

Brussels, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Subject: EIBF condemns the unjust exclusion of bookshops from the German Bookshop Award**

The European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF) strongly supports the German Booksellers and Publisher Association (Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels) in condemning the exclusion of three bookshops from the German Bookshop Award. This decision, made without transparency or due process, undermines the award's integrity and threatens the fundamental values of our industry. Our core concerns regard the following:

- **Lack of fair process:** The bookshops were excluded without being given a chance to respond to allegations, violating basic principles of fairness.
- **Lack of transparency:** The opaque 'Haber' procedure lacks clarity and contestability, eroding trust in the entire award system.
- **Risk to freedom of expression:** Bookshops are essential for cultural diversity and democratic discourse.

Exclusions based on political assumptions — without evidence — threaten these fundamental values.

Booksellers serve the public by making a wide spectrum of ideas, perspectives and debates accessible. Through their freedom to curate and offer diverse catalogues, they contribute to a pluralistic cultural landscape and to a well-informed, intellectually curious society. Such openness to ideas and debate is one of the essential foundations of a healthy democratic culture. The presence of particular titles in a bookshop must therefore be understood as part of this broader mission of providing access to knowledge, debate and literature.

Recognition of a bookshop's cultural achievements should never depend on the possible political orientation of its product range. Therefore, EIBF urges the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media to review his decision and reinstate the Prize laureates immediately, or provide clear, verifiable evidence for the exclusion.



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