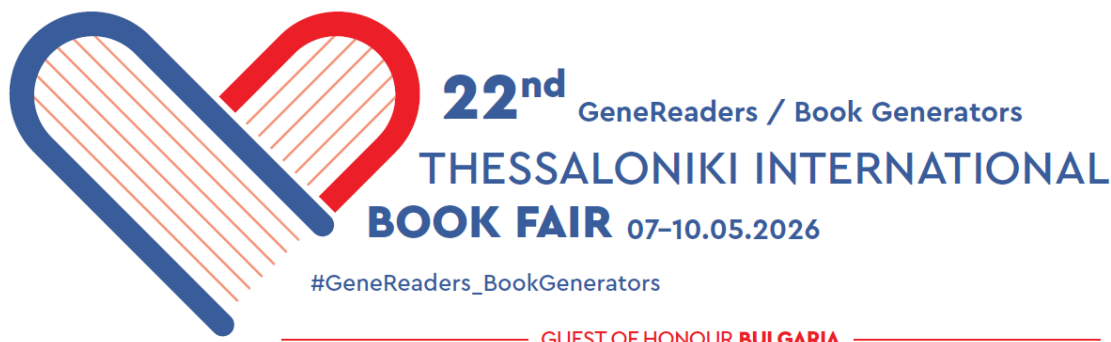


PRESS RELEASE

22ND THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR, MAY 7-10 2026



The biggest names from the book world meet in Thessaloniki! The International Professional Programme

This is the fourth year of the international professional programme held within the framework of the Thessaloniki International Book Fair, where publishers, authors, literary agents, translators, and publishing professionals from all over the world gather at TBF to exchange ideas, create partnerships, and explore new opportunities in the global publishing landscape. This year's expanded professional programme takes place at the DIALOGOS Rights Center (Pavilion 15, HELEXPO Exhibition Center).

This year, the 40 participants from around the world will contribute their ideas and knowledge in the fields of rights sales and acquisitions, Artificial Intelligence, the development of reading habits, and translation funding models. The "Spanish Phenomenon" will be explored as a best practice, as well as the parallel lives of books and media, especially in the era of social media.

International Book Markets

The programme starts with the presentation of the ***Greek publishing industry and the policies of HFBC: GreekLit, BIBLIONET, the 1st International Children and Young Adults Book Fair in Patras, and international exhibitions***, by **Nikos Bakounakis**, HFBC President, and **Panagiotis Kapos**, PhD in Communication, Media, and Culture, HFBC Vice-President.

The **Guest of Honour, Bulgaria**, provides an overview of its publishing market with **Gergana Pancheva**, Literary Agent and Director of Sofia Literary Agency, and **Svetlozar Zhelev**, Director of the National Book Center of Bulgaria. Discussing children's book trends and international cooperation opportunities are: **Zornitsa Hristova**, Editor-in-Chief of Tochitza Publishers, and **Dessislava Grozdanova**, Editor-in-Chief of Fox Books Publishing. Moderation: **Dessislava Zheleva**, Editor at Colibri Publishing. The main challenges faced by translators of Bulgarian literature into Greek, contemporary trends, and connection through translation, will be discussed by **Blagorodna Filevska**, translator, **Spyros N. Pappas**, translator, and **Zdravka Mihaylova**, translator, moderated by **Gergana Pancheva**.

The Role of Literary Agents

How do books cross the boundaries of their original language and reach readers worldwide? Literary agents from very important publishing houses, participating in this year's TBF fellowship programme, will discuss their role in spreading stories across borders. From translation and rights to emerging international trends, they discuss the way books travel between languages, cultures, and markets in today's interconnected publishing landscape.

Speakers: **Deniz Topaktas**, Isbank Cultural Publications, Turkey; **Joanna Maciuk**, Wydawnictwo Mięta, Poland; **Tasja Dorkofikis**, Linden Editions, UK; **Adrian Kasnitz**, Parasitenpresse, Germany. Moderation: **Marie Desmeures**, Noir sur Blanc / Notabilia, France.

The fellows also discuss their role in rights sales and acquisitions and the impact of book fairs and digital platforms on title dissemination. Speakers: **Flora Esterly**, Farrar Straus & Giroux, USA; **Evita Pilla**, Penguin Random House, UK; **Cristina Garcia Hidalgo**, Grupo Planeta, Spain; **Adèle Rolland-Le Dem**, Editions Gallimard, France. Moderated by **Niki Davarinou**, Literary Agent, Read & Right Agency. Industry professionals internationally will also examine the way they negotiate and manage the rights of children's books, from illustration contracts and intellectual property issues to licensing and translation agreements. Speakers: **Kim Laura Franzke**, Ueberreuter Verlag GmbH, Germany; **Mireia Trius**, Zahorí Books, Spain; **Pedro Reisinho**, Zero a Oito, Portugal; **Davide Ioppi**, Terre di mezzo Editore, Italy. Moderated by **Claire Rivkin**, Random House Children's Books, USA.

What does the term “Spanish Phenomenon” mean?

The Spanish publishing industry has shown great growth and international influence in recent years. Driven by a dynamic publishing sector, the global reach of the Spanish language, and close ties with Latin American markets, Spanish publishers have significantly expanded their presence in the field of international rights trading and translations. Today, Spain is one of the most active players in the global book market, promoting authors writing in Spanish worldwide and strengthening cultural dialogue through books.

Speakers: **José Manuel Anta**, Managing Director of the Spanish Federation of Book Publishers in Spain, and **Faidon Kydoniatis**, Publisher, Vice-President of the Federation of European Publishers.

Furthermore, **Jesús González González**, Deputy Director General for the Promotion of Books, Reading, and Spanish Literature, will talk about the way funding programmes, public bodies, and publishing houses cooperate to support the translation of Spanish literature into other languages.

Books & Media

This new thematic section within the professional programme starts with a discussion on the second life of books: books with a historical or collective nature and all printed forms of information (newspapers, magazines, printed documents) can now acquire a new life through the use of technology. They can become more easily accessible to researchers and their content can be transformed into new publications and other cultural applications: podcasts, vidcasts, educational material, small-scale exhibitions, and digital archives. **Andreas Tsiliras**, Cultural Manager and Publisher, **Vassilis Gatos**, Director of Research at the Institute of Informatics & Telecommunications, NCSR “Demokritos”, and **Katerina Christopoulou**, co-founder of AI4doc, will present relevant examples and discuss the needs of publishers, libraries, collections, and cultural organizations.

Also, the rise of **BookTok**, which has significantly affected reading trends and book sales, rekindling interest in both new releases and older titles, will be discussed. To what extent has it evolved into a powerful community of readers with which publishers can interact and rely on? Speakers: **Elena Pataki**, Publisher, Patakis Publishers; **Eleni Papageorgiou**, Publisher,

Metaixmio Publications; **Athina Daskalea**, Marketing & Communication Director, Psychogios Publications; and **Giannis Pliotas**, Marketing Director, Dioptra Publications.

The relationship between sports, cinema, and music with literature and the publishing sector, and the shaping of narratives, audiences, and cultural trends, is the subject of another discussion with speakers: **Giorgos Mouroutis**, publisher, AΘens Bookstores, journalist; **Sotiris Triantafyllou**, President of the Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions; **Apostolia Papaioannou**, Director of the Mediterranean Film Institute – Producer; and **Dimitris Vassilakis**, Saxophonist, composer, poet, and academic researcher.

Small Languages – Great Literatures

How can literature written in smaller or less widespread languages reach an international reading audience? Professionals from the translation field will discuss the importance of supporting translation and talk about funding programmes, international collaborations, and best practices for promoting diverse voices in the global book market. Speakers: **Simeon Aleksandar**, Creative Europe Desk Bulgaria; **Kostas Trakosas**, Creative Europe Desk Greece; **Hipsime Madoyan**, head of publications (Antares, Armenia); **Veronika Chaloupkova**, editor, literary agent (Argo Publishers, Czech Republic); and **Tere Irastortza Garmendia**, poet, translator (Basque Country).

The **Creative Europe funding programme** strengthens publishers, organizations, and authors from European countries every year to translate and publish their books in other languages, to proceed with international promotion and projection collaborations, to organize festivals, actions, and fellowships, and to participate in book fairs and festivals. The Swedish author **Erica Hindborg** from the project **Trans-European Journeys** (2025-2027), the Slovenian authors **Jana Bauer** and **Andreja Peklar** from the project **Connected with Books** (2024-2026), the Greek publisher **Nestoras Poulakos** (Vakxikon Publications), and the representative of Creative Europe Desk Greece, **Kostas Trakosas**, will talk about their experience and the prospects emerging from the participation of book people in such collaborations.

Anne Bergman-Tahon, Director of the **Federation of European Publishers**, who is coming to Thessaloniki also as a guest of the HFBC, coordinates an event for the European Union Prize for Literature (**EUPL**) with three of its authors: **Makis Malafekas** [shortlisted 2025, Greece, for his book *Deepfake*], **Lusine Kharatyan** [shortlisted 2023, Armenia, for her book *A Syrian Affair*], and **Anja Mugerli** [Slovenia], who won the 2021 prize for her book *Bee Family*.

Book Generators – The Future of Publishing

With a view to the future, this thematic section touches on issues of artificial intelligence, legislation, rights, translation, and freedom of expression.

Senja Pozar, Editorial Director of the Journal for Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Development (JAISD) and Financial Officer at IRCAL under the auspices of UNESCO at the Jožef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana; **Emilia Diamantopoulou**, Founder of Rhyme&Reason Language Services; and **Panagiotis Kapos**, PhD in Communication, Media, and Culture, HFBC Vice-President, examine the way AI-based research and development affects the future of publishing. The speakers will discuss the opportunities these tools offer for accelerating content creation, supporting authors, developing reading habits in the new generation, and discovering new publishing models, while simultaneously examining issues concerning authorship, intellectual property, transparency, and publishing responsibility.

How can intellectual property be protected and accountability ensured without restricting free expression or publishing independence? **Christina Banou**, Professor (“Book Policy and Publishing”), Department of Archives, Library Science and Museology at the Ionian University; **Jessica Sanger**, Director of European and International Affairs at the German Publishers and Booksellers Association; and **Jose Borghino**, Secretary General of the International Publishers Association, examine the way emerging regulatory frameworks—such as the EU AI Act and related

digital legislation—shape the use of artificial intelligence in the publishing industry. The discussion will highlight the main challenges publishers face when integrating AI, as well as the way the industry can responsibly use these tools while ensuring both intellectual property and the fundamental principles of freedom of expression.

Artificial Intelligence and translation rights from and to smaller languages: Will AI reshape the model and terms of rights sales from and to smaller languages? How are rights contracts changing for file usage and translation? Is there an attempt to bypass the local publisher? How can publishers in smaller languages strengthen and renew their decisive role in the market of translated books? Speakers: **Katerina Fragou**, Literary Agent, founder of Iris Literary Agency; **Gergana Pancheva**, Literary Agent, director of Sofia Literary Agency; and **Giannis Pliotas**, Marketing Director, Dioptra Publications. Moderated by **Michalis Kalamaras**, Publishing Consultant, Thinking; founder of eAnagnostis.gr.

The **fellows** of the professional programme will discuss the application of effective AI practices and the way these can support more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable models in the publishing world. Speakers: **Noor Van Pelt**, Commissioning Editor, HarperCollins, Netherlands; **Costel Postolache**, CEO, Integral Publishers, Romania; and **Eleni Karametaxas**, co-CEO, Helvetiq, Switzerland. Moderation: **Fatimah Abbas**, Publishing Consultant, AI Strategist, and founder of FALA Agency.

Within this framework, the role of independent regional bookstores as cultural spaces will also be discussed. The way provincial bookstores function as hubs for the local community—organizing events, supporting local authors, promoting the culture of reading, and creating spaces for dialogue and communication—will be examined. Speakers: **Evrupidis Konstantinidis**, Bookseller; **Demi Koutsostamati**, Little Bookstores; and representatives of bookstores from Northern Greece.

Photos of the Professional Programme participants can be found [HERE](#).

For the events within the Promotion of Reading Culture theme that underlies the entire programme of this year's TBF, a separate update will follow.

More information and details for the 22nd TBF programme will be announced in the coming days. You can also visit the fair's website <https://www.thessalonikibookfair.gr/>, which, just like the social media managed by HFBC, will be constantly updated and enriched.

The Thessaloniki International Book Fair (TBF) is organized by the Hellenic Foundation for Books and Culture (HFBC) in collaboration with TIF–HELEXPO, Greek publishers, and the Municipality of Thessaloniki, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and the Region of Central Macedonia. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, within the framework of the ROP Central Macedonia 2021-2027. TBF is a member of the International Book Fairs Forum and the European Book Fairs Network ALDUS UP.

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CITY OF
THESSALONIKI

IN COLLABORATION
WITH THE GREEK
PUBLISHERS



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Programme
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