



Joint declaration by the European Writers' Council (EWC), the European Booksellers Federation (EBF) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP)

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The European Writers' Council (EWC), the European Booksellers Federation (EBF) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), representing the interests of writers', booksellers' and publishers' national associations across the European Union and the European Economic Area, would like to ask the newly appointed Latvian government to reconsider the position of the previous government and allow books to benefit from a reduced VAT rate on books.

According to the information gathered by the Latvian Booksellers Association, since the VAT increase on books in January 2009, book sales in Latvia have dropped between 29% and 36% in January and February and the forecast for the next months show an even bleaker picture. Some shops reported dramatic decreases of 60% and even 70%.

This is a further evidence that books have no price elasticity and that taxing reading is economically counter-productive, without even mentioning its devastating effects on education and culture.

VAT is an appropriate instrument to stimulate book consumption and to reap the benefits of increased readership.

We therefore strongly recommend that the Latvian government reconsiders its position and allows the book industry to apply the lowest VAT rate possible, as is already the case in 24 of the 27 Member States of the EU.

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