**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the future of the European book sector**

1. **Rapporteur:** Tomasz FRANKOWSKI (EPP / PL)
2. **Reference numbers:** 2023/2053 (INI) / A9-0257/2023 / P9\_TA(2023)0329
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 14 September 2023
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee**: Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution underlines the cultural, societal, educational, and economical importance of the book sector for Europe and points out the role of the sector for society, resilience to disinformation, freedom and diversity of expression, and the necessity to promote reading and to support the actors of the sector, notably independent booksellers. The resolution calls on the Member States and the Commission to support the sector to address key issues such as accessibility of books; increased circulation of books and promotion of literature and reading; green transition; support to Ukraine; artificial intelligence; data sharing and statistics at European level.

The diversity of issues highlighted in the resolution entails the mobilisation of different tools by the Commission such as funding programmes (Creative Europe, Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, support Ukraine) but also legislation (e.g. implementation of the Digital Markets Act) or policy initiatives (digital decade) which are described in detail in the response below.

1. **Response to the requests and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

***The societal importance of access to books***

The Commission shares the views of the European Parliament that **books should be widely accessible to all Europeans** including to those with disabilities (paragraphs 1 to 8). Inclusion is one of the cross-cutting priorities of the Creative Europe programme and all projects funded must have a relevant inclusion strategy. As suggested by the European Parliament (paragraph 9), the Commission will explore the possibility to introduce measurable goals for how funding is used to improve the accessibility of books for people with disabilities in its mid-term review of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027.

Regarding the support to translation, the Commission confirms that all costs linked to the publication of the paper and electronic versions of the translated books are eligible for support. This includes costs linked to accessibility in order to encourage and help publishers fulfil their obligations under the European Accessibility Act. In addition, cooperation projects have been funded to accompany the sector in this transition.

***Supporting and promoting better circulation of European books***

Regarding **the possibility to dedicate more funds to the book sector under the next Creative Europe programme for 2028-2034** (paragraph 10), the Commission recalls that the next Multiannual Financial Framework post 2027 cannot be prejudged in scope and content and that the Commission will make a proposal in due time, which cannot be already biased.

Currently, Creative Europe devotes nearly 8% of the Culture strand budget to the book sector. Despite this effort, and in view of the increasing number of applications, not all high-quality projects can be financed.

On the possibility to expand support for the sector through a future research programme, the Commission recalls that currently Horizon Europe already provides support to the research and innovation needs of the cultural and creative sector and industry.

Regarding the **scope of Creative Europe support to literary translation,** the Commission confirms that national but also regional and minority languages recognised in any participating country are eligible. More than 1400 books have been selected for translation since the beginning of the current programme involving more than 40 regional, minority or national languages.

Considering the artistic and creative nature of the Creative Europe programme, the support to translation is limited to literature and specifically fiction, or essays with fictional elements. The programme dedicates EUR 5 million per year to this scope. At present, the Commission is not envisaging to enlarge the scope to non-fiction books (as suggested under paragraph 14).

The new mobility initiative, **Culture Moves Europe,** has recently been enlarged to also include all book professionals working in the field of literature and translation as suggested under paragraph 17.

**Creating a children’s book category within the European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL)** as suggested in paragraph 21 would *de facto* mean creating a new prize considering the specific nature of the children’s book sector: authorship is often the result of a collaboration between illustrators and authors; markets and publishers have specific channels; and the target audience is segmented into age groups. The Commission is cautious about not multiplying prizes considering the investment required to launch and promote them.

Alternatively, the Commission and the Creative Europe programme support the children’s book sector in many ways, such as training and promotion of creators and illustrators; literary translation (children’s books represent nearly 40% of books translated through Creative Europe); and the Day of European Authors which is being used to promote reading and the diversity of literature to younger audience.

***Towards an inclusive reading culture***

Regarding the **Day of European Authors (**paragraph 28), the Commission thanks the Parliament and its members for their support to the first edition in 2023 and will seek to further involve the Parliament in the future editions. The Day aims at promoting reading and encouraging young readers to discover the diversity of European literature. The Commission confirms the second edition of the Day will take place on 25 March 2024 in all Creative Europe countries. The Commission seeks to involve a diverse range of partners (authors, schools, libraries, booksellers, NGOs…) and Member States (Ministries of Education and Ministries of Culture).

On **the call for further efforts to develop, fund and promote the Europeana platform (**paragraph 30), the Europeana Initiative is the flagship from the Commission for the digital transformation of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions, both public administrations and businesses. The overall policy framework for this endeavour is the Digital Decade, where the Commission has ambitious targets for the uptake of advanced technologies and to improve digital skills. Particularly for libraries and other cultural heritage institutions, the Commission published Recommendation 2021/1970 for a common European data space for cultural heritage, which is one of the 14 domain data spaces that will create a sovereign, interoperable and trustworthy data sharing environment, to enable data reuse within and across sectors, fully respecting EU values.

In addition to this, the Europeana Initiative is also actively empowering the sector, hosting events, deploying tools and best practices, fostering innovation, building capacity and sharing expertise to embrace digital transformation.

As of 2023, the Europeana website allows access to over 58 million digital objects with over 3 billion metadata from more than 4000 libraries and other cultural heritage institutions in the EU and some even beyond (such as Serbia or Ukraine).

Regarding bookshops and the possibility **to create a label for independent bookshops (**paragraph 34), the Commission recognises the pivotal role of bookshops in the promotion of European books. Creative Europe supports, for instance, the RISE project (Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability for the Enhancement of Bookselling) implemented by the European and International Federation of Booksellers to accompany the digital and green transition of bookshops in Europe. Another project “the Europe of independent bookshop” is working more specifically on the status of independent bookshops and will deliver recommendations on the feasibility of a label at European level in the first semester of 2024. The Commission will analyse the results of those projects and continue consultations on the feasibility and financing of such label.

Regarding **Ukraine** (paragraphs 37 to 39), the Commission has been supporting cultural and creative sectors and professionals in Ukraine since the first days of Russia’s war of aggression against the country, through projects such as EU for Culture and House of Europe or the Creative Europe programme.

House of Europe has two phases (phase I, EUR 11.6 million for the period 2019-23 and phase II, EUR 5 million for the period 2023-2024). Under the first phase, the EU provided translation support for the book sector. Under the second phase, the EU will continue offering a broad portfolio of grants of different sizes and logic for cultural organisations and creative businesses, including in the book sector. Ultimately, House of Europe carries on as a top-of-mind resource for information on any EU and EU Member States’ opportunities (beyond those implemented by House of Europe itself).

Ukraine has been part of the Creative Europe programme since 2007. EU grants have been used to help preserve intangible and tangible cultural heritage, support artistic and cultural cooperation, foster the circulation of cultural works, facilitate the online or offline mobility of artists and professionals to and from Ukraine, and to provide relief, through culture, to Ukrainian displaced people in and outside Ukraine. The three consortia put in place following the special Creative Europe call for Ukraine (EUR 5 million) or projects such as Tales of EUkraine in the book sector, are emblematic of this collaborative approach between EU and Ukraine. Under Creative Europe, European publishers have also been encouraged to cooperate with Ukrainian counterparts. Translations from or into Ukrainian now represent nearly 28% of the 486 books selected by Creative Europe for translation in 2023. Ukrainian culture and creative industries will continue to be one the priorities of the Creative Europe programme in 2024. On a long-term basis, the Commission also provides expertise to help the preservation of intangible and tangible heritage and prepare for the reconstruction of Ukraine. The Commission set up an expert sub-group on “safeguarding cultural heritage in Ukraine” that is tasked to identify good practice and formulate recommendations. The 26 experts appointed (6 of which are of Ukrainian nationality) cover the entire spectrum of cultural heritage, including the book sector with an expert representing the National Library of France. The experts met twice already (in June and September 2023), and the third meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 2024.

***Challenges for the future growth of the book sector***

Regarding the “**greening” of the book sector** (paragraphs 40 to 46) the Commission agrees with the Parliament that this will require research and collaboration within the book sector to explore new practices including in the use of raw materials and equipment. Programmes such as Horizon Europe or to some extent Creative Europe can be used to support the sector in this process.

On the opportunity to create a “printed in Europe” label or the suggestion to monitor paper and ink production and to support the development of the industrial capacities of the European book sector (paragraph 43), the Commission confirms that they represent pertinent subjects to explore in order to reduce carbon emissions by encouraging printing books in Europe, especially for books for children and young people which have been delocalised from Europe over the last years. This will require further research and dialogue with the book sector and the Member States on the feasibility, practicalities and impact of such measures.

Regarding the Deforestation Regulation (paragraph 45) the Commission is currently drafting guidelines for the implementation of the Deforestation Regulation, addressing specific elements identified in the regulation, relevant also for the book sector.

With reference to paragraphs 49 and 50 on **artificial intelligence**, the Commission attaches great importance to the opportunities as well as to the challenges raised by the digital transformation and artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors, including in the book sector. In 2022, the Commission published the study [Opportunities and challenges of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Cultural and Creative Sectors](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/opportunities-and-challenges-artificial-intelligence-technologies-cultural-and-creative-sectors). The study examines some of the new challenges that need to be addressed and provides recommendations to address challenges in five areas, notably access to data, access to skills, transparency, collaborative ecosystems and access to finance, taking into account the wide diversity of needs across sectors, including small players. The study includes a specific chapter on the book publishing sector.

Regarding the **training of book sector professionals** (paragraph 49), the Commission agrees on the need for regular up- and re-skilling of all professionals (including the book sector) to keep pace with and benefit from technological developments. The Pillar of Social Rights sets out that 60% of all adults of working age should engage in training each year. The EU Skills Agenda includes actions to support Member States, including the Council Recommendation on Individual Learning Accounts and the Pact for Skills. Significant EU funding is available for these purposes, mainly channelled at Member State level through the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Erasmus + and other EU funding programmes allocate significant resources to support people across the EU to improve their skills.

Specifically for the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), the large-scale partnership in the creative and cultural sector, set up in the framework of the Pact for Skills, is an appropriate forum to address skills needs in the sector in general, including those related to the emergence of Artificial Intelligence. Besides, a sectoral skills alliance for a blueprint strategy on cultural heritage professions (2021-2024) and another one on culture and creative industries (2022-2024) have been launched. The Commission has also developed tools, such as DigComp, which was recently updated to take account of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

Regarding support for **research and innovation projects on the use of Artificial Intelligence** (paragraph 50), the Commission agrees on the importance of supporting the sector to promote the use of Artificial Intelligence to enhance the efficiency of the book sector. Under Creative Europe, Horizon Europe (Cluster 2: Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Societies), Erasmus+ and Digital Europe programmes, the EU provides funding for innovative projects in the cultural and creative sectors and industries, including the book sector.

As part of the creative industries, publishing is supported through Horizon Europe Cluster 2. Horizon Europe finances research and innovation activities to support sustainable growth and job creation and contribute to integrating them into European industrial policy as drivers for innovation and competitiveness. One relevant example is the *Cultural Heritage Cloud* initiative, which aims to create a digital infrastructure that will connect cultural heritage institutions and professionals across the EU and develop specific digital collaborative tools for the sector while removing barriers for smaller and remote institutions. Furthermore, Horizon Europe Cluster 4 ‘Digital, Industry and Space’ includes support for Artificial Intelligence as an enabling technology, to serve the needs of all types of European industries. The Artificial Intelligence, Data and Robotics partnership under Horizon Europe provides most of this support, with an expected Union contribution of EUR 1.3 billion over 2021-27, and matching contributions from industry.

Besides, the Commission has launched, under the umbrella of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, a call for tender for a study on discoverability of diverse European cultural content in the digital environment, aiming at better understanding the impact of content prioritisation, algorithm recommendations, and curation strategies on cultural and linguistic diversity. The study will on focus on less-explored and less-regulated sectors such as music and books.

Regarding paragraphs 51 **on data sharing and standardisation**, European comparable cultural statistics are a priority for the Commission. Understood as a horizontal priority, the European Work Plan for Culture defines a specific action on “Cultural statistics – to build resilience in and through culture”. Target outputs include exchanging best practice among Member States; identification and development of a set of harmonised and comparable statistics across the EU, covering gender equality aspects, the labour dimension, economic support for the sector, and cultural participation, with relevant social-demographic breakdowns. This goal will be pursued in close collaboration with Eurostat.

Official statistics by Eurostat are published on a wide range of social and economic aspects related to culture and more specifically to three sub-sectors. One of them is the book sector. Statistics include economic indicators such as number of enterprises, value added and turnover for publishing activities and retail sales of books (data are also available for newspapers and periodicals); employment data on economic activities related to publishing and estimates on the number of authors, journalists and linguists; international trade of books and press, within and outside the EU, by partner country; index of prices for books and press. Books consumption habits are monitored with data on books expenditure in EU households, purchase of books on-line, books reading by sex and age (for this last, 2022 data will be available from early 2024). All the data are collected in the sub-domain of Eurostat culture statistics web-page dedicated to books and press.

Regarding paragraphs 59 on **inclusion of interoperability of e-book formats and devices within the scope of the Digital Markets Act** (DMA), the Commission would like to recall that the Digital Markets Act’s rules aim at preventing certain undertakings providing core platform services which are important gateways, from imposing unfair conditions on businesses and end users and ensure the openness of important digital services. On 6 September 2023, six companies were notified that they have been designated as gatekeepers for 22 of their respective core platform services. These decisions are based on the notifications received so far by the Commission from the companies which considered that they met the quantitative thresholds of the DMA. None of the notifications concerned core platform services directly related to e-books. At this stage there are no elements to question this self-assessment. The Commission continues to monitor market developments to ensure that the application of the DMA remains future-proof.

As to the call on the Commission to **monitor the effective implementation of the DMA** by dominant market players (paragraph 60), the Commission would like to note that the DMA mandates the Commission to ensure effective compliance with the DMA and enforce it vis-à-vis designated gatekeepers. Member States may provide in their national legislation investigatory powers for national competent authorities to pre-investigate any non-compliance with the DMA. The Commission is already actively engaged in pre-compliance discussions and with the designated gatekeepers, which will intensify in the next months in view of ensuring that on 7 March 2024 an effective compliance is ensured by all gatekeepers. This process also included taking into account any feedback from third parties that may inform such compliance discussions and compliance measures as well as solutions.