

ONE YEAR OF CRISIS

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WRITERS AND
TRANSLATORS IN THE EUROPEAN BOOK SECTOR 2020-2022



EUROPEAN WRITERS' COUNCIL FOLLOW-UP SURVEY. 2021 EDITION



***FOREWORD BY NIKLAS NIENÄß, MEP
FOUNDER OF THE CULTURAL CREATORS FRIENDSHIP GROUP***

Writers, translators, artists, performers and all cultural workers are the sources of Europe's entire cultural ecosystem. On their shoulders and their individual, personal risk stands the entire value chain of what was Europe's third strongest economic factor before the Covid-19 crisis hit in 2020. Moreover, cultural creators are indispensable for innovation and as a socio-ethical corrective.

It is now all the more important to develop sustainable concepts for the future of all individual cultural actors for Europe, in order not to put these values at risk carelessly. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis, as this study by the European Writers' Council confirms, has revealed the structural gaps. These include a lack of social security for self-employed authors, artists and freelance cultural workers – and the obvious lack of understanding in many countries for the contract situations and working conditions of individual professionals in the field of culture.

Writers and translators faced all over similar structural obstacles, starting with the lack of opportunities to build secure reserves – necessary in order to mitigate the months of event cancellations, royalties falloff and, in some cases, delays of over a year or more in follow-up contracts – due to declining revenues from their works. This revenue gap is not a new insight, but with the Covid-19 crisis, it has become widely known.

This makes it all the more important to implement the EU Copyright Directive in the Digital Single Market in the interests of authors and artists, especially with regard to fair remuneration and transparency. In addition, strengthening rather than weakening Authors' Rights and moral rights will be existential for the use of book and text works in the digital markets, in the remote learning, and in the educational sectors of the future.

Furthermore, social security is hardly possible without sustainable remuneration. A concept such as a Europe-wide social insurance for authors, artists and cultural professionals with a connected possibility of labour security, needs both determined political will and the recognition of the values that cultural workers and especially those who produce the intellectual goods contribute.

In this sense, I trust that the EWC study can lead to a better understanding of the situation of authors and at the same time that it will result in concrete measures in the legal, social and economic fields.

Niklas Nienäß
MEP Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

The Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG) is a cross-partisan coalition in the European Parliament (EP) with 27 members from six different political groups. The aim is improving the whole European cultural ecosystem – i.e. the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) – and especially the situation and conditions of creators, e.g. authors, performers and artists. www.culturalcreators.eu



*EDITORIAL NOTE BY NINA GEORGE, NOVELIST
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN WRITERS' COUNCIL*

How do we want to live together? This question is all the more compelling because we are still living in the in-between world of before and after. Shaping this after, in the face of the events of the past 18 months, involves political, socio-cultural, civil, ecological, economical, and geopolitical concerns. What connects all these issues and makes them a common matter is the universe of art and culture – as a unifying element that creates community experiences and common spaces of identification even where people or nations are distant from each other.

Yet the book, for all its effects in the dialogue between author and reader, it is also a medium of contact: This is shown by the serious losses of income that writers and translators in the European book sector have suffered during the Corona crisis, especially due to cancelled live events – readings, lectures, workshops, or festivals. This proved that the book is a popular medium that connects people and brings them together even where there are otherwise few points of common ground. Accordingly, books are a lifeblood of pluralistic societies, of mental and emotional spaces of encounter, identification, and empathy for us – and for others.

It is even more important, if not essential, to measure the losses of writers and translators as the source of the book value chain, their causes, and consequences, and to take appropriate legal, financial, social, and coordinated measures to strengthen and rebuild the diversity of books. Accordingly, this 38-page EWC follow-up report highlights the acute effects of the crisis in 2020, the consequences for the years 2021 and 2022, and outlines the key tasks for the future to emerge from the crisis with optimism and a necessary learning effect.

As we see, the loss of income in the individual countries of Europe differs due to structural deficits – often due to a lack of social security systems and few opportunities for individual financial provision. Moreover, although the digital transformation has been accelerated positively in many areas, the digital possibilities have been not able to compensate for the deep fall. The subsequent years 2021 to 2023 will see a significant drop in the number of new titles across Europe. That, too, is a loss of new voices and issues. This affects translations in particular, so we will hear less about what our European neighbours are reading, or what is on their minds.

To address these challenges, I trust that the facts, analysis, and recommendations presented within this report will support writers, translators, and the book sector to make visible the value of their work, both economically and in terms of context, and their contribution to societies. Because investing in authors today protects the democracies of tomorrow.

Nina George
Novelist, President of the European Writers' Council



***ONE YEAR OF CRISIS: MONITORING ON THE ECONOMIC
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS
IN THE EUROPEAN BOOK SECTOR 2020-2022***

The Ernst & Young study Rebuilding Europe showed how seriously the Covid-19 crisis and its sanitary measures affected the European cultural landscape: 90% losses for the performing arts, 76% in the music sector, 56% in the fine arts, 30% in the book sector.

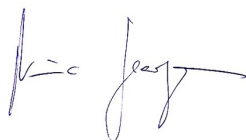
Large numbers, however, are hiding cloaks. They make the individuals and their existential dramas invisible and conceal how overall losses impact individually and sector-specifically. For this reason, the European Writers' Council is continuing in 2021 its monitoring of the impact of the Corona pandemic on writers and translators with this survey: ONE YEAR OF CRISIS: THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT.

The first EWC report on the Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Writers and Translators in the European Book Sector 2020 assessed the different fields of losses, the expected severe consequences and developments. The European Writers' Council conducted this follow-up monitoring One Year of Crisis: The Winter of our Discontent from March 27 to May 8, 2021. 27 writers' and translators' organisations from 20 countries, representing 158,000 authors of all genres and writing in 24 languages, participated and contributed 112 pages in total of figures, facts and testimonials on 23 specific quantitative and qualitative questions proposed online. The focus of One Year of Crisis is on the scope of the economic loss for writers and translators, on how Publishing houses and national Governments reacted, on the value gaps in the digital sphere, and including insights into the educational book sector and remote learning.

Overall, at least four years of monitoring are planned in order to analyse the breaking points of the sector that have become apparent through the burning glass of the crisis, and to present sustainable measures to political decision-makers. This includes legal, economic, social and overall civic frameworks and conditions to secure the future of literature, knowledge and the freedom to form opinions. To respond constructively to the gaps visible in the crisis is a compelling prerequisite for the fundamental values of Europe.

We would like to thank MEP Niklas Nienä, founder of the Cultural and Creators Friendship Group (CCFG) for his valuable and supportive introductory remarks.

Nina George
President



Miguel Ángel Serrano
Vice President



Myriam Diocaretz
Secretary-General



The European Writers' Council (EWC) is the federation of 46 national organisations of professional writers and translators in 31 countries including the EU, as well as Belarus, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom, altogether writing in 31 languages and in all genres. The EWC represents over 160,000 individual authors. www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword by Niklas Nienä, MEP	2
Editorial note by Nina George, President of the European Writers' Council	3
Introduction	4
Table of contents	5
Executive summary	6

CHAPTER I. ONE YEAR OF CRISIS: THE YEAR THE WORLD STOOD STILL

Facts and figures on the various impacts on writers and translators in 2020 and 2021

The Winter of our Discontent: The Crisis in a Nutshell	8
The fields of losses for writers and translators in 2020 and 2021: Live events	9
Insights: Moving to the digital sphere: Chances and risks	10
How publishers in 2020 reacted and how authors were affected	12
Not essential? How writers and translators fell through the social net	15
Economic impact on writers and translators in 2020 and 2021: Severity level and income drop	17
Conclusion	20

CHAPTER II. THE INVISIBLE CRACKDOWN: THE RIPPLE EFFECT IN 2021 AND 2022

Facts and figures on the consequences on writers and translators in 2021 and 2022

What's done can't be undone: The crisis boosters	21
Publishing strategies in 2021 and 2022: Consequences of the first wave	22
Insights: The Crisis as a push factor for the digital trade? Partly yes, but ...	24
How authors supported society: On remote learning and the educational sector	25
The Robin Hood Paradox and the free riders of the pandemic	26
Conclusion	28

CHAPTER III. INVESTING IN AUTHORS IS INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY

What legal, social and ethical roadmaps must be set for 2022-2025

The digital sphere: More opportunities and less revenue	29
The world of tomorrow: Challenges, tasks and burning issues	30
The EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market	30
Artificial Intelligence, text and data mining, and digital exploitation	31
Educational books and text works	33
Democracies under pressure: The rise of restrictive legislation	33

RECOMMENDATIONS & MEASURES

Post scriptum by Miguel Ángel Serrano, Vice President of the European Writers' Council	36
Annex, list of 20 participating countries and 27 organisations	37
Imprint, contact	38



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

Richard III

During March to May 2021, 27 writers' and translators' organisations from 20 countries, including the non-EU countries Belarus, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the EEA country Norway, representing 150,000 authors of all genres, responded to the follow-up survey by the European Writers' Council on the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis on writers and translators. The monitoring, which follows the first EWC study, includes the résumé of the year 2020, the situation and consequences for 2021, and the forecasts for 2022.

The respondents provided concrete information on areas of loss, affected genres, severity of the crisis and its consequences in national book markets, and reported on State aid measures, positive developments and negative effects.

A special focus is put on digital transformation, and the use of instructional and educational materials within remote learning during the crisis.

The survey is concluded with ten recommendations to decision makers of the EU and national governments, and a position paper.

Losses for writers and translators in the book sector

- **77% of authors suffered** from cancelled readings, literary festivals and lectures or contributions in panels in 15 crisis months. The lack of visibility at fairs also played a role (70%). In particular, the cancelled readings in bookshops, literature houses and libraries, as well as in schools played the most significant role. Cancellation fees were not paid in 90% of cases.
- **15% to 25% average income loss for part-time authors**, 30% to 40% for full-time authors in average – but full-time writers in the stronger markets registered an income loss of over 50% and more, while part-time writers generally experienced between 10% and 25%. Likewise, the national market size is relevant.
- **The decrease in advance payments** has been registered in Norway, Germany, Latvia, and Romania.
- **Only half of all twenty monitored countries offered state compensation** or aid packages for (self-employed) writers and translators; the rest fell through the net.

Reactions by the publishing houses and the effects on writers and translators

- During the lockdown weeks in 2020, an overall **decline in sales, between 75% to 95%**, was registered.
- Numerous **publishers postponed titles for 8 to 18 months or cancelled them**. For 2021/2022, the respondents foresee a reduction of 30%. This leads to 150,000 fewer titles in the European sector per year.
- **Writers of fiction, translators, and new authors** are mostly affected by these measures.

The digital dead end ...

- There is not yet a coherent, homogeneous digital single market in the book sector: country-specific differences in distribution forms, market participants and dominance, as well as royalty models differ. As consequence, **partly increased digital sales have not been able to compensate for the loss** in the print book sector.
- Online readings were randomly paid.
- **The usage of educational book and text materials for schools, universities, researchers, or scientific institutions** has risen considerably. The International Federation of Reprographic and Rights Organisations (IFRRO) recorded that 40% of CMOs received applications for license extensions or fee relief (which led to lower revenues for authors); 70% are expecting a negative long-term impact on the licensing income.
- Another serious impact was an increase in **digital piracy**, tripling in some countries.

... and the digital opportunities

- **Online readings, book launches, digital lectures and workshops, and virtual conferences were identified as the most positive gains** in the forced transition to the digital sphere. Festivals, fairs, and license trades continued to be preferred in the “real world”.
- In some countries, the electronic book market was invigorated. **Publishers (re-)discovered the possibilities of digital publishing**, and the digital audio book market expanded.
- **Booksellers developed new forms of supply** and, under pressure from the pandemic, established web-shops and click-and-collect or click-and-deliver methods.

Severity level and largest impacts

- **52% of the respondents estimate the overall impact from severe to very severe, 48% somewhat severe.** The differences are largely related to the existence of public support, the stability of the legal framework for remuneration, and the status of coordination and communication between the book industry players and their respective governments. Accordingly, the approaches to solutions must also be located here.
- **Cancelled paid live events, closed bookshops, cancellation of fairs, and the general invisibility of new titles were identified as the four strongest factors for the collapse.** For nearly 40%, the resulting program cuts by publishers are another disruptive factor.

A selection of the EWC recommendations

- Strong implementation of the **EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM**.
- Improving **Public Lending Right**, protecting equipment levies, increasing the budget for education and culture.
- Establishing protective and **practical frameworks for online and offline authors' activities**.
- EU wide harmonisation of the **authors' working conditions and social security**.
- A fair playing field in the **digital distribution markets**.
- Bringing back the books to the adult readers – and **to the children**.





CHAPTER I

ONE YEAR OF CRISIS: THE YEAR THE WORLD STOOD STILL

WHAT'S DONE
CAN'T BE UNDONE —

Macbeth

The book is a fascinating alchemy: it unfolds its major effect when it is in solitary dialogue with its reader. Two people never read the same book, although it is the same. Yet the book, for all its supposed timidity, is also a medium of contact: This is shown above all by the serious losses of income that writers and translators in the European book sector have suffered over eighteen months of Corona crisis especially in the events sector. In other words, where the book established contact between authors and readers, where it opened spaces for debate in society, where it was needed for exchange, encounter, and reconnection.

Writers and translators initially suffered losses in average of 30% to 40% due to cancelled live events, most of which did not refund any cancellation fees. Moreover, no digital alternatives could be found

unless the organisers or publishers were willing to pay a fee – in any case, the online audience was not ready to be charged for digital gigs. Falling sales due to closed bookshops and in some cases up to 50% of reduced publishing programs also caused royalties and follow-up orders to plummet. At the same time, hardly half of the EU countries were able to adequately compensate for the losses.

The years 2020 and 2021 will go down in the history of European book history as black years of fate, the *Winter of Our Discontent*, and as those years in which political decision-makers could have set the course for the future.

For the book and its authors more than ever it is necessary to bridge the distances caused and reinforced by the pandemic between individuals, nations, and cultures.



THE FIELDS OF LOSSES FOR WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS IN 2020 AND 2021: LIVE EVENTS

MY PRIDE FELL WITH MY FORTUNES — *As you like it*

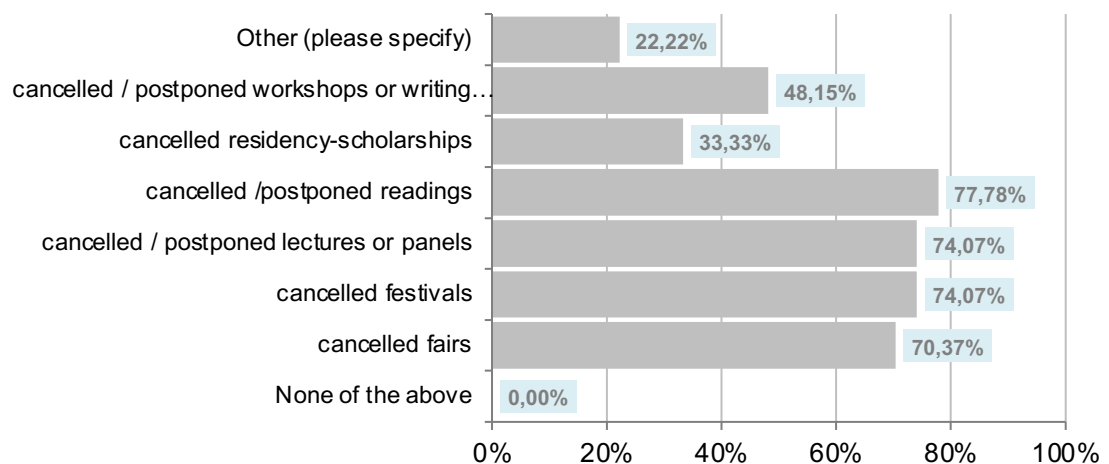
The fears of the writers and translators from the EWC study 2020 were thus confirmed almost in full: 97% had stated that they expected the highest loss due to cancelled contact events in the course of the year; however, the 2021 follow-up monitoring shows that a few writers were compensated by a handful of summer events under sanitary conditions,

most of which were supported randomly by public funds. Bookshops could hardly afford an event. Moreover, it was at Book Fairs and Literature and Poetry festivals that new titles and authors were not introduced. As a result of a related non-visibility, fewer sales and drastically reduced royalty income were registered all over the European book sector.

SPECIFIC INSIGHTS

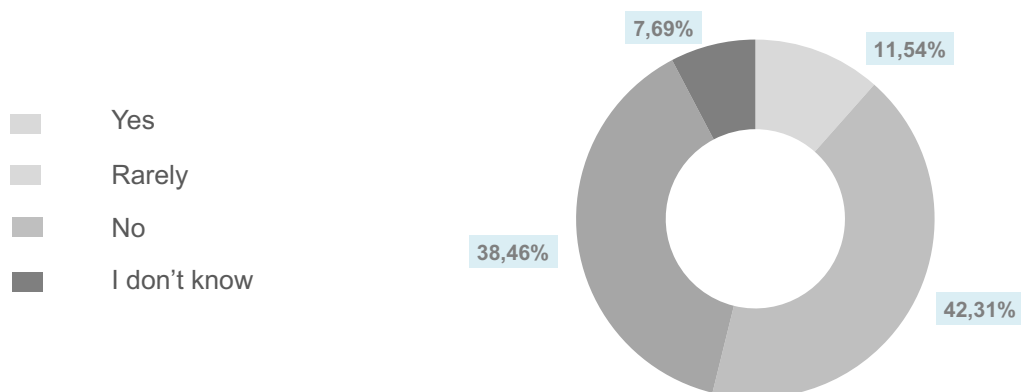
Three-quarters of the 27 associations surveyed recorded cancelled readings, literary festivals, lectures or panels as the most common reasons for loss of income. The impact of cancelled readings was particularly intense. Cancelled readings in bookshops, literature houses, libraries, and schools played the most significant role:

In which fields of cancelled or postponed live events did your members experience the most loss of income since March 2020?





Were these losses compensated by organisers? (full or partial cancellation fee)



Tragically, in eight out of ten cases there was no cancellation compensation at all. Thus, writers and translators bore the full brunt of the necessary sanitary protection measures to contain the pandemic.

MOVING TO THE DIGITAL SPHERE: CHANCES ...

The resilience and initiative action of writers is part of their DNA. Accordingly, there was a rapid, high emergence of online events in various formats – live readings on Zoom or Switch, on Instagram and TikTok, streaming directly from the writers' or translators' desks. Where there has been collaboration between the book sector and the public sector, the pandemic has been a true catalyst for positive digital transformation. **Another positive effect: the digital stage has enabled a “democratisation process”.** Authors have been able to present books on their own initiative and to establish contact with readers across national and language borders.

- » Agreements with government bodies – such as the Ministry of Culture – for online workshops and lectures aimed at big audiences. —SPAIN <<
- » The local book festival went online (...). A learning curve on the digital opportunities was exploited and will be adopted also in 'normal' times, events will surely be treated as hybrid wherever possible in the future to reach a wider audience. —MALTA <<
- » ...the grassroots movements are concerned: book clubs on Facebook and Instagram grew rapidly and to a great success. Now authors had suddenly an equal chance to reach the readers online. Also, those publishers, who used to give preference in marketing to only chosen authors, were giving more interest also to the lesser-known ones. —POLAND <<
- » Some writers experience increased income from streaming audio books – for some five figure amounts in euros —NORWAY <<

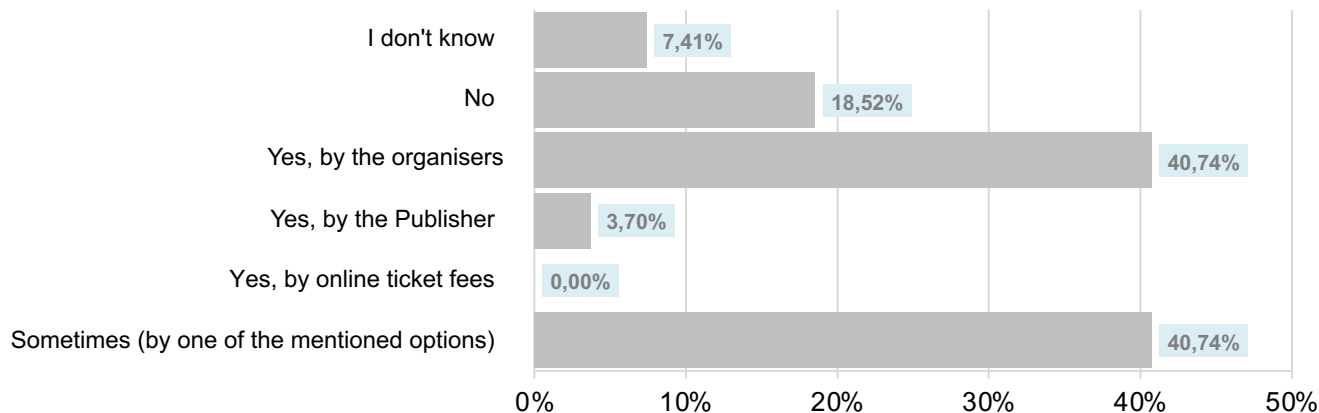


... AND RISKS

The shift to the digital sphere has revealed its gaps in legal, economic, and artistic matters: It was not possible to develop a functioning and European-wide ticketing system within the pandemic period. Just 8.5% of the respondents have had positive experiences with online events paid for by the audience. At self-organised digital readings or book launch events, often no fee was paid by the audience. Sometimes organisers were able to remunerate the invited authors. Publishers have rarely taken over the fee for online readings, as the results of the following charts demonstrate:



If your members started giving readings (workshops, lectures) online – was their fee paid?



» As a rule, very few online readings are paid, most of them are self-organised to increase the visibility of the writer's own books. Digital readings with payment are increasing by means of indirect state funding through our literary fund sponsored by the German government. — GERMANY

«

» The crisis generated by the pandemic was felt like a tsunami blow. Instead of supporting the cultural field, there was open access to a wide range of literary or cultural activities, and many challenges on licensing agreements in the educational field.” —ROMANIA

«



HOW PUBLISHERS IN 2020 REACTED AND HOW AUTHORS WERE AFFECTED

DON'T WASTE YOUR LOVE
ON SOMEBODY,
WHO DOESN'T VALUE IT

Romeo & Juliet

Closed bookshops: the total meltdown. The various findings of the Federation of European Publishers (FEP) and the European and International Booksellers Federations (EIBF) showed the heterogeneous ride through the one and a half year of the ongoing crisis and its impact on the retail sector.

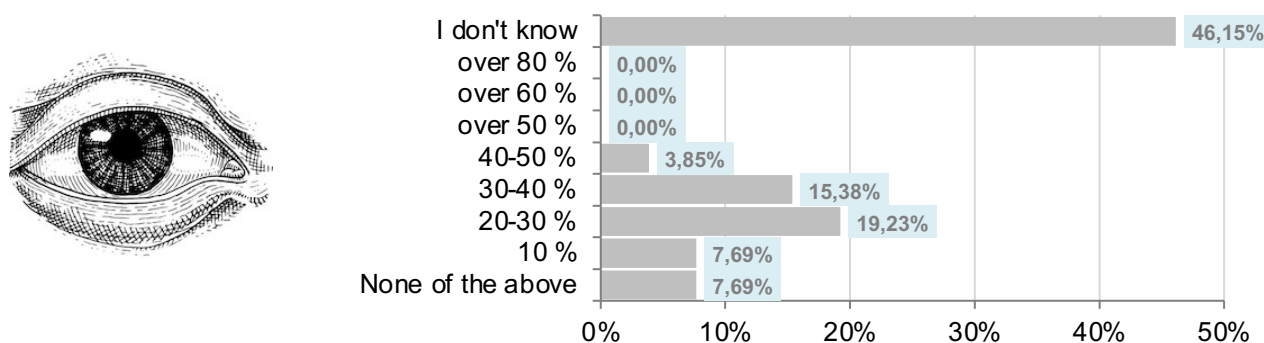
Sales in the trade have shown different facets of time limited, quarterly, and annual losses – during total lockdown weeks in 2020 for instance, an overall drop down between 75 to 95% was monitored (Source: “Consequences of the covid-19 crisis on the book market”, FEP, July 2020).

THE FIRST CUT IS THE DEEPEST

As FEP quoted in July 2020: “*This meant the postponement or cancellation of many planned new titles – which in turn further affected revenues. (...) Bulgarian publishers expected to publish 500 to 1,000 fewer titles than planned in 2020 (...) and 87% of them postponed all titles during the lockdown; (...) French publishers postponed publication of 5,236 new titles and new editions (...); title production dropped 75% by end March in Greece (...); Czech publishers postponed some 15% of their titles so far. Most strikingly, in Italy 23,200 titles had been cancelled or postponed.*”

From an author's perspective, the picture is scattered: every fifth of the respondents was not aware of the concrete reactions by publishing houses. This is a communication gap that is easy to avoid but this can lead to insecurity and miscommunication between the players of the national book community.

54% of publishers in 20 countries reduced their programs to the following extent:

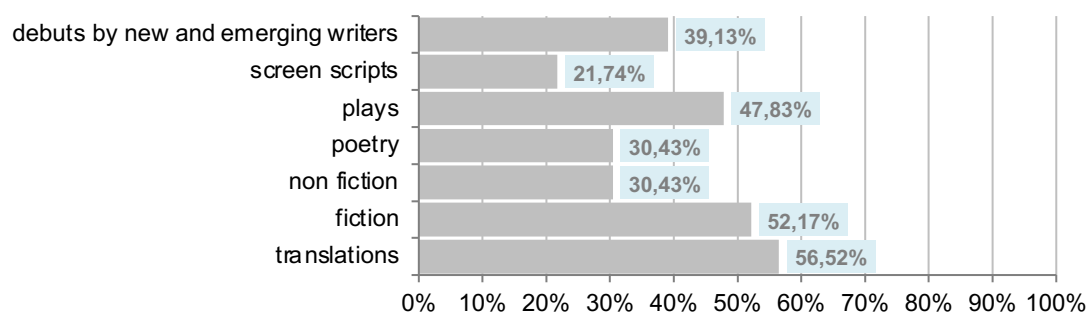




TITLE TRAFFIC JAM

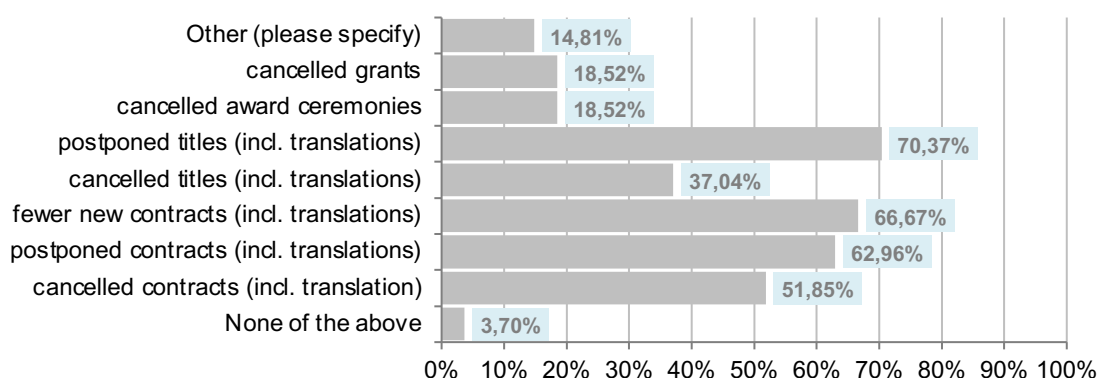
To circumvent the “black hole” of lack of attention due to cancelled readings, fairs, festivals or book launch events, numerous publishers postponed titles. Negotiated translation contracts were also cancelled or postponed. As a result of this “title traffic jam”, planned follow-up titles, which might not have been due until 2021 or 2022, have been put also on postponement in many cases:

Which genres were particularly affected by cancelled publications and/or postponed titles?



These program reductions lead to authors waiting for advances or translators waiting for payment. Individual respondents observed an increasing focus on bestsellers. In Norway, Germany, Latvia, and Romania, for example, already a decrease of advance payments has been registered.

Have your members suffered losses as a result of ...



» Every publisher made specific choices, but most of the time publications were delayed by 8 to 18 months.” —MALTA

«

» According to a survey asking our members, about 28% writers’ publications were postponed —SWITZERLAND

«

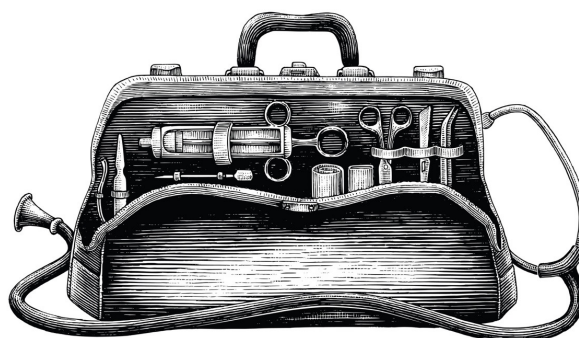
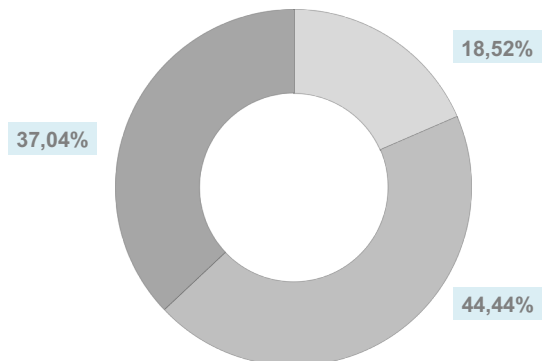
THE DIGITAL DEAD END?

Increased digital sales have not been able to compensate for the loss in the physical sector. In countries with a large e-book market, new publications were sometimes initially published only as e-books, not as physical copies. This short-circuits strategy did not lead to more visibility or sales. In a few cases there have been increases in income from audiobook sales – which in turn has only been possible through a large, equitable raise in royalty shares for authors. During the lockdown months of

2020 as well as in the winter months of 2021, another destructive phenomenon was registered: lending of e-books in public libraries increased, in France by a factor of about five, in Germany by a factor of six compared to electronic sales. However, as e-lending in public libraries is far below an adequate remuneration, reading online even increased – but it contributed only marginally to a total e-revenue (in Germany e-lending in libraries covers 40% of e-reading, but accounts for only 5% of revenue).

Have publishers released more titles as “e-book first” or “e-book only”?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



NOT ESSENTIAL? HOW WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS FELL THROUGH THE SOCIAL NET

NOTHING CAN COME FROM NOTHING —

King Lear

Solo cultural actors, and here writers and translators, fall through half of the nets of state provision: only every second country was able to provide congruent compensation for the loss of income they suffered. The unequal treatment compared to permanent employees has become

obvious as a problem at all levels of politics. But the recognition of this problem has not been articulated throughout Europe. State measures to secure freelance cultural actors can be described as a catastrophe overall, because “The true state religion is permanent employment.” —*Sascha Lobo*.

Were there any coherent compensation programs for writers and translators by your governments, e.g., monthly fixed State aid, or short-term equivalents?



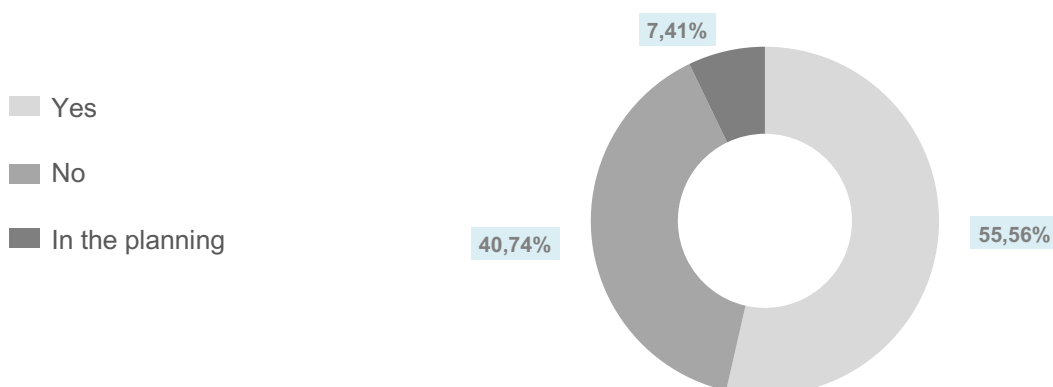


A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY

Solidarity among writers and translators remains unbroken. All the 27 associations surveyed have provided their members with legal or monetary assistance. Be it by suspending membership fees, by re-allocating state funding models, or by collecting private donations to be able to distribute them for emergency aid. All these are drips on the hot stone – but they prove the high level of understanding among writers and translators, and their vulnerable dependence on circumstances beyond their control.

There are also some best practice measures worth mentioning, such as a quarter million euros donation to pay authors' fees for readings under sanitary rules (Bonnier Publishing Houses, Germany), or grants resulting from cooperation with the State, publishers, collective management organisations (CMOs), individuals and companies (UK, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland). In countries such as Austria, England, Spain, or Germany, CMOs have also set up aid funds in consultation with authors' organisations.

Has your organisation provided supportive financial assistance to members?



» We provided scholarships from funds that were donated to us by members, publishers and organisations. —SWEDEN

«

» We have created a modest social fund via private donations which gives very modest support (between 150 and 300 euros) for the worst cases on the basis of an application system. It means only 7 to 8 cases one time, at maximum 15 to 20 in a year. We have 400 members. —HUNGARY

«





ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS IN 2020 AND 2021: SEVERITY LEVEL AND INCOME DROP

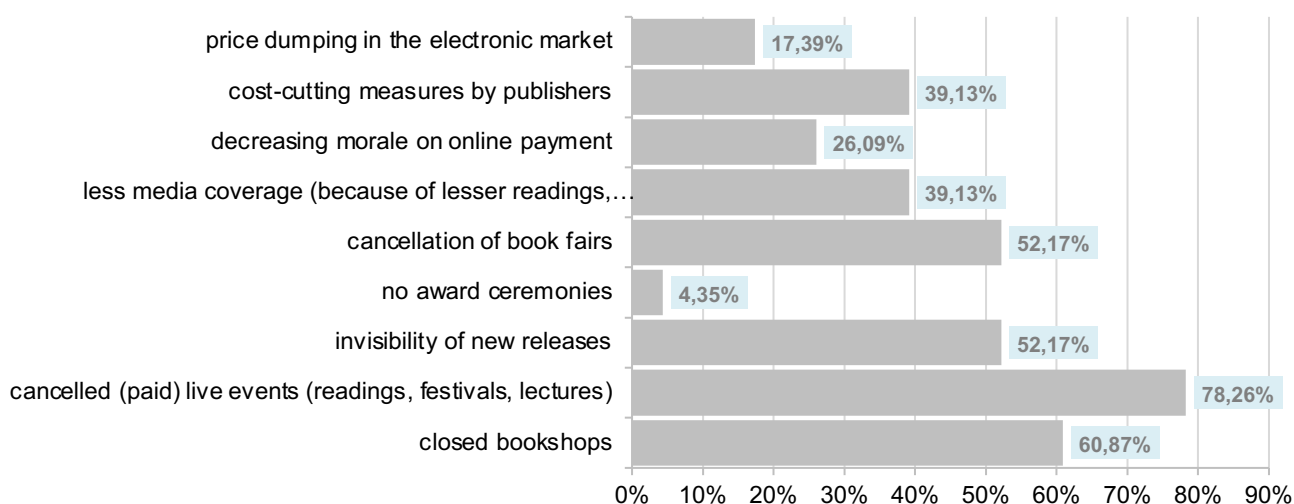
REPUTATION IS AN IDLE AND MOST FALSE
IMPOSITION: OFT GOT WITHOUT MERIT
AND LOST WITHOUT DESERVING

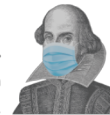
Othello



The collapse of physical events, decreased sales due to closed bookstores, invisibility and decreased media attention, were the four apocalyptic riders for writers and translators:

What do you consider to be the strongest impact?

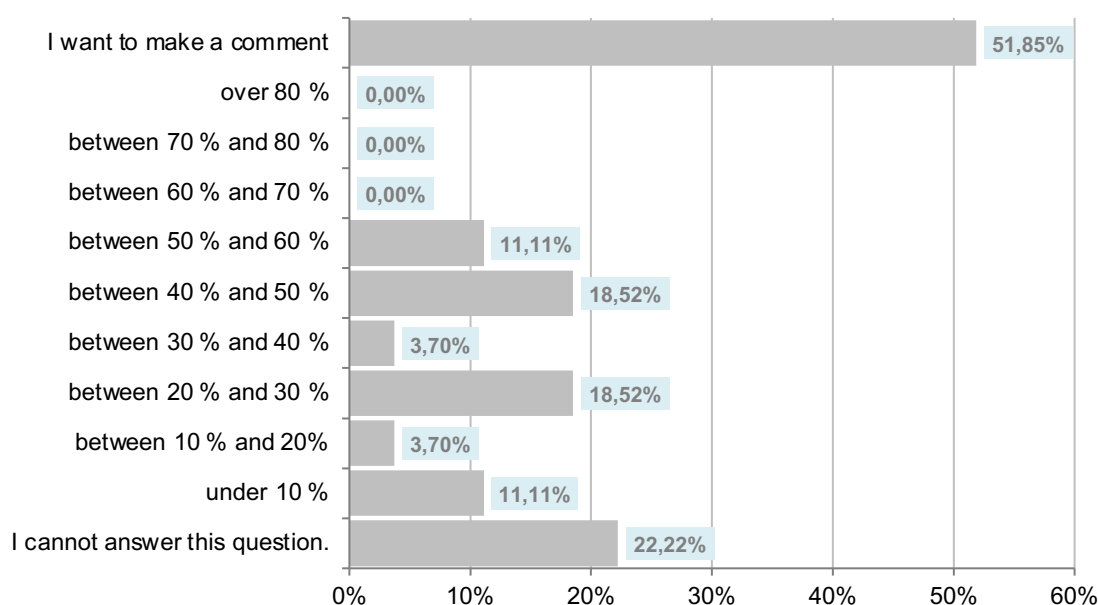




INCOME DROP IN 2020: 50% FOR FULL-TIME, 10% TO 25% FOR PART-TIME WRITERS

The statements of income loss refer to the average numbers – noting that full-time writers in the stronger markets of Germany, Spain, Italy, France, and England registered income losses of 5% or more, while part-time writers generally experienced between 10% and 25% in comparison to years before. Likewise, the national market size is relevant. In the Czech Republic, Malta, or Latvia, for example, very few writers can make a full-time job out of it, but depend on activities like teaching, lectures or writing reviews, which had also been cancelled.

Can you specify the income losses of most of your members in 2020 (in%)?

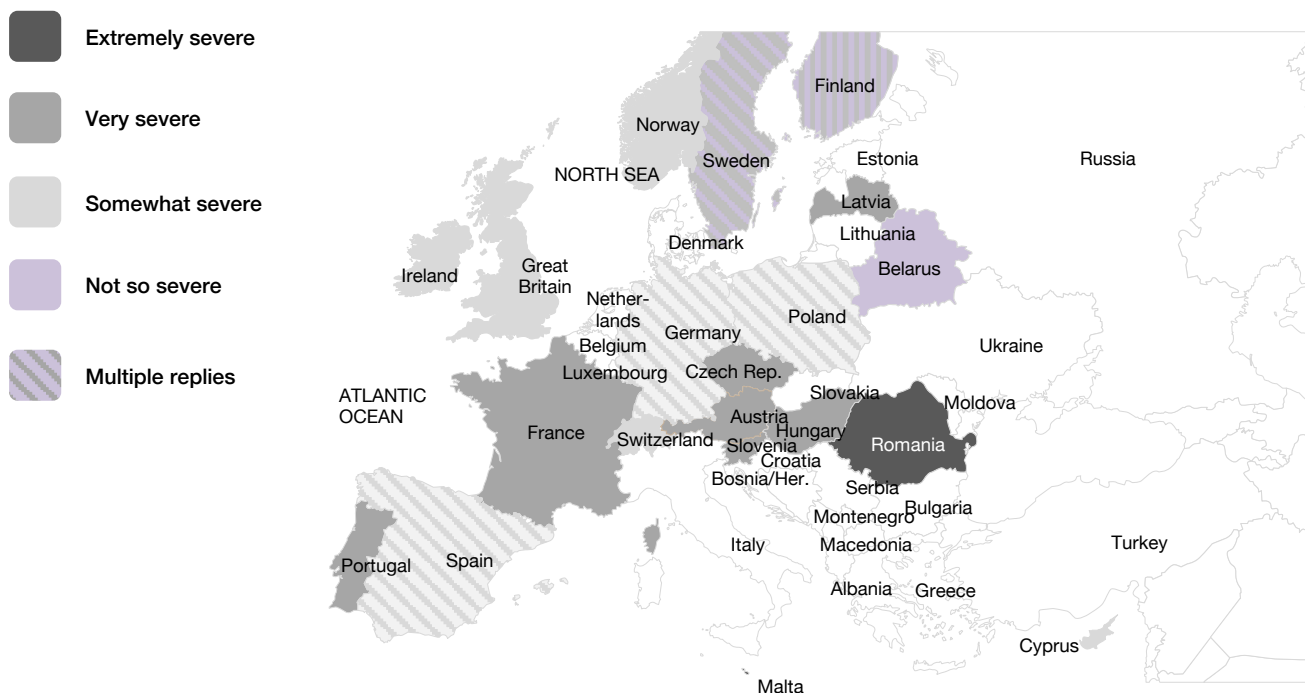


- » Those who are full-time authors have been affected severely (estimated 50%) with those who are part-time authors affected less severely (estimated 25%). —UNITED KINGDOM
- » Full-time children's and young adult book writer's have suffered up to 60% to 70% of their yearly income. The gap is very wide. —GERMANY <<
- » The effects of the pandemic vary, but 40% to 50% income loss is an average over the whole spectrum of writers and literary translators. —SWEDEN <<





How severe do you estimate the financial impact on your members in 2020 until today?



Where all the players in a particular cultural sector formed collaborative ventures and developed models in the interests of all those involved in the value chain, there was often State aid for freelancers, and, even despite high losses, a very different, less pessimistic assessment of the situation. Where, on the other hand, each entity in the book sector became active solely for its own interests, the situation is perceived by authors as much more serious and uncertain for the future, even despite moderate income losses. This led to the following impression: **We may all be in the same storm – but we are obviously not in the same boat.**

Conclusion: those who were able to communicate and collaborate during the crisis are taking something very valuable with them: They are not only in the same storm but can build a boat together.



» The associations of the book sector (writers, translators, publishers, booksellers, libraries, collecting societies, etc.) are cultivating a more intensive exchange, which can lead to a better mutual understanding of the different concerns. Authors', publishers', and booksellers' associations are planning a joint national economic stimulus package for 2021. —SWITZERLAND

«



CONCLUSION

TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THAT IS THE QUESTION

Hamlet

The EWC projected these developments in June 2020 and expected a “title collapse” of at least one third, which means 150,000 fewer publications per year for the whole of Europe. Here we see the biblio-diversity in Europe seriously affected. Likewise, it became obvious how the lack of personal

provision affects the sources of the entire book sector, starting with the shortage to build secure reserves. This is not a new insight, but it has come to light with the Corona crisis: the royalty shares do not provide a basis for an individual security that can bear income losses even for one and a half year.

This speaks for a new start also within the book sector, starting with the swift and author-friendly implementation of the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM, especially for fair remuneration and a most comprehensive transparency. Likewise, the digital structures of distribution and remuneration need to be reformed. It should be avoided that state players such as libraries, universities and other public institutions dig deep into the moral rights and into the pockets of authors with even more legislative exceptions and limitations with little or no remuneration. This applies to e-lending, as well as the use of educational materials. Streaming or shared revenue models in the audio book market must also undergo a critical examination. Finally, a social security system that understands and values the special situation of self-employed writers and translators must take effect. Further concrete recommendations are given at the end of this survey, and in the [EWC Position Paper](#).





CHAPTER II

THE INVISIBLE CRACKDOWN: THE RIPPLE EFFECT IN 2021 AND 2022

THE ROBBED THAT SMILES, STEALS SOMETHING — FROM THE THIEF —

Othello

The disruption of the life we once called “normal” has been going on for a year and a half. It can be assumed that this exception will be a constant, a companion of the future. Pandemics, climate change, the splitting of societies into conspiracy ideologies as well as the increasing political extreme right-wing pressure up to dictatorships in direct neighborhood like Belarus, reveal altogether a caesura for the world society. Crises, in turn, reveal character. In numerous European countries, writers and translators have

learned that literature, knowledge production, and art have not been understood as essential by their governments. Although the third strongest economic factor which stands on the shoulders of authors and artists, the sources of culture have been consistently ignored in favor of airlines or shopping malls. At the same time, we saw an upswing in digital transformation, with both positive and negative effects which would certainly not have happened at the pace and to the extent it did without the pandemic.

CRISES REINFORCE THE STRENGTHS OF A SOCIETY – AND ITS FAILURES

The implementation of the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM has been fulfilled in very few countries so far and if it has been transposed, it has been partly less author-friendly than its useful effect negotiated over years in Brussels, especially regarding remuneration, transparency, and protection in the digital domain. The procrastination of this reform is a disservice to authors suffering in the crisis.

At the same time, destructive actions became popular, such as the so-called Emergency Library in the US, which unceremoniously made more than 1.4 million copyright protected books and text works by authors and translators from all over the world available online free of charge. Without licenses or royalties, of course.

Moreover, in light of the crisis, state-funded institutions revealed a reckless need. Instead of appreciating the authors, their publishers and CMOs were granting quick and low-cost licenses for remote e-learning, home schooling, and online education; calls grew louder to make these voluntary services to society the new “normal” – again, with the help of vertically enacted laws on further limitations, exceptions, or mandatory licenses.



THE PUBLISHING STRATEGIES IN 2021 AND 2022: CONSEQUENCES OF THE FIRST WAVE

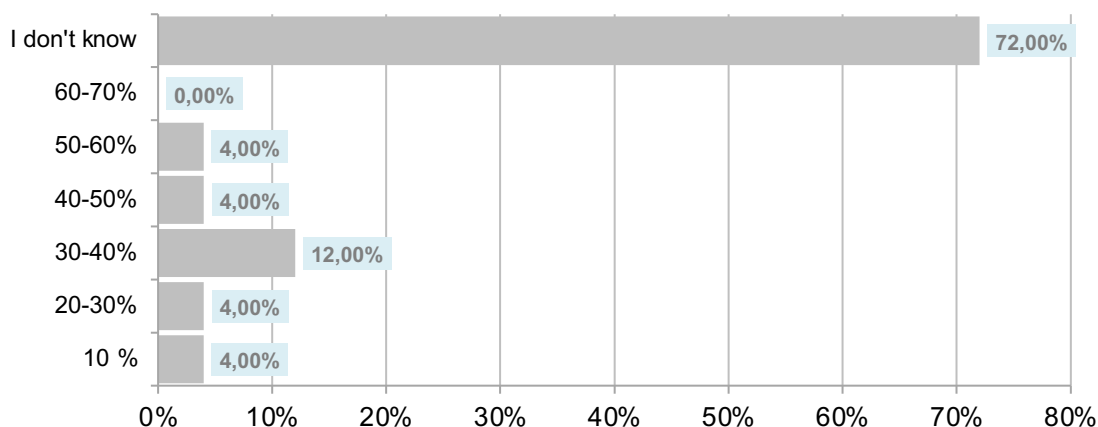
WORDS WITHOUT THOUGHTS NEVER TO HEAVEN GO —

Hamlet

As was the case in 2020, publishers also reduced and postponed their programs in 2021. This is expected to have a corresponding impact until 2025 before anything like a recovery occurs. In addition to original language publications, translations are also affected, which are less purchased in the foreign rights departments. Risks to build up new authors or to occupy niche topics are taken less often. However, in some countries like the UK or Germany, the children's book segment was not shrinking, but rather growing. The communication about publishing plans is virtually nonexistent, as indicated by the responses

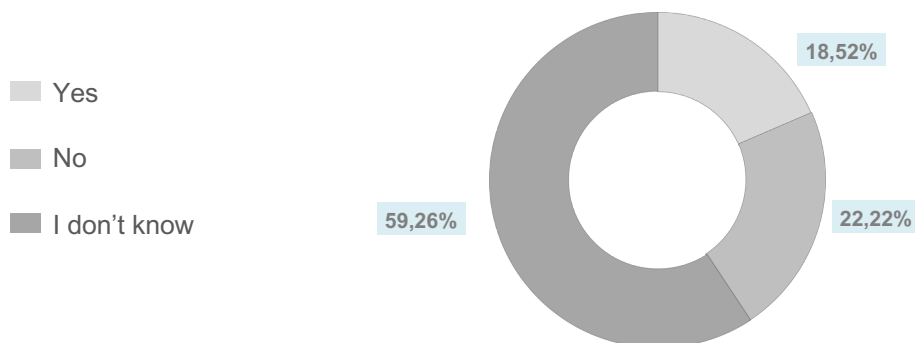
of the organisations surveyed. Estimates alone range from 10% to 60% program reductions. This suggests that in the European book sector, although communication and words are its core blood, essential decisions are still made vertically. Here, publishers would be well advised to approach their authors and national associations openly. After all, each individual publishing decision will produce a backlash in the entire author scene: new writers will be less likely to dare to want to publish, established authors will change professions, and thus innovational topics and voices will be lost.

To what extent will the programs of publishing houses be reduced overall in 2021?



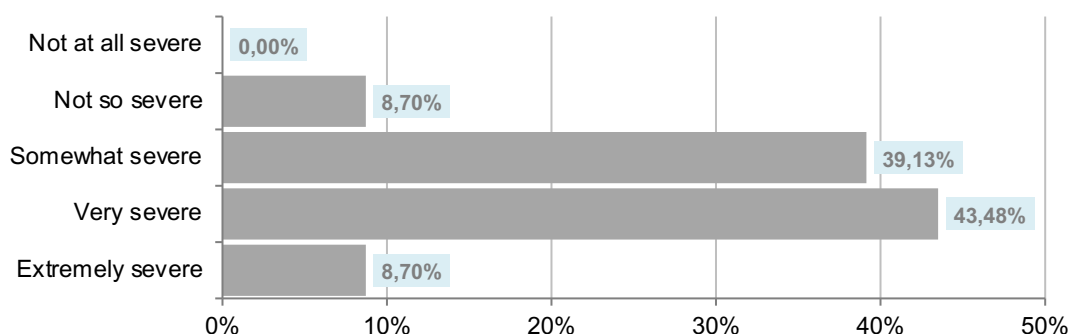


Have the advances for new contracts in 2021 gone down?



Picky publishers, fewer debuts and shrinking advance payments: taking up the writing profession in these times doesn't seem the best advice. The focus on bestsellers and established author brands is a side effect in terms of substance and literary quality. It is even more essential that in this transition, funding from the public sector domain – Scholarships, Prizes, grants – is prepared to award literary quality and less marketable literature.

How severe do you expect the impact on the book sector in 2021/22 in general?



More than half of the organisations surveyed estimate that the future for writers and translators in 2021 and 2022 will be from difficult to very or rather extremely difficult. The combination of the described phenomena – putting authors at a legal disadvantage, loss of digital remuneration, reduction of programs as well as lack of state compensation – makes the authors as sources of the book works not very optimistic about their future.

>> In Hungary e-book purchase is out of use. Very modest purchase, much piracy. So, publishers can regain only a very small income via publishing e-books.” —HUNGARY

<<

>> Overall publishers are more reluctant, and picky. —NORWAY

<<



THE CRISIS AS A PUSH FACTOR FOR DIGITAL TRADE? PARTLY YES, BUT

“As the FEP stated in their monitoring, published in March 2021: *“Digital sales drove growth in the Nordic countries: in Norway, more than one third of books accessed by customers were streamed audio books; in Sweden, ebook sales were up 12.1%, and digital audio book sales grew by 41.5%, with audio books representing 90% of all digital sales; the Finnish audio book market doubled in size. In Italy, ebook sales went up 37% and audio book sales did so by a stunning 94%. (...) Sales multiplied also in Greece, where some publishers re-entered the ebook market after several years of absence; the overall share remained very small nonetheless, likely below 1%, the same as in Portugal, Latvia and probably other smaller markets.”*

There is not yet a coherent, homogeneous digital single market in the book sector: country-specific differences in distribution forms, market participants and dominances, be it by State Institutions, by Amazon, or by large Publishing Groups, and, above all, royalty models for authors differ. We see a North-South split in the audio book usage, and a slight East-West divide in the e-book sector. In some countries, panic reactions were registered among publishers, who hastily offered new releases at dumping prices, both in print and digital formats. In a few other countries such as Poland, the experiment of offering online content for less or for no money at all worked – these promotion offers lured people in lockdown to buy more e-books.

» Publishers have noticed a huge potential of the digital forms (e-books and audio books). Moreover, large platforms like Legimi or Empik Go acted swiftly, offering a free access to their contents, which has visibly increased their sales. —POLAND «

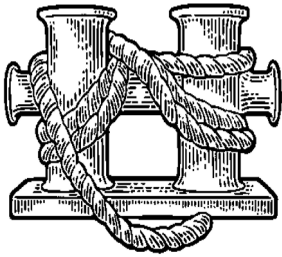
... CLICK & COLLECT AND HOME DELIVERY GREW STRONGER

The EIBF monitored in May 2021: “To ensure they could survive this drastic and unexpected change in their daily activities, booksellers had to shift their business model and encourage their customers to start buying books online. At the same time, many booksellers didn’t have the same presence, or even any presence, on digital channels as they did in their shops.” Online book retailing is not a homogeneous overall European market either. Bookstores with an own web store for ordering printed books were able to profit early on, while bookstores without their own

online solution were cut off from sales. In countries where Amazon dominates the market, books were declared second-rate goods in the first months of the pandemic and were delivered more slowly or not at all. This in turn was an opportunity for local stores to satisfy the thirst for reading, and to make home deliveries locally with cargo bikes.

These countless individual initiatives by owner-managed bookshops should be highlighted as one of the outstanding crisis management activities.

» There are some literary institutions that are organising online book platforms which are connecting many publishing houses, and are trying to stimulate the sales of Slovene books while bookstores and libraries were closed. This is the positive consequence of this unfortunate and difficult time. —SLOVENIA «



HOW AUTHORS SUPPORTED SOCIETY: ON REMOTE LEARNING AND THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

— WHEN WORDS SCARCE
THEY ARE SELDOM SPENT IN VAIN

Richard II

Since the early stages of the pandemic, home schooling, remote teaching and the usage of educational material for schools, universities, researchers, or scientific institutions have risen enormously. This led to higher requests for use of licenses to educational text and book works, often administered collectively.

The collecting societies affiliated to the International Federation of Reprographic and Rights Organisations (IFRRO) recorded the following findings in 2020:

- 40% received applications for license extensions or fee relief, what led to lower revenues for authors;
- almost 70% are making projections about the negative long-term impact of the crisis on their licensing income (what will hit authors in 2021 and 2022, when the shares are to be paid);
- around 50% had worked with authors and publishers to extend their existing licenses to enable remote learning and support home working. A similar proportion have also developed entirely new licenses, such as for online book readings or remote access to library content for researchers.

The above proves how much the intellectual goods of authors were needed and how much writers, translators and visual artists like illustrators stepped in to help society through the crisis. But the appreciation for this voluntary grant often failed to happen: authors contributed to the educational mission of their State, but were rarely compensated by them, as the following case examples show:

Case Example 1: Sweden

We had a discussion with the big publishing houses last spring when they – without consent from our authors – made all digital content available for free. Probably our authors would have said yes to the measure, but we strongly opposed that they handled our rights in that way without consent. They also expressed that that was a fault on their side. Otherwise, the demand for educational materials has been stable during the pandemic with a strengthening of the digital market. A market that also is much more volatile and with more not so serious publishers. Some authors have had new books cancelled, but most damage has been done by cancelled readings, courses for teachers, etcetera, from which many of our members have a substantial part of their income. That the Governmental systems for support were badly fitted for that kind of small businesses which our authors represent, also became very clear and exposed weaknesses that were there also before the pandemic. The discussion around this has been one of the few very positive aspects of the crisis. The umbrella organization KLYS (<https://klys.se>) has been very important here in Sweden in negotiations with the Government.

— THE SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL WRITERS

Case Example 2: United Kingdom

We remain extremely concerned about the effects of Open Access requirements on non-tenured academic and part-time academic authors, with the requirements of Open Access being broadly too onerous and not appropriate for such authors. Our educational writers remain concerned about the increasing prevalence of fee-based assignments across the sector and the propensity for educational materials to be given away for free during the pandemic and for the UK Government's seeming proclivity for prescribed catch-up materials.

—THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS (UK)

Case Example 3: Poland

The biggest challenge for all the education-related publishers was the sudden introduction of e-schooling in all the levels. School publishers, who are in a constant contact with both the teachers and the students, had decided to open the digital platforms free of charge for as long as the schools were closed, releasing the e-book versions of schoolbooks and additional materials used by the teachers. It is difficult to assess the direct impact of the pandemic on academic publishing. The pace of change will depend on the financial resources available, and this picture is not clear. The Government has no direct schemes of support for academic publishing and does not care much about it. Licensing and open access has been an issue for some time. —UNIA LITERACKA (POLAND)

What these specific cases show: It is essential to implement the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM for a stable future vision of educational materials. Governments have the possibility to make the use of academic and educational text works and books subject to remuneration. Education needs not only spoken commitments but also bold budgets: Here we see the duty of the State to strengthen the sources of knowledge, facts, and education, instead of further weakening authors through exceptions and limitations.

THE ROBIN HOOD PARADOX

Just as it was becoming apparent how badly writers were being hit by the pandemic, the Internet Archive (IA) had 1.4 million books and text works from all genres and including educational materials, illegally made available for download via an online “emergency library”. It reads like bitter mockery how these pirates in the dress of public servants and the wealthy, justified the plundering of authors: “The

National Emergency Library was a temporary collection of books that supported emergency remote teaching, research activities, independent scholarship, and intellectual stimulation while universities, schools, training centers, and libraries were closed due to COVID-19.” Four major US publishers filed a lawsuit against the IA on June 1 alleging “willful mass copyright infringement.”

We are seeing a worrying market shift to digital lending from libraries. Consumption, which on the one hand brings little remuneration, will soon exceed the e-purchase market. This was especially bitter in the pandemic, where we were more reliant than ever on electronic revenue, that government-funded institutions were grabbing our water. And now they want to legally enable this attack by implementing a compulsory licence. —SYNDIKAT, GERMANY

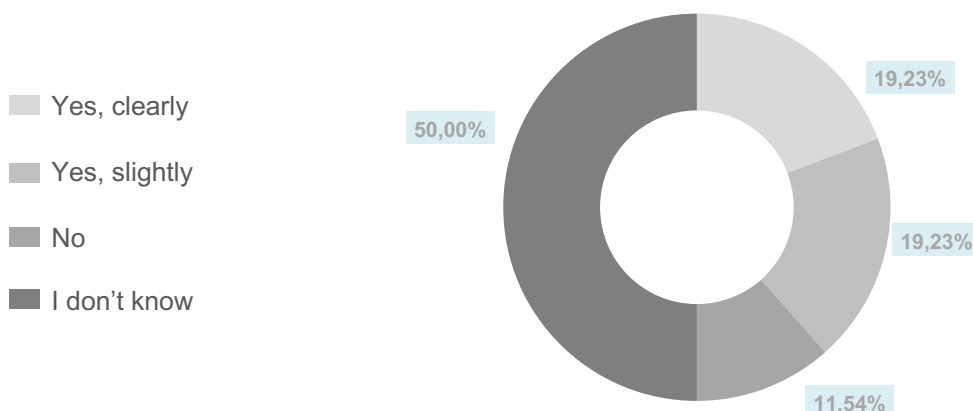
THE FREE RIDERS OF THE PANDEMIC

Another serious impact of the pandemic was the increase in digital piracy, especially in Spain, France, Sweden, Norway, and Germany. CEDRO, the Spanish reproduction rights organisation, recorded a tripling of the level of e-book piracy in Spain and was able to block more than over 100 social media channels on Telegram, WhatsApp, or Facebook groups exchanging content from books, journals or

magazines without consent or royalties. In response to the increased illegal use of digital content during the lockdown, and to inform the public on copyright issues, OSDEL, the Greek collective management organisation, has designed a campaign with the central motto:

“Books are not written by computers – Books are not written by photocopy machines.”

Did e-book and audio book piracy increase in your country?



WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE LIBRARIES?

The topic of the so-called “controlled digital lending” increased in popularity during the crisis. Forces lobbied for libraries to be able to digitize print books and lend them, contrary to existing basic laws and moral rights; of course, without the consent or monetary participation for the authors. Together with libraries, universities, archives, museums, and politically interested partners such as the Pirate Party or Wikimedia, several stakeholders launched open letters and political pressure at the international and national levels to rigorously obtain new limitations and exceptions in favor of their

institutions – and to trample over authors’ and their economic partners’ moral rights and comprehensible economic claims. This was a momentum of the pandemic in which what ailed many societies around the world became openly apparent: Authors’ Rights and the right of access to education are played off against each other – to save the necessary budgets. Instead, books created individually and at personal economic risk are to be forcibly socialised.

Authors: the self-service buffet of the state, its institutions, and befriended platforms?



CONCLUSION

WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE

The Tempest

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair”: Charles Dickens’ opening sentence of “A Tale of Two Cities” represents the multiple moments of the pandemic. It is a time when significantly more was read than before; equally significant, less was paid for it. It is a time when the

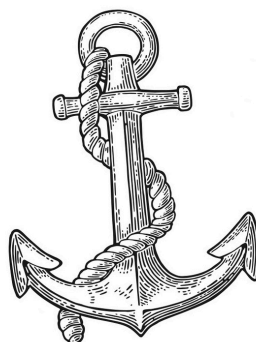
work and intellectual achievements of writers and translators were needed more than ever, but they often experienced the state, society and educational institutions ignoring the conditions for making their work happen.

It is a time when the voices of authors have been needed and heard more than ever in the struggle against the extreme political tendencies in Europe, and when the free word is coming under political and economic pressure more than ever.

2022 is a fateful year in which legal regulations and government budgeting measures may either lay the groundwork for a stable vision of the future for the sources of literature, culture, and knowledge, or fail.

The challenge for the future will be to reconcile the growing demand for books and educational materials with the legitimate interests of authors. This will require concepts that are different from those used in the past:

It is up to the political decision-makers, and to the book sector itself, to advocate that intellectual property rights, and rights of access to education shall be no longer played off against each other.





CHAPTER III INVESTING IN AUTHORS IS INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY

BE GREAT IN ACT,
AS YOU HAVE BEEN
IN THOUGHT —

King John

Climate change, AI, cryptocurrencies as the main means of payment: Our lives will look different in 2030 than they do today; but everything that was considered a forecast before 2020 has been changed by the “black swan” of the pandemic – an unforeseen, global event that redefines systems, structures, and prospects. The virus and the measures taken against it have redirected the course of time in a sudden way – in the geopolitical constellation, in the gradient of

prosperity, in the relationship between generations. Here it is up to us not only to look into singular processes in individual fields, such as the specific issues of the book sector. We also need to uncover links and use them to make new forecasts, to establish connections between culture and the economy, education and political drifts, digitalisation processes and democratic values, as interdepartmental factors in a changing system.

THE DIGITAL SPHERE: MORE OPPORTUNITIES AND LESS REVENUE

The digital transformation that many European countries are aiming for has been involuntarily speeded up. Some are driven out of the curve, others to unimagined heights, and some creativity is equally set free under undreamt pressure to act. The creative flights certainly included the newly emerging digital live formats such as readings, panels, workshops, and courses, and a clear gain in communication through video meetings and literary-political livestream conferences that reached a broader, more diverse audience. Interaction and encounter were thus raised to a new level – and without any travel costs! Nonetheless, after 18 months, “Zoom-fatigue” is setting in. The hunger for presence is growing – accordingly, book fairs, poetry and literature festivals, and license and rights transactions were perceived as less attractive in the virtual than in face-to-face events.

- » Also, those publishers, who used to give preference in marketing to only chosen authors, now were giving more interest also to the lesser-known ones. —POLAND «
- » I'd certainly mention the <https://www.kreativnicesko.cz/en> platform which has proven very active in dealing with pandemic impact on the Czech creative industries. They've been organizing regular meetings and put together a strong collective voice to the Czech government. – CZECH «

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW: CHALLENGES, TASKS & BURNING ISSUES

ALL THINGS ARE READY,
IF OUR MINDS BE SO

King Henry V

The crisis has illuminated every field that needs to be addressed – both politically and within the book sector – by all stakeholders with the utmost care and with a view to protecting and empowering writers and translators; the latter, as sources of knowledge,

literature, education, and identification space, can only continue to create valuable content if the state, society, and market structure support the authors. **The EWC identified the following areas of action as essential in this context:**

THE EU DIRECTIVE ON COPYRIGHT IN THE DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

Member States were expected to have implemented the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM into their national law on 7 June 2021. As of 1 August 2021, only eight of the 27 EU Member States have fulfilled the process. Articles 18-22 (Title IV, Chapter 3) provide a stronger protection for authors. This includes transparency on how their works are exploited; additional claims for remuneration if the original payment was disproportionately low compared to the revenue generated from exploitation of the work; revocation of licenses or assignments where their works are not being exploited; and a new alternative dispute resolution procedure to resolve matters.

→ **This consistent enforcement must not be delayed any longer. Any further delay puts unjust pressure on the writers and translators who have been severely damaged in the crisis.**



THE WORLD OF TOMORROW: CHALLENGES, TASKS & BURNING ISSUES

WHEN SORROWS COME,
THEY COME NOT SINGLE SPIES,
BUT IN BATTALIONS ———

Hamlet

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & TEXT AND DATA MINING

For years, lucrative economic products classified as artificial intelligence have been in use and have “learned” from copyrighted works via text and data mining. In these fields, these AI products compete with or already replaced authors and translators: (a) the automated creation of texts (stock market news, sports and weather news, journalistic texts, corporate communications); (b) the automated creation of translations (machine translation MT, search results, books, legal texts, product descriptions, translations on Social Media, audio captions); (c) imitative image and video works (deep fake); (d) text analysis tools (“dictionaries”), such as those provided by universities to companies for a fee, for the purpose of improving style, expression, text and rhetoric for product descriptions, marketing information, to mine opinion – or to use content control software.

Are authors cheap goldmines? Books and text works are “learning material” and are thus the most important basis for the not particularly intelligent but computationally powerful AI applications and software in the text fields. The impact on the book, image, and music sectors is foreseeable, where AI products are already growing into commercial competition to authors. In a liberal market economy, it should not be allowed to make products of a certain group (here writers, translators, authors) available free of charge to others, so that they can make a profit from it. This is equivalent to expropriation, and it destroys the basis of the system of a society with integrity, which develops ethical and democratic standards of value under the attribute of equal treatment. Articles 3 and 4 of the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM provide two exceptions to copyright infringement for text and data mining (TDM). Article 3 is in relation to scientific research; Article 4 allows those with lawful access to the work to conduct TDM so long as it has not been expressly reserved and the copies are only kept if necessary.

→ **The possibility of an opt-out for writers and translators to TDM in the legal national frameworks must be guaranteed. Individual contractual clauses must not override this moral right.**

→ **We call for a fair remuneration for authors, when TDM of copyrighted books is used directly or indirectly for the development of AI software.**

Human written versus Robotext: Likewise, the topic of “opinion mining” and text analysis will increase in economic, creative, and political contexts. We strongly emphasize the opportunities as well as the risks of using qualitatively uncontrolled text analysis tools. These can deepen prejudices, limit diversity, curtail artistic and press freedom, and lead to a digital dictatorship of opinion reduction.

→ **We call for a right of co-determination for producing authors to participate in the development of ethical, legal, content-related, semantic and qualitative value standards, especially about text analyses and “evaluation mechanisms” or content control methods.**

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW: CHALLENGES, TASKS & BURNING ISSUES

DIGITAL EXPLOITATION

AUDIO BOOKS

Sales of audio books have increased rapidly in recent years, and the market is mostly dominated by the Amazon company Audible, with correspondingly disadvantageous conditions; in addition, shared revenue models such as Spotify are causing revenues to fall even further. An equally grown field is audio book piracy, as it also happens on YouTube. The use of AI is also playing a role in the audio book sector, which will provide the book sector with several legal, technical, and economic challenges:

SPEECH TO TEXT

The company Audible uses machine learning to transcribe audio books into text; because licenses for audiobooks are separate from the licenses for e-books, a copyright violation is evident here. It is true that the subtitle function can be valuable for people who use audio books to learn a language; especially from the point of view of worldwide migration, language learning using audio books will increase.

→ **There must be licenses that ensure authors are compensated even when their work is used as a simultaneous audio and text work.**

TEXT TO SPEECH

AI is not far from being able to perfectly imitate human voice. AI text-to-speech that sounds like a human narrator rather than a robot is the stated goal of Apple, Google, Microsoft, and Amazon – to make audio book publishers and speakers obsolete, and to allow an e-book to be read aloud by a device. In the context of the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty and to empower inclusion in the digital society, this may be a welcome measure for the accessibility of e-books for the visually impaired. However, it is foreseeable that non-blind people will be able to upgrade their devices with apps to turn e-books into audio books, without remunerating its authors for this double exploitation.

→ **Here, the public interest must not take precedence over the author's rights to remuneration and copyright.**

E-LENDING

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled that it is not contrary to the EU's Rental and Lending Rights Directive for Member States to create a provision whereby e-books are made available to users by way of one copy / one loan for a limited period. The ECJ has ruled this only for cases where e-lending is actually “comparable” to the lending of printed books by libraries, i.e., mainly in a limited quantity of titles, limited loans, and effort of acquisition for readers. Nevertheless, there are efforts to transfer e-lending into national legislation within limitation regulations and to deduct it from the public lending fee. This would be fatal for many authors in the European sector because the library compensation fees are very low (Germany, Czech Republic, Poland) or non-existent (Bulgaria, Romania); e-book consumption via libraries would destroy the market, or damage authors where there is no official collecting society that can conduct the negotiations properly. Here, it is up to the national governments not to play off the moral rights of authors and their legal claims to remuneration against the right of access to culture.

→ **The digital transformation needs sustainable concepts that protect the sources and justify the functional mission of libraries with a significant increase in budgets. National stakeholder dialogues shall include representatives of authors' associations. Further limitations and exceptions for e-lending in libraries are to be rejected.**

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW: CHALLENGES, TASKS & BURNING ISSUES

EDUCATIONAL BOOKS AND TEXT WORKS

Article 5 of the EU Directive on Copyright in the DSM aims to enable educational institutions to take full advantage of digital technologies. The Directive provides for a mandatory copyright exception for the “digital use of works and other subject matter for the sole purpose of illustration for teaching”, defining the scope of uses with some flexibility, namely, whether to take into consideration licensing or remuneration schemes that benefit authors (including writers, translators, journalists, visual artists) and publishers, fostering the national creative ecosystem, or alternatively, opt for an unremunerated exception.

- **Together with the initiative “Content4Education”, we call upon national legislators to clearly define “digital use”. Clear boundaries are vital, otherwise the exception could be interpreted as a green light to make extensive copies of works.**
- **Provide a mechanism to preserve licensing systems between users and CMOs, RROs or entitled authors’ organisations, on behalf of writers, translators, and illustrators.**
- **The exception should be applied only when licensing agreements are not available.**
- **Fair compensation where the exception is applied: A provision for fair compensation is essential for authors. There is no justification for cutting off these important sources of knowledge, of their revenue.**

DEMOCRACIES UNDER PRESSURE: THE RISE OF RESTRICTIVE LEGISLATIONS

COVID-19 put pressure on democracies in Europe. Leaders faced difficult decisions, postponed elections, and locked-down cities. In countries where democratic institutions were already under pressure, right-wing populists actively exploited the pandemic. The Hungarian parliament granted Prime Minister Viktor Orbán sweeping emergency powers; in Poland, elections were overshadowed by the misuse of state resources and criminal charges against LGBT+ activists and authors. In southeastern Turkey, the Turkish government continued to crack down on dissent in the country.

In the direct neighborhood of Europe, in Belarus, a worsening attack by the illegitimate Lukashenka regime, especially against cultural and literary figures, has been taking place since the rigged August 2020 elections. Human rights are being violated, and the country is on its way to becoming a European North Korea – although the democracy movement is being supported as best it can from outside, especially by cultural and literary associations from abroad.

The EWC reiterates the call for active support to the democracy movement through:

- **Facilitated humanitarian and Schengen-visas.**
- **Scholarships and writers-at-risk programs abroad.**
- **Monetary support to NGOs in the neighbouring states, helping those on the run.**
- **Support for the relocation and re-establishment of civil associations and organisations.**





RECOMMENDATIONS & MEASURES

WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE
BUT KNOW NOT
WHAT WE MAY BE —

Hamlet

The diversity of books and the support of writers and translators is no luxury good – it is the backbone of democracy, of education, of culture, and community. Europe, in its struggle against fake news and extreme tendencies, must ensure that the mental sources of

books 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 contributes the following recommendations:

(1) STRONG IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU DIRECTIVE ON COPYRIGHT IN THE DSM

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

(2) PUBLIC LENDING RIGHT, EQUIPMENT LEVIES, EDUCATION BUDGET

We call upon the Member States of Bulgaria, Portugal, and Romania to implement Public Lending Right. We encourage other Member States to significantly increase the budget for e-lending in Public Libraries, and to avoid additional limitations and exceptions. Licensing agreements should provide a fair remuneration share for the authors. The protection of equipment levies and remuneration for authors through Collective Management Organisations (CMO) is also the key issue for the future, together with a raise of budgets for educational, academic, and teaching materials under licensing agreements.

(3) FRAMEWORKS FOR ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVITIES OF AUTHORS

We support the concept on a European wide digital event platform with options for pay-per-view, subscription-models or funded by State institutions, with a fair remuneration for authors. At the same time, the establishment of a permanent EU or national reading-fee-fund for bookshops and other cultural venues, following the example of Switzerland, that shall support authors, translators, and venues to recover and to organise events to re-connect readers and society.

(4) EU WIDE HARMONISATION OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF AUTHORS

We appeal to Member States to institute a social security system for freelance authors, following the example of Germany or France, including pension schemes, accessible health and labour insurance.



(5) COMPENSATION FOR PAST & UPCOMING LOSSES

We urge Member States to establish an 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.

We also want to encourage Member States to provide post-Corona-packages for authors of the educational field, who have supported society, universities, libraries and other educational institutions with fee relief or extended licenses.

(6) SUPPORT OF MONITORING AND OF AUTHORS' ORGANISATIONS

We call upon the Member States to implement frequent monitoring of the situation of writers and translators, by supporting national organisations, to adjust measures and to establish a continued, coordinated stakeholder dialogue in the national book sector with all representatives.

(7) A FAIR PLAYING FIELD

We propose to Member States to build grant schemes to develop sustainable platforms for audio- and e-book distribution, with clear rules and fair remuneration for authors. Likewise, projects such as the second-hand book trade of printed works with a voluntary share to the authors, should be supported (best practice: Norway).

(8) BRING BACK THE BOOKS TO THE ADULT READERS – AND TO THE CHILDREN

We request Member States to significantly increase the coverage of cultural and literature works in the public media, and to get active in reading promotion with the campaign “A book for every child”.

This can be organised through the annual purchase of new titles in the segment of children and young adult books, or with vouchers handed out at school to be redeemed at local bookstores.

The comeback-measure includes national reading promotion funds where organisers (schools, libraries, etc.) can apply for the payment of fair authors' fees.

(9) PRESERVE EUROPE'S DIVERSITY ON AN EQUAL BASIS

We declare that European literary awards or translation grants should be based on the principle of equal promotion of all spoken/written languages, to foster multilingualism.

(10) INVOLVING AUTHORS IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

We advocate for a closer involvement of writers and translators within Cultural Councils, to implement new funding principles for culture as a state duty by law, as well as to complement important questions of digital transformation, inclusion and the preservation of democracy. Authors are accustomed to listening, reflecting, and finding unusual solutions. Their voice is essential to any society.

[To the EWC Position Paper](#)

**We further explicitly refer
to the 37 recommendations for measures
and schemes of the first EWC Survey**





*POST SCRIPTUM BY MIGUEL ÁNGEL SERRANO, POET
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN WRITERS' COUNCIL*

It is commonly accepted that writers, and translators too, are loudspeakers of what is happening around them, sometimes to highlight that the world is not working well for everyone or, as now, that a virus is able to stop it. It has forced not only authors but also editors, plumbers, subway drivers, footballers or mascots to confine themselves in a medieval terror that only now, as 2021 slowly vanishes into the winter, seems to open doors to hope. If anything, this study should serve to make us aware that culture, like many other aspects of everyday life as we knew it, is living a transition that may undermine many of the foundations on which we thought it was based. We are in a perfect storm.

First, because actors that we always believed to be allies, such as libraries, seem to have now another face behind the forced masks of the pandemic. Something that is simply illogical is being discussed, such as the fact that work is not remunerated and, what is more astonishing, legal protection is being requested for what is simply outrageous: it is not the responsibility of authors, or at least not without their consent, to give free training or unpaid spiritual balm to the population. The growth in reading or the consumption of other products such as audio books during the hardest stages of confinement shouldn't have been done at the expense of the moral and economic rights of authors. Internet shouldn't be a jungle.

Technological changes are playing a role as well. It is dangerous to think that authors can be replaced by robots, because a robot will never disagree with the mainstream or its programmer. Diversity of opinion, and this can already be seen in social networks, is increasingly under threat, and we see that many of the alleged advances are shortcuts to a world with less capacity for calm debate.

The final recommendations of this study are not only for the benefit and protection of authors: they seek to ensure that European culture is not demolished unnoticeably: if this were to happen, it would imply the rise of a more unequal, less wealthy and probably less democratic Europe. It is not only about defending creators, but also those who enjoy written culture.

This is our call to action for politicians, NGOs, writers and readers: Defend what has truly built Europe, its culture. As for the wish that drives these final words, it is the hope that we will not have to repeat a study like this one; and that our discontent during this long, long winter, turns into a joyful spring for all of us, writers, translators and readers. So be it.

Miguel Ángel Serrano
Vice President

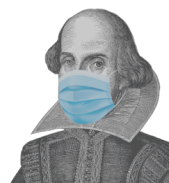


ANNEX *PARTICIPANTS – WRITERS’ AND TRANSLATORS’ ORGANISATIONS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER*

A*dS – Swiss professional association of authors and literary translators	Switzerland
ACE – Asociación Colegial de Escritores de España – Spanish Writers’ Association	Spain
AELC – Associació d’Escriptors en Llengua Catalana Association of Catalan Language Writers	Spain
Akkademja tal-Malti – Association of Writers of Maltese	Malta
Asociace spisovatelů – Czech Writers’ Association	Czech Republic
Društvo slovenskih pisateljev – Slovene Writers’ Association	Slovenia
Forfatterforbundet	Norway
IG Übersetzerinnen Übersetzer	Austria
Irish Writers’ Union	Ireland
Läromedelsförfattarna – Swedish Association of Educational Writers	Sweden
Latvian Writers’ Union	Latvia
Literature and Criticism Association	Cyprus
National Book Council	Malta
Polish Chamber of Books	Poland
Société des Gens de Lettres	France
Society of Authors	United Kingdom
Society of Swedish Authors in Finland	Finland
Sociedade Portuguesa de Autores	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
Unia Literacka	Poland
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



The WINTER of our DISCONTENT



ONE YEAR OF CRISIS: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

Survey period

27 March – 8 May 2021. Updates: September 2021.

Tool and analysis method

Monkey Survey (Extra) ©1999-2020, online query, secured invitation link, full text analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods.

Imprint & credits

Concept and realisation: Nina George, President, Miguel Ángel Serrano, Vice President

Evaluation and text: Nina George, President

Cover, design and production: Landguage.consulting

Editor: Dr. Myriam Diocaretz

© **Photo and image credits:** Landguage.consulting (charts), PresentationLoad (maps), EWC (logo), European Union (Niklas Nienab), Helmut Henkensiefken (Nina George), MAS (Miguel Ángel Serrano).

Engravings: antiqueimagesdotnet 123rf, topicha 123rf, suricoma 123rf, silvertiger 123rf,

Antonio Abrignani, Arthur Balitskiy, Patrick Guenette, Henrico Hondius (1623), Tetiana Lazunova, Channarong Pherngjanda, Alexander Pokusay, Adobe Stock Photo, Miguel Ángel Serrano's collection.

Contact:

European Writers' Council – Fédération des associations européennes d'écrivains

Rue d'Arlon 75-77, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

Registration Nr. 886.193.681 in 2006 Brussels, Belgium

International not-for-profit Association

Legal representative: Dr. Myriam Diocaretz, Secretary-General



EWC-Secretariat(at)inter.nl.net



europeanwriterscouncil.eu



@CouncilWriters



europeanwriterscouncil/