



EIBF adheres to the ‘Make Amazon Pay’ Campaign

The European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF), who speaks on behalf of more than 25,000 individual booksellers of all kinds in Europe and beyond, is proud to join the [‘Make Amazon Pay’](#) campaign, together with a coalition of trade associations and unions from around the globe.

Like every year, from Black Friday up until Cyber Monday, digital giants like Amazon see record-breaking profits soar as they engage in anti-competitive business practices to lure customers towards their online platforms. By engaging in systematic tax avoidance, compounding the climate crisis and undermining labour, privacy and digital rights, Amazon’s business model has proved to be problematic for a wide range of industries, and the book sector is no exception.

Amazon’s sheer size and dominance in the online book market has raised various concerns among booksellers, who regard Amazon as effectively holding a monopoly in the online marketplace. Indeed, if you only have one big retailer on the market like Amazon, the retailer can in turn impose its bargaining, rebate and commercial conditions. In the book trade, this could mean restrictive conditions forced upon publishers, which could lead to less investments in books and thus bring damage to cultural diversity. This would inevitably have a ripple effect on booksellers as the last piece in the book value chain bringing the books to customers.

Amazon has also engaged in business practices aimed at stifling competition, preventing innovation and, ultimately, once more harming consumers. For instance, Amazon’s offer of non-interoperable e-book models doesn’t allow consumers to read the same e-book they’ve purchased from Amazon on different e-reading devices, other than Amazon’s own Kindle. Indeed, tech giants like Amazon have their own e-book file format, which are not interoperable with files and hardware sold by third party businesses, including booksellers.

From a bookseller’s perspective, EIBF President Fabian Paagman details the overarching implications of Amazon’s dominance on smaller businesses:

“In this digital playground, facing the impact of Amazon’s business approach is inevitable. As the largest online bookseller worldwide, they dominate the set of rules by which online bookselling is being conducted. Amazon has been able to thrive due to abusing its sheer size to work around national legislation and the lack of federal (US) and European laws and rules. Amongst others to avoid paying their fair share in taxes and pay lower wages



than in many national book markets so they can operate at lower costs to finance their race to the bottom.

Booksellers have been resilient in the face of many of these challenges. By embracing the opportunities offered by digitization and by offering excellent service, knowledge, serendipity and new ways of promoting books by blending these into hybrid formats, they have ultimately been rewarded by their customers and readers. The race to the bottom is not over yet though, and it still needs to be brought to the attention of policy makers and the public.

That is why we strongly support the Make Amazon Pay campaign.”

With its unfair competitive advantages in many tax jurisdictions, its widescale tax avoidance activities and its monopolistic and anti-competitive behaviour, it is time for Amazon to reassess its modus operandi. We commend the incredible work booksellers across the world are doing to counter the impact of Amazon – but more must be done by the relevant decision-making stakeholders as we must level the playing field for everyone – including the big and powerful.

But we can all be a part of the change in our own way: instead of using online giants such as Amazon for your online holiday purchases, seek out your local bookshop’s online platform and contribute to reinvigorating the social fabric of the communities we cherish for a fairer, more equal world.