



Joint statement – Brussels, 7th January 2020

The European book sector, represented by the European Writers' Council, the Federation of European Publishers, the European and International Booksellers Federation and the European Council of Literary Translators' Associations, has learnt with consternation of the proposed savings on culture from the Flemish Minister for Culture. Besides a linear cancellation of 6 %, especially the reduction of 60% on the project grants deprives beginning and advanced artists who want to build their narrative about Flanders, Europe and the world. The social benefits and individual emancipation effects of reading need an active reading promotion program with the support of all the actors in the book sector.

Together with our Flemish colleagues and members, EWC, FEP, EIBF and CEATL have been supporting a rich and diverse literary landscape with a wide and inclusive range. The cooperation with the entire cultural sector is paramount, to look beyond policy areas and boundaries and to the support of the artists, in particular the writers, so that they can build their oeuvre and have a decent life.

These reductions affect also the authors who often have incomes deriving from many sources. Literary events' organisers have been reporting for years the lack of indexing of allowances, with a direct negative impact on income and opportunities for contact with readers.

The non-indexing – loss of 3 % - and the striking-out of 6 % of the budget of Literatuur Vlaanderen seems to be compensated by extra money. In fact, it is destined for new missions that serve more the ideological and promotional objectives of the government than the real necessities of the partners in literature for whom the 3 % + 6 % deliveries damage the dynamical development of the literature and Flemish authors, translators and illustrators.

In order to be able to support the existing growth opportunities and necessary dynamics, an adequate financing of the entire cultural and arts sector is essential. We call on the Flemish government to positively address the issue and properly fund culture for its vital role in society.

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