small businesses, have to prove losses, have to use up savings first, are not allowed to use State Aid for a living or any insurances, get a one-time-payment only or need the status of full-time artists to receive a compensation. It is precisely this that leads to unequal treatment or does not correspond to the level of losses that authors have already suffered and will continue to suffer.

State aid does not reach writers and translators

Governments of the Member States and non-EU countries must recognise that writers' and translators' life and work situations fall outside the scope of most of the social security schemes, which are likely to be built around an employer–employee model. Writers and translators have in average a low income rate and are particularly vulnerable. Therefore, it is important to have effective schemes that are easy to manage and which take effect immediately. However, we observe that, at this point in time in mid-May 2020, very few authors or translators in need have access to any financial help. In a few countries, small-scale readjustments are made, but it is often obvious how little countries are prepared for the collapse of freelance cultural workers in general and freelance writers and translators in particular.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUNDS TO THE CULTURAL OR BOOK SECTORS

A zoom into the details (status as of 21 May 2020)

AUSTRIA

- specific support to the arts (literature, music, performing arts, visual arts, film): non-refundable income replacement of 500 or 1,000 Euros as first-aid-measure, for writers in high distress 2,000 Euros per month for a maximum of three months

BELGIUM

- compensation for cancelled lectures by Literatuur Vlaanderen (ca. 100 Euros)
- for full-time authors a payment of 1,300 Euros per each month of lockdown
- for part-time freelancers there is a proposal of an amount of 645-820 € / for each lockdown month
- compensation for loss of royalties in 2021 by tax relief on 20 % or by funding by the libraries by lowering their discount of 20 % to 10 %

CROATIA

- unconditional basic income for artists and authors for three months
- State-supported compensation for cancelled events for organisers
- increased purchase by the Ministry of Culture of books for public libraries

CZECH REPUBLIC

- ongoing negotiations on how the package will be divided

DENMARK

- compensation scheme for cultural freelancers (including writers and translators) and artists: 30 % of losses, also partly compensation for cancelled events
- In mid-May, an additional cultural package for aid, reconstruction and economic recovery for artists and authors was launched

FINLAND

- new grants that writers in a difficult financial situation can apply for
- self-employed and freelance authors can apply for unemployment fees

FRANCE (updated on 11 June)

- a national emergency aid to the Cultural Sector (25 million Euros)
- a specific emergency aid for the book sector (5 million Euros)
- specific for authors and translators in distress, to receive support of up to 1,500 Euros per month for max. 4 months, organised via the writers' and translators' unions

GERMANY

- Länder-federalist unequal treatment (from 0 Euro to 5,000 Euros one-time first aid)
- State Aid only available for operational costs, neither living nor any other costs for insurance. Writers and translators are forced to use up their savings first

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUNDS TO THE CULTURAL OR BOOK SECTORS

A zoom into the details (status as of 17 May 2020)

ICELAND

- ongoing negotiations on how the package will be divided

NORWAY

- organisers can apply for funding for cancelled events
- public libraries have been allocated money to buy e-books
- under certain conditions: 80 % compensation of losses for writers and translators

SLOVENIA

- a kind of universal basic revenue during the quarantine time for those who have the status of freelance writers and translators and are under distress

SPAIN

- 66 million Euros for aid measures in the cultural sector
- public fund of 4 million Euros to libraries for cultural and literature events
- the public fund for events with authors at schools and high schools will be doubled
- VAT rate for e-books is reduced from 21 % to 4 %
- state aid has been released for 15,651 writers, artists and translators

SWEDEN

- 500 million SEK (47 million Euros) has been pledged to the Cultural Sector
- tax relief, applications for access to social security
- a coalition of cultural organisations calls upon the government to create measures for freelance authors, artists and performers

SWITZERLAND

- aid for cultural companies and associations (refundable credits)
- state aid for freelance authors and translators, performers, artists, cultural workers
- financial support of foundations
- creating funds by foundations for projects emerging during the crisis etc.

UNITED KINGDOM

- Arts Council Package, to protect up to 80 % of the income of freelancers

.....

Wherever there were agreements for events with non-government funded institutions and locations, occasionally and few cancellation fees for authors and translators are ensured. In a few countries, readjustments were made and funds for events that did not take place in state-funded venues were released to a small but mostly not full extent for freelance authors. Losses from sales and deferred contracts, electronic free distribution or online activity are not included anywhere.

The information was compiled on the basis of the information provided by the respondents. However, it is possible that conditions in individual countries may have changed since 21 May 2020.

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SUMMARY AND 37 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Support and measures for writers and translators

Summary: is this crisis a chance for a groundbreaking system update?

No one experienced this crisis before. Everyone runs on sight, but all the various actions will not replace what policy makers and the book world itself have to tackle after this deep rupture: A fundamental update of the system.

The Corona crisis, its phenomena, losses, negative developments and search for alternatives, have identified the predetermined breaking points of our book world, which have now become overly clear. Whether it is a question of low remuneration and weak contractual laws, or the high dependence on live events and getting in contact with people, or the digital exploitation of authors' works and the resulting low share, the crisis revealed the helplessly tolerated dependencies on distribution monopolies, on lack in legal, cultural and market policy – and on the fact that there are no social safety nets for full-time freelance authors.

The three key points:

- (1) **the consequences for the entire book sector and for writers and translators are seen as very serious and directly threaten the diversity of European literature**
- (2) **online activities and digital distribution need support through funding but also through much more author-friendly legislation and remuneration schemes**
- (3) **freelance full-time authors and translators have a significant loss due to events that are cancelled until the end of the year, face a second and third wave of losses – and fall through most national aid programs**

It is time to commit to a system update, to correct the various deficiencies that are now threatening the existence of professional writers and translators, who are the sources of the book value chain, the backbone of most valued European ideals: diversity and freedom of expression, fact-based knowledge and innovation, emotional, intellectual and cultural identification, innovation in thinking and imagining new worlds.

The diversity of books and the support of writers and translators is no luxury good. A sustainable Europe, in its struggle against fake news and extreme tendencies, and its hopes for togetherness and exchange, must ensure that the mental sources of knowledge and also of human education do not dry up – because every innovation, every development, every reconstruction after a crisis, begins with an author.

With this position in mind, the European Writers' Council has compiled the following 37 Recommendations for Europe and National Governments:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Challenges and measures for writers and translators

SHORT-TERM MEASURES

STRONG IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DSM DIRECTIVE ON COPYRIGHT

- (1) encourage EU Member States to focus on the full implementation of Chapter 3 of the Directive on Copyright
- (2) compensation-oriented, author-friendly implementation of additional articles in the Directive on Copyright, including: on text- and data mining, uses of educational material and out of commerce works (opt-out, remuneration, licensing, limited usage)

REMUNERATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ONLINE ACTIVITIES OF AUTHORS

- (3) support the development of a European wide fair platform with options for pay-per-view, subscription-models or financing by State funded institutions, with a fair remuneration of 100 % for authors
- (4) pandemic-funding for subsequent compensation for online events
- (5) funding and support for innovative new formats, including hybrid models of events (digital and analogue)
- (6) support to digital activities with a stable legal framework and remuneration standards for authors

COMPENSATION FOR PAST & UPCOMING LOSSES FOR WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

- (7) EU emergency aid and hardship funds for writers and translators for losses which are not compensated by their national funding, with easy access, and reduced conditions.
- (8) "second-wave"-help, when losses because of lost sales, postponed titles, cancelled contracts will hit over 150,000 authors: direct or indirect support, for example by increasing the number of scholarships, by increasing grants for translation projects from lesser-known languages, and the introduction of EU and national reading promotion funds where organisers (also schools, high schools, libraries, book stores etc.) can apply for paying fair authors' fees
- (9) create compensation funds for organisers of cancelled readings, panels, workshops, theatre plays, poetry festivals, etc. with funding for authors' fees
- (10) establishment of a permanent EU or national wide reading-fee-fund for bookshops and other cultural venues, following the example of e.g. Switzerland
- (11) a book for every child: active promotion of reading and support of the authors of children's books through the annual purchase of new titles in the segment and distribution to every family with children under 14 years

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Challenges and measures for writers and translators

MEDIUM-TERM MEASURES

EVERY USE MUST BE REMUNERATED – ALSO BY LIBRARIES, PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OR DEVICE MANUFACTURERS

- (12) encourage the Member States of Bulgaria, Portugal and Romania to implement Public Lending Right. Purchase of books covered by the communal budget, lending (print books) by the State
- (13) encourage Member States to increase the budget for e-lending in Public Libraries, but to avoid further limitations and exceptions. Licensing agreements should also always provide a fair remuneration share for the authors
- (14) maintenance and protection of equipment levies and remuneration for authors via Collective Management Organisations
- (15) encourage Member States to raise the budgets for educational, academic and teaching materials instead of promoting further exceptions and limitations
- (16) post-Corona-package for books and text works and their authors, which had been given away for free to support society, universities, libraries or any other educational institutions

SUPPORT OF MONITORING OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN 2020-2022

- (17) encourage the Member States to implement frequent monitoring of the situation of freelance workers in all cultural sectors and sub sectors to adjust measures
- (18) support European-wide monitoring from federations to adjust measures
- (19) establish a continued, coordinated stakeholder dialogue at EU level with the main participants and representatives in the cultural and the book sector
- (20) monitor national actions and integrate culture in general EU policy decisions

LONG-TERM MEASURES

SUSTAINABLE FIGHT AGAINST E-BOOK AND AUDIO BOOK PIRACY

- (21) e-book piracy has overtaken legal consumption.¹ This has an impact on the income of authors, and also on the investment volume of publishers.² Not only because of lost sales, but also because “paid piracy” portals are submerged in illegality and their income is not taxed, it reduces paid taxes and makes innovation and competition for the European book sector more difficult

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1 <https://www.ivir.nl/publicaties/download/Global-Online-Piracy-Study.pdf> consulted 20 May 2020
2 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/december/tradoc_157564.pdf consulted 21 May 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Challenges and measures for writers and translators

LONG-TERM MEASURES

SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPE

(22) ensure the participation of authors' networks, federations, unions through funding and project grants (also for surveys, monitoring, coordination exchange and knowledge transfer)

(23) expansion of the Creative Europe programs in cooperation with the representatives of writers and translators, also in terms of diversity, inclusion and equality

(24) encourage Member States to significantly increase coverage of cultural and literature works in the public media

EU WIDE HARMONISATION OF THE LIFE AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF AUTHORS

(25) social insurance for full-time freelance authors, following the example of e.g. Germany, including pension schemes for full-time freelance authors

(26) encourage national governments to negotiate collective agreements and remuneration standards between the players of the book value chain, as it has long been the practice in other professions

(27) encourage collecting management organisations for writers and translators to set up crisis funds, following the example of e.g. Austria, France, and Germany

PROMOTING ALTERNATIVES INSTEAD OF MONOPOLIES

(28) funding for projects to rebuild fair and sustainable platforms for audio- and e-book distribution, with clear contractual rules

(29) antitrust investigation of the dominant position of e.g. Amazon and other market participants

MEASURES DEDICATED TO PUBLISHERS AND BOOK STORES

PROMOTING SMALL SIZED AND INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING HOUSES

(30) support of translations projects under the condition of transparent, fair contractual agreements, and remuneration

(31) funding for books in lesser-known and spoken languages

(32) grants to publishers who are particularly committed to a diverse program, including from an equality perspective, provided that they work with transparent contractual agreements



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

MEASURES DEDICATED TO PUBLISHERS AND BOOK STORES

SUPPORT FOR NEW DIGITAL EVENT FORMATS

(33) support of book fairs moving online

(34) favourable loans or subsidies for venues and bookstores for the acquisition of digital equipment for hybrid event formats

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(35) tax and rent reliefs, benefits and funding projects for independent book shops and small sized, independent publishing houses

(36) reconstruction funding in 2021 / 2022, i.e. with interest-free loans or funding for the most diverse possible literature event formats, which can also be hybrid – analogue and digital simultaneously

(37) new classification of cultural and event venues that are particularly relevant to literature in order to ensure graduated funding or operational benefits

EUROPE NEEDS THE OVERALL POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO CULTURE

We call on the decision-makers of the European Parliament and the European Commission, the Member States and the Non-EU and EEA countries to act across departments, committees, in horizontal frameworks. It is clear that only the cooperation among copyright policy, cultural policy, economic policy and regional development can contribute to the substantial protection and innovative capacity of the book world and the entire cultural landscape of Europe during and after the present crisis.

Accordingly, it would be desirable that the decision-makers in these policy areas meet at regular cultural summits, both at EU level and at national level, to reach fundamental agreements. The commitment to European culture, to European literature, to authors as the sources of the world of books can only be supported by way of an overall political agreement.

The European Writers' Council is at your disposal for further questions and explanations.
Brussels, 25 May 2020.

MAPPING THE CALLS FROM WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

What the EU and national legislation could do – suggestions on measures dedicated to the sources of the book value chain

sectors book sector publishers develop funds pay cultural artists
authors programmes EU market countries provide
help online book support

financial support for publishers while ensuring they provide their authors and translators fair contracts and pay fair fees

ensure the Chapter 3 of the DSM directive is implemented as strong and fast as possible in all countries!

regulate the market, so that Amazon or other big players will not continue to abuse the situation to dominate the market

could the EU provide project funding to help the international book fairs to get online? A dedicated platform would be needed

sweep up minimum standards for authors' remuneration and copyright standards

provide special funds or incentives for projects dealing with the pandemic using different artistic means and expressions, to be started asap

EU and Creative Europe could give support for online programs and cooperation

translation grants for translators and publishers

creating an EU wide system of both social security and pension schemes for freelance authors & artists

increase allocation to funding of translations through Creative Europe. Establish programs for cultural exchange that takes place digitally

support lesser spoken and known language authors where the book market is too small

MAPPING THE CALLS FROM WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS:

What the EU and national legislations could do – suggestions on measures dedicated to the sources of the book value chain

sectors book sector publishers develop funds pay cultural artists
authors programmes EU market countries provide
help online book support

a funding to support writers' unions, networks, federations and cultural organisations, especially in Member States where they lack state support, to develop international networking and build up online literary and cultural events

recommend all countries to lower VAT on books!

rehabilitation fund for after-pandemic challenges

the strengthening and policing of copyright laws and improvement of PLR rates and and implementation should not get out of sight

a general first aid for writers, translators, freelance editors – especially for those in countries without any compensations scheme

creating or supporting online platforms to counteract Amazon, so that the book sector can work and sell independently from this monopoly

EU wide Reading & Literature Act, including funding for media reviewing arts and books

raise awareness among national governments about the importance of culture

support for International Book Fairs

28 responses.
Word size by frequency

ensuring that supporting measures are valid for all writers and translators residing in EU countries independent from EU passport, therefore only depending on residencies. We have quite a lot of members residing and living in countries other than their home country.

FUTURE OUTLOOK – personal comments, thoughts & testimonials

“Losses of three billion Euros are expected in the Spanish book sector. Significant reduction in the sale of rights due to reduced programming. A one-year period of postponed titles is expected and, therefore, a significant interruption in the production chain of new titles.”

—**Asociación Colegial de Escritores de España (ACE)**

“Sant Jordi, April 23, is the Catalan “Valentine’s Day”, when you buy books and roses for your loved ones. 20 % of all book sales within the year take place on the 23rd or the days before. Most of these purchases happen in the street stalls, and it’s a celebration of Spring. Authors sign books (specially in Barcelona) and it’s a really special day. This year this was not possible and we fear for the survival of smaller bookshops and publishing houses. Of course, this will have great impact on writers, too.”

—**The Association of Catalan Language Writers**

“Open up the Bookshops!”

— **Croatian Writers' Association**

“We hope that this current situation and the impact on us will help us find better and more efficient ways of enforcing and disseminating the best of European culture.”

— **Croatian Writers' Society**

“Especially small independent book stores will be in trouble, and they would need an extra help.”

—**The Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers**

“So many authors earn their living from teaching and from appearances – readings, panels, etc. This has been stopped. Despite the provision of emergency welfare payments, it is hard to prove an accurate loss of earnings from such casual self-employment. The Chairman of the Irish Writers Union, Lissa Oliver, is a freelance journalist and has no work for the covid duration, with no source of alternative income or welfare support. Another member of the executive of the Irish Writers Union is a part-time lecturer and continues to retain an income from this as his college moves to online research and teaching. But approximately a quarter of his income was boosted by activities as an author: readings, panels, judging awards, and providing courses and workshops. Most of these have been cancelled and he is now supporting his family on a little over 75 % of his usual income. Again, these disruptions to his income do not entitle him to claim the special COVID-19 welfare supports. There is, too, a knock-on effect in that authors are losing the opportunity to keep their name in the public eye through appearances, etc. Those “getting noticed” will have suffered a severe setback, and the workshop/courses opportunities are now fewer due to loss of weeks and will not be so widely spread between facilitators. The lesser-known new writers hoping to facilitate their first classes will miss out to the better-known facilitators.”

— **The Irish Writers' Union**

FUTURE OUTLOOK – personal comments, thoughts & testimonials

“In a longer but not far perspective the elaboration of a lasting system of operative subsidies for literary organizations and writers’ societies, focusing on the Central-East European and the Balcan region. In these countries the cultural market is too small and the effective demand is low because of low salaries and incomes, so cultural and mainly literary consumers cannot finance the market. And as the living standard is relatively low the Maslow-law gets working: the cultural consumption is the first to be given up, and the last to be taken.”

— **The Society of Hungarian Authors**

“I think we will start to feel the effects of the crisis later, when the losses of the book market will be seen. In Latvia, in the environment of social networks, the largest Latvian publishers have stated that the number of copies of new books could be significantly reduced in the future. I know publishers who have reduced royalties for translators by 25 % during the crisis. According to the Latvian Association of Book Publishers, small publishers have already suffered badly – their turnover has decreased by 70 %, but in the industry as a whole by 30 %. Authors will suffer from all this: lower copyright revenue, lower revenue from books sold and the use of public lending rights.”

—**Latvian Writers' Union**

“In the future, the governments should maybe think of an infrastructure that would systematically allow the uses of authors’ works in homes for elder people (nowadays especially isolated), hospitals and other institutions of public interest, but with providing also a fund to remunerate authors for such uses.”

— **Slovenian Writers' Association**

“A crisis is also a chance. By updating the cultural sector we’ll have the chance to eliminate and to correct the mistakes of the actual existing system in authors’ rights and to create fair share of profits in this large and vital market.”

— **SYNDIKAT e.V. (Association of German Language Crime Writers)**

“The interdependence in the book sector is so strong, that we’ll all sink together, whoever has to give up first – booksellers, writers or publishers. It’s vital to strengthen every single link of our chain.”

—**VDÜ (German Literary Translators' Association)**

“People re-invented the power of books and reading in lockdown situation.”

—**Vlaamse AuteursVereniging (Flemish Writers' Association)**

ANNEX

1. participants – writers' and translators' organisations in alphabetical order

A*dS – Swiss professional association of authors and literary translators	Switzerland
ACE – Asociación Colegial de Escritores de España – Spanish Writers' Association	Spain
ACE Traductores	Spain
AELC – Associació d'Escriptors en Llengua Catalana – The Association of Catalan Language Writers	Spain
Akkademja tal-Malti – Association of Writers of Maltese	Malta
Asociace spisovatelů – Czech Writers' Association	Czech Republic
Croatian Writers' Association	Croatia
Croatian Writers' Society	Croatia
Danish Authors Society	Denmark
Društvo slovenskih pisateljev – Slovene Writers' Association	Slovenia
IG Autorinnen Autoren	Austria
IG Übersetzerinnen Übersetzer	Austria
Irish Writers' Union	Ireland
Läromedelsförfattarna – Swedish Association of Educational Writers	Sweden
Latvian Writers' Union	Latvia
Literature and Criticism Association	Cyprus
The Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association	Norway
Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity	Slovakia
Slovak Writers Society	Slovakia
Société des Gens de Lettres	France
Society of Authors	United Kingdom
Society of Swedish Authors in Finland	Finland
Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores – Portuguese Society of Authors	Portugal
Swedish Writers' Union	Sweden
SYNDIKAT e.V. – Association of German Language Crime Writers	Germany
Szépírók Társasága – The Society of Hungarian Authors	Hungary
The Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers	Finland
The Union of Belarusian Writers	Belarus
The Writers' Union of Iceland	Iceland
Uniunea Scriitorilor din Romania – Writers' Union of Romania	Romania
VDÜ – German Literary Translators' Association	Germany
Verband deutscher Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftsteller – Writers' Union of Germany	Germany
Vlaamse AuteursVereniging – Flemish Writers' Association	Belgium



ANNEX

2. survey period

30 March – 24 April 2020. Evaluation and up-dates: 25. 4. - 21. 5. 2020

3. tool and analysis method

Monkey Survey (Extra) ©1999-2020, online query,
secured invitation link, full text analysis

4. imprint & credits

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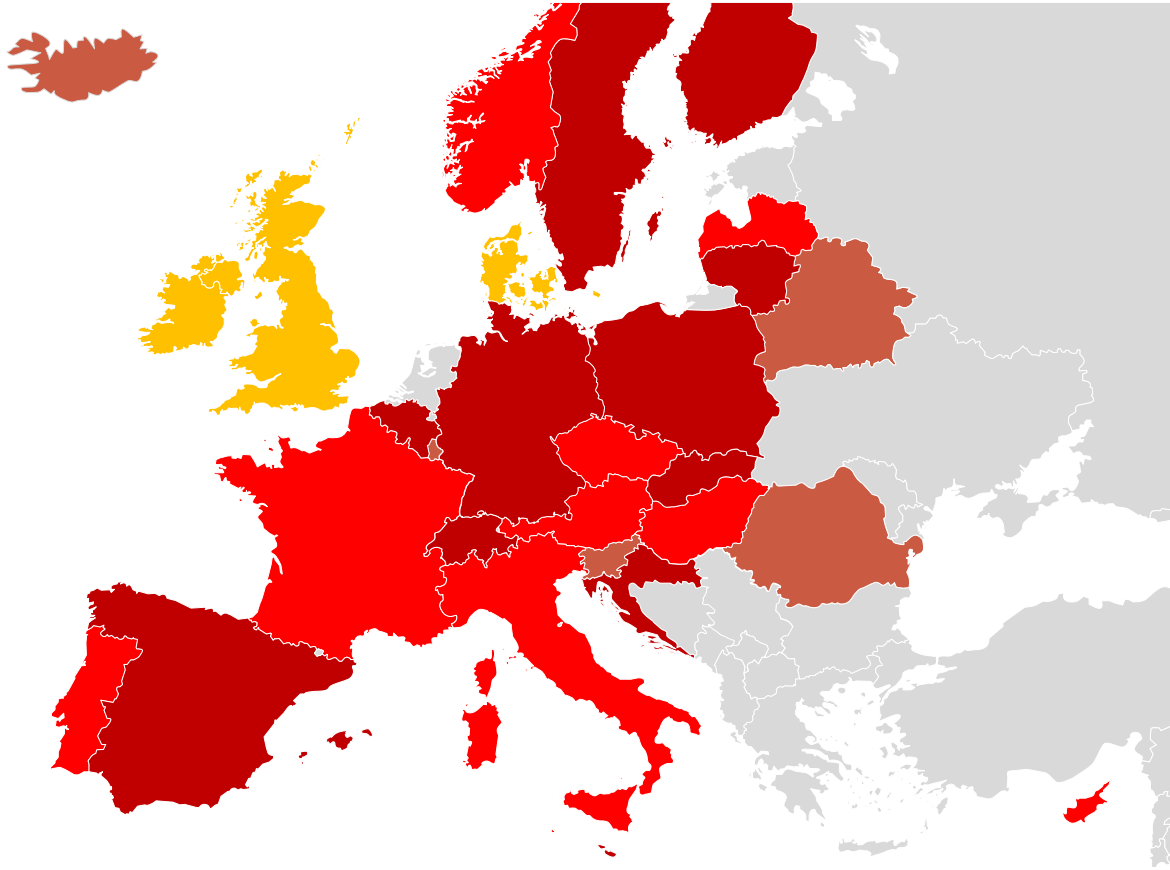
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Facebook: europeanwriterscouncil/





**Read also the Statement
of the European Writers' Council:**

**THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE IS UNDER THREAT
WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS CALL ON THE DECISION MAKERS FOR
AN OVERALL POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO AUTHORS AND CULTURE**

LINK TO THE STATEMENT ONLINE:

<http://europeanwriterscouncil.eu/ewc-statement-impact-covid19/>

LINK TO THE SURVEY ONLINE:

<http://europeanwriterscouncil.eu/ewc-survey-covid19/>

www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu