

Ms Marta Cienkowska
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Mr Andrzej Domański
The Minister of Finance and Economy
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Brussels, 26 March 2026

Subject: Act on the Protection of the Book Market

Dear Minister Cienkowska, Dear Minister Domański,

The European Writers' Council (EWC), the world's largest federation representing a quarter million writers of the book sector from 52 associations and 34 countries including Poland, welcomes with admiration the legislative work by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage on the bill with measures designed to protect Poland's book market. We also recognise the Ministry of Finance and Economy for its financial support in facilitating this financing.

We acknowledge the **Act on the Protection of the Book Market** will incorporate the recommendations of the Book Market Roundtable, consulted and supported by members of EWC's esteemed member, Unia Literacka, an association that has been a driving force to reinvent the literary market in Poland.

We share the **optimism and genuine satisfaction expressed by Unia Literacka**, as for Polish literature, the Act can become a fundamental regulation – improving transparency and commitment to fairness. The EWC expresses its full hopes, that the further consultations within the Ministries lead to a pivotal **historic moment**, and bring the two decades of fruitful discussions in Poland towards a sustainable future, aimed to protect the sources of the whole Polish book value chain: the authors.

In particular, we consider the introduction of fixed book prices to be essential.

Fixed Book Price (FBP) systems effectively promote both book sales and title diversity. By securing a dense network of physical bookstores and encouraging non-price competition through service quality, FBP regulations directly support the cultural policy objectives of protecting books as cultural assets and ensuring widespread public access.

International comparisons (Williams, 2024), proves significantly higher sales volumes in countries with active FBP systems, and evidence-based studies show it maintains bibliodiversity at the same time (Lüke, 2025 and Genakos, 2025).

Contrary to assumptions that vertical price restraints harm consumers, investigations e. g. by Gail and Klotz (2025) indicate that niche titles often become more affordable under FBP-regimes, while bestseller prices remain stable. Likewise, in countries with fixed book prices, independent bookstores are widespread, particularly in rural areas, contributing to the stability of the employment market and the socio-cultural vitality of a region or local town, with bookstores serving as a “third place” for encounters, exchanges, and debate.

Nevertheless, a fixed book price limited in time can only be a start, which we sincerely hope will be expanded so that the legislative proposal can blossom into a truly effective instrument serving authors, the book sector that depends on them, and readers alike:

As Authors are never paid directly for their work but receive only a calculated percentage of the revenues in return for their high private investment in the creation of a work, including research, working time, quality, etc., **a fixed book price is only one part of a needed triangle to enhance the living and working conditions of book authors:**

Across Europe, in countries without fixed book prices, royalties are paid from non-transparent, opaque net proceeds, a system in which the economic risk and disadvantages of retailer discounts or low-price battles are fully outsourced to the authors..

Only a permanently stable fixed book price, for both print and e-book editions, guarantees a calculable remuneration. This also pays off subsequently – in more stable tax payments and contributions to social security and pension systems.

The appropriateness of remuneration should also be the aim of this regulation. Appropriateness is subject to both objective and subjective parameters, especially in the volatile book market, where popularity can play a non-rational role in remuneration negotiations.

Objective parameters, however, should be definable, for example by enabling collective bargaining for a minimum royalty tied to the initial fixed book price, also after the 12-months-period, establishing jointly agreed remuneration rules (under mediation or antitrust supervision), or allowing either model contracts to be drawn up and published by writers' organisations, or a standard contract to be developed by mutual agreement within the book sector.

In order to complete the triangle of fairness, fine-grained transparency is required in addition to a fixed amount for negotiating and reviewing royalties.

This applies not only to sales, but also includes transparency regarding use by third parties, i.e., e-book distributors, audiobook publishers, translations, film adaptations, and the like, as well as the disclosure of discounts and commissions. Here, EU law (Directive 2019/790 on Copyright in the Digital Single Market) has given member states the opportunity to be flexible and adapt to their national circumstances on the one hand, and on the other hand to empower authors to review the exploitation of their work through a duty of disclosure across the entire value chain.

The principle of proportionate remuneration is an objective to get to appropriate revenue-streams towards authors, and only full transparency allows them to exercise their rights, to re-negotiate, to reject lump-sums and total buy-out contracts – including with the aid of a to be set-up mediation entity, as a balancing instrument, backed by the CDSM Directive 2019/790 (EU).

We hope that the Polish government will continue its dialogue with the book sector and, in particular, its sources, the writers, tirelessly represented by Unia Literacka, in this regard. The first important step has been taken, and we look with appreciation and hope at this deeply important message to the whole of Europe by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (MKiDN), supported by the Ministry of Finance with regards to the budget.

Should Poland decide to become a leading light in these times of technological evolution, upheaval, and the need to protect human, unique, and innovative authorship, then we can hopefully also expect further systemic support that will benefit the book sector, but also the cultural economy and the reading community. Examples of this include the improvement of library royalties including remuneration for e-lending schemes, but also facilitating the opt-out for text and data mining, or the set-up of support programs for the entire literary field, including translations.

We would like to thank the Polish decision-makers for their tireless efforts on behalf of this legislation and, together with Unia Literacka, remain available to answer any questions.

On behalf of the EWC,

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