

## EWC Statement: Critical voices in critical times

The European Writers' Council (EWC), representing over 260,000 professional authors in the text and book sector, calls for the recognition of the **Writer as critical infrastructure** for the cohesion and integration of our societies.

Books are essential for building an active, critical and empathetical society that is facing the challenges of the present and the future. However, it is often forgotten that books do not appear spontaneously: they are the result of creativity and work of human writers. Without those who imagine, create, write, and translate, literature would not exist. Works would not reach readers and help shape both their personal identity and that of our collective society.

It is crucial that we, as a society, appreciate writers are essential to a functional democracy. We need more than ever to strengthen culture, social cohesion, civic participation, and a shared sense of democracy in order to preserve and develop a sustainable human community. For this reason it is essential to recognise writers as the originators of society's self-understanding.

Writers are the first spark of the creative process, and the guarantors of empathy, understanding, and the most basic well-being of a society. They should never in these critical times be the last to be recognised, protected, and supported.

Writing has never been so necessary – nor so difficult.

### Critical times

We are living in critical and complex times, times in which writers and society are victims of a subtle but progressive erosion of the cultural sector both in Europe and in the wider international sphere. There are attacks on our freedom of expression; by direct censorship or by subtle and silent oppression; and increasingly frequent threats to cultural and linguistic diversity: one of Europe's core values.

In addition to the usual precarious economic situation of the sector, there are drastic budget cuts in the creative space, sometimes driven by ideological or political reasons, as well as the growing commodification of culture.

This alarming situation is further intensified by the massive emergence of so-called generative AI on a global scale, and the theft of works and systematic violation of rights that it has entailed.

### Authors' rights are human rights

We believe that defending the professional, personal, cultural, economic, and linguistic rights of authors also means defending the human rights of people as a whole. We are committed to protecting and promoting the space for freedom and independence that all writers should have, and **we urge governments and all public and private cultural institutions in Europe to share this approach.**

In very difficult times, we need to protect a diversity of critical voices.

**The Statement was adopted by the EWC member associations at the EWC AGM, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026, in Brussels.**



The present delegates of the EWC member associations from all over Europe are reading the statement in a public action in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Picture: © eyecone

### **About the European Writers' Council (EWC) and Contact**

The EWC is the world's largest federation of writers in the book sector and of all genres (fiction, non-fiction, academic, children's books, poetry, etc.). With 55 organisations and professional guilds from 34 countries of the EU, the EEA and of non-EU areas, the EWC represents over 260.000 writers and translators, writing and publishing altogether in 37 languages. The EWC is the world's leading federation for the defence of book authors' rights since 1977.

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