

Authors' Claims – déclaration – Forderungen der Autorinnen- und Autorenverbände Europas (AAAE) on the EU Commission and the Member States

Authors are the source of a value chain which provides work for over 500,000 people in Europe and generates a turnover of more than 23 billion euros for publishers, making the book sector the largest in the culture industry. Books are of utmost importance in European culture: writers, translators and other creators should have their rights protected and developed. Advances, fees and first prints are constantly being reduced though the number of new titles grows daily which forces most of them to have alimentary jobs to cover daily expenses. It is essential that the economic value of cultural and creative works should be passed on to the creators of the work and that authors' rights should be strongly protected.

The AAAE calls on the EU Commission and the Member States to ensure:

1. IMPROVEMENTS IN SHARING THE VALUE GENERATED BY THE BOOK SECTOR:

Authors must receive a fair share of the total revenue generated by their works, whether from direct trade publication, derivative publication or collective management. Proportional remunerations should prevail and flat fees should be excluded.

All authors must therefore systematically receive:

- an advance payment for each title for any kind of publication;
- a minimum percentage of 10 percent of the net retail price for the hardcover first edition, a minimum of 20 percent of the net retail price for unit sales of e-books and a minimum of 25 percent of the net proceeds for all other digital uses (flat rate fee, extracts, e-lending, etc.).

2. TOTAL TRANSPARENCY ON FIGURES:

Member States shall ensure that authors receive at least once a year timely, adequate, accurate and sufficient statements on the use and promotion of their works from those to whom they have directly licensed, assigned or transferred their rights and from any licensee, notably as regards modes of exploitation, promotional activities undertaken, revenues generated and remuneration due.

Statements should include sales figures and any other kind of figures from all forms of exploitation, especially from lending and e-lending in libraries, digital flat rates/subscriptions and promotions.

In the long term, Member States shall ensure that authors have direct access to sales figures from retailers, akin to the digital systems that already exist for DVDs and CDs.

3. STRONG LEGISLATION ON AUTHORS' RIGHTS AND NO FURTHER EXCEPTION OR LIMITATION:

Authors are strongly against any new exception or limitation to authors' rights such as those covering e-lending, libraries, user-generated content, transformative material, and out-of-print and orphan works, etc.

It is essential to maintain strong legislation on authors' rights in every State of the European Union and its enforcement provisions. Strong legislation means maintaining the principle of the author's authorization for any use of his or her work. With too many exceptions or limitations, those become the rule and authors' rights become the exception.

4. LEGISLATION ON THE FIXED BOOK PRICE:

It is essential to protect regulations on fixed book pricing for both the print and digital sectors since these regulations play a part in protecting fair and equitable remunerations for authors and an independent bookselling network.

Member States need to be aware of the issue raised by the rise in second hand sales which represent 20 percent of the market from which authors and publishers derive no income.

Writing is a job, not a hobby. Just as any other professional, authors shall be able to receive social protection and pension planning. They also shall be paid for all of their activities as authors (as readers and as speakers).