

Brussels, 20.06.2016

**UNESCO WORLD BOOK CAPITAL CITY TO BE APPOINTED ON 22 JUNE 2016
EIBF REITERATES THE NEED OF A FULL RESPECT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

On 22 June, Unesco, with the help of an Advisory Committee composed of the IPA, International Publishers Federation and IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations, will appoint World Book Capital – WBC - 2018.

EIBF (and formerly IBF) was Member of the Selection Committee since 2002 and has taken the decision to step down from its position in the Committee.

“We do feel the need for expressing publicly the reasons for which we cannot support this Prize anymore, at least with the evaluation criteria which are on the table from this year onwards” said Fabian Paagman, EIBF co-President. “EIBF supports the principles outlined under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. EIBF is of the firm view that freedom of expression is a fundamental democratic principle which must be respected in all circumstances. It is the backbone of the publishing and bookselling industries “

Added Françoise Dubruille, EIBF Director: *“I am saddened to have to step down from the WBC selection process and leave my colleagues from IPA and IFLA. Until last year, and for 13 years, our three organisations had very fruitful and passionate discussions around WBC applications from all over the world. With the change of rules currently on the table, which makes our committee an advisory one, EIBF feels that it has not been heard, in spite of its repeated messages since June 2015 and that freedom of expression, of publishing and bookselling is not considered a non-negotiable criterion. For EIBF, the absence of freedom of expression is ipso facto an eliminatory criterion in any WBC application and there is no need to refer to any other form of assessment.”*

Books convey culture and culture empowers citizens. Booksellers stand for diversity of expression so that everyone can be properly educated and informed. Once again, the European and International Booksellers Federation would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its strong belief in and support for freedom of speech, publishing and bookselling.

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