European Writers' Council

Doing the Rights thing since 1977

SUOMEN KIRJAILIJALIITTO | SUOMEN TIETOKIRJAILIJAT RY | Finlands svenska författareförening | sanasto THE FINNISH LITERARY COPYRIGHT SOCIETY

Helsinki, 21st of May 2024

Press Release

European Writers Convene in Helsinki to Address the Threat to Authorship – Representatives from 19 Countries in attendance

From the 24th to the 26th of May 2024 the European Writers' Council (EWC) will invite the Writers' Associations in Europe to gather for their most important annual meeting. This year, Annual General Assembly will be held in Helsinki and it will be hosted by four Finnish organisations representing literary authors – the Union of Finnish Writers, the Association of Finnish Nonfiction Writers, the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland and the Finnish Literary Copyright Society Sanasto.

More than 60 delegates and Board Members from 19 countries representing over 220,000 professional authors in the text/book sector, writing and publishing in 34 languages altogether, will meet in the capital of Finland to discuss hot topics for authors and to network.

– For us, the EWC Annual General Meeting is an important occasion to gather, exchange ideas, and to debate and draw the future strategic guidelines of our advocacy activities for writers and the future of literature. In fact, it is more than a purely professional meeting: it's a way to form a stronger bond, an enhanced sense of solidarity, a clear view of what is important for us as a qualified voice in describing reality, says **Miguel Ángel Serrano**, President of EWC, highlighting the importance of this event.

The agenda of the meeting will cover current issues relevant to the authors and the book industry, such as issues related to open knowledge, changes brought by artificial intelligence and AI regulation, as well as authors' declining income, censorship, and authors' freedom.

– We have always in mind that we have the privilege and obligation to defend freedom of expression, that is at stake in some parts of Europe. We not only champion our economic and legal rights, but also our moral position and most important: democratic values. Helsinki is a fantastic place to do that, Ángel Serrano adds.

Enjoying literature and debating actual threats on authors' profession

On Saturday 25th of May the delegates will join, discuss, and get inspired during the so-called "Burning Issues Forum". Under the tagline "Situation Room: the Threat on Authorship", EWC guest speakers and the participants from its member organisations will debate crucial issues that menace the future of the profession:

1. Artificial Intelligence: The ultimate threat on authors rights and role
2. Censorship and dictatorship: a dire scenario
3. Open knowledge, open wound
4. Writers' income – different story in every country

Speakers are EWC's Board members, representatives of the Finnish host organisations as well as **Minna Ruckenstein**, Professor of Emerging Technologies in Society at the University of Helsinki, multiple award-winning German novelist **Nina George** (also EWC President of Honour), the Belarusian writer and novelist **Barys Piatrovič** (Sačanka), **Jorge Corrales**, the CEO of CEDRO (Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos) and the Finnish writer and journalist **Karo Hämäläinen**.

In addition, the delegates and the Board will review the activities held since June 2023 and discuss the expected actions to be taken in the next period. The event, not open to the public, will conclude on Sunday 26th with the Annual General Assembly, at which the 50th association is expected to become a new member.

The program also includes an International Poetry Event, taking place in the House of Text, and a reception by the City of Helsinki.

Finnish literary organisations welcome their European colleagues to Helsinki.

– We are delighted to host this meeting and strengthen our connections with colleagues across Europe. Authors everywhere share common concerns, particularly those related to artificial intelligence and declining incomes. It will be especially intriguing to learn how these issues affecting authors' work and copyrights are being addressed in other countries, says **Niina Vettensola**, Executive Director of Sanasto, speaking on behalf of all the Finnish co-hosts.

For media inquiries and interview requests, please contact:

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More detailed information about the Burning Issues Forum you can find attached.

Additional information

European Writers' Council

The EWC is the world's only and largest representation of writers in the book sector and of all genres (fiction, non-fiction, academic, children's books, poetry, etc.). With 49 organisations and professional guilds from 31 countries of the EU, the EEA and of non-EU areas, the EWC represents 220.000 writers and translators, writing and publishing altogether in 34 languages. The EWC is the world's leading federation for the defence of book authors' rights since 1977. | europeanwriterscouncil.eu

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THE FINNISH LITERARY COPYRIGHT SOCIETY

Union of Finnish Writers – Suomen Kirjailijaliitto

The Union of Finnish Writers is an ideological and professional organization representing fiction authors writing in Finnish. The organization was founded in 1897 and has now 890 members. Our purpose is to develop and improve the material and non-material conditions of writers' work as well as to promote Finnish literature. Our vision is to ensure a thriving, diverse literature sector in Finland and promote writing as a profession equal to other professions. We work to keep the Union attractive among professional writers and desirable as a cooperation partner. We also work to maintain the Union's reputation as an influential expert consulted in all matters related to writers. | kirjailijaliitto.fi

Association of Finnish Nonfiction Writers – Suomen tietokirjailijat ry

The Association of Finnish Nonfiction Writers is Finland's biggest writer organisation. It is a cultural and professional organisation dedicated to protecting the interests of nonfiction writers. It promotes Finnish nonfiction, protects the copyright and financial interests of its writers, provides support for nonfiction writers and furthers the professional competence and ethics of its members. The Association was founded in 1983, as a joint organisation for writers of nonfiction and text books. It now has over 3,300 members – writers of nonfiction for the general public, text books, articles, etc. | suomentietokirjailijat.fi

Society of Swedish Authors in Finland – Finlands svenska författareförening

The Society of Swedish Authors in Finland is an association for Swedish speaking fiction writers. It was founded in 1919. At the moment it has got around 200 members and hence represents just under 20 per cent of fiction writers in Finland. Its main task is to protect the union interests of its members. It also represents its members in negotiations with the Ministry of Education and Culture, with publishers and other parties. It has actively worked to better copyright legislation, publishing contracts and library grants among other things. Its activity encompasses cultural policy and different literary issues. | forfattarna.fi

Sanasto – Finnish Literary Copyright Society

Sanasto is a Finnish literary copyright society founded in 2005. We represent over 17 000 authors, writers and literary translators. Sanasto manages e.g. the compensations paid for Finnish public library lending and for the use of literary works on Finnish radio and television. Additionally, we provide licenses for the use of literary works and pay the compensation forward to the authors. Influencing decision-makers to improve the status of literary authors and strengthen copyright is a key focus of our work. We engage in social discussion and actively take a stand on legislation that affects the authors. Sanasto does advocacy work both in Finland and at the EU level, for example on behalf of PLR.

Sanasto's member organisations include the Union of Finnish Writers, the Association of Finnish Nonfiction Writers, the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland and the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters. | sanasto.fi