



Press release

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Europe really needs reading – so Read. For Real!

This year's European Authors Day will offer celebrations across Europe thanks to the collaboration of an international consortium of seven partners from five countries supported by Creative Europe.

The consortium, led by the **Universal Reading Foundation** from **Poland**, with partners including the **National Library of Poland**, **Stiftung Lesen** from **Germany**, **CICLIC**, the French public agency for books and images of the **Centre-Val de Loire Region**, the Bulgarian organisation **Chetene**, the Belgian-based **Federation of European Publishers** and the **EURead network**, will run a multi-level strategy to raise readership in Europe and promote European literature, which will be the continuation of the European Authors Day initiated in 2023 by Creative Europe.

Europe really needs reading. 75 million adult Europeans are unable to read with understanding and lack properly developed literacy skills. A large part of the population does not participate in the life of economies and communities due to insufficient reading skills – it is a tremendous loss for them individually and for the societies and democracies as a whole. Reading for pleasure, which is a sign of literacy skills, is at the lowest level since years.

The consortium will be continuing Creative Europe's work around three pillars:

1. Annual celebrations of authors through the pan-European **Read.ForReal campaign**
2. Annual workshops to strengthen reading promotion professionals and their network
3. Annual conferences to create a platform of thought and impact.

The first huge celebration of the European Authors Day will be held during **11 November-12 December** each year. **Meetings with European authors travelling from country to country will take place across Europe. Schools, preschools, libraries and bookstores from all around Europe will be invited to join in with their creativity and unlimited potential.**

More information and details will be published at the end of summer 2025.

#1 Creating the experience

'We have committed to organising author meetings in 40 countries. It's a huge challenge, but we are looking forward to this 'train of authors' from one country to another, as well as to seeing the joy of children and young people that these meetings will bring.' says **Julia Konopka-Żolnierczuk** from the National Library of Poland, who is responsible for organising the events. *'From the beginning, we*

*have liked the idea of the European Authors Day enormously: writers and novelists, illustrators and graphic designers are wonderful people whose talents build our minds and sensibilities. The Federation of European Publishers is delighted to be part of a project that supports the role of creators,' stresses **Anne Bergman-Tahon**, Director of the **Federation of European Publishers**.*

Reading is the future, so read, for real! The #ReadForReal project will draw on the experience of the nationwide #ReadingDad campaign organised by the URF in Poland, the Read-aloud-Day led by Stiftung Lesen in Germany (and more), also relying on an open formula in which anyone can download a poster, inspirational materials from the website and organise their own meetings with guests coming from the broad creative sector.

#ReadForReal is a subversive slogan: underneath the cloak of a certain seriousness lies a strong invitation to multifaceted fun. It emphasises the importance of experiencing literature in a meaningful way – through live encounters with authors – which is especially vital in today's deeply digitised society. The slogan also highlights the urgent need to turn to books in light of alarming statistics around critical thinking competencies. Meeting scenarios will be a part of the offer for educators, librarians and booksellers. *'We have been working this way in France for years and we know that it is a great help and a simple mechanism to simply share and spread the desire to read.'* – emphasises **Annaick Le Ru**, Deputy General Manager, from **Ciclic Centre-Val de-Loire** in France.

#2 Stimulating the expertise

Strengthening European reading promotion leaders' networks during periodic inspiration workshops, is the second pillar of the project. The idea behind the workshops will be to share experiences, co-create new solutions, build a network of mutual support and inspiration, in order to form an international community which, despite its different origins, will share and effectively promote a strongly evidence-based understanding of what reading is to societies. Leadership and substantive team formation is expected to translate into the effectiveness of the other two elements of the strategy.

'Since 2021, we have been working in a workshop format with a number of great Polish organisations as part of the Reading Poland Coalition. As we organise international workshops, we will use this experience, scaling it up to the European level'. - says **Maria Deskur**, CEO of the **Universal Reading Foundation**. *'I am delighted that the workshop will also be held in Sofia and we already invite you to Bulgaria for 2027!'* - adds **Val Stoeva**, from **Chetene**. Meanwhile, in 2026 the workshops for all participating countries will also be held in France.

#3 Building impact

The third strong pillar of the strategy will be the annual international **Literacy for Democracy Conferences** which URF has been organising for 3 years now. *'I attended last year's Literacy for Democracy and Business Conference, and I am delighted that we are all becoming co-organisers of this stimulating event. Intellectual inspiration is important for us, but also for the different participating communities, it shapes our environment, it forms creativity in building influence at state level, but also at European level. And that's what it's all about - we want to have an impact, and to show that investment in reading is not only wildly profitable but, also necessary.'* - emphasises Dr. **Joerg F. Maas**, CEO of **Stiftung Lesen** and long-standing chair of **EURead**.

The vision

Offering the experience of reading REAL books for fun, introducing up-to-date most trendy topics for REAL conversations around books, stimulating pleasure in REAL time around books, treating a conversation with a REAL author or creator as a formative experience - is the vision for #ReadForReal: beyond nationality, latitude, political, social, religious or wealth backgrounds.

European surveys show varying results for reading. Unfortunately, the level of readership in Europe stands at just over 50%. Only 26.8% of citizens read more than five books per year, while just 13.8% read more than ten. Statistically, women read more than men, but the data still leaves much room for improvement. Nevertheless, these statistics are deeply concerning, as they are likely to have tangible consequences for education, the economy, the labour market, and even public health. **Research proves reading to be a factor for development and innovation, a binder of civilisation, social capital and democracy.** The consortium dreams to make a positive impact on the European reading landscape. Promotion on traditional media and social platforms will help reach the aim.

‘Be the change you wish to see in the world – as Mahatma Ghandi said – is probably the best description of what we want to do together with hundreds of thousands of educators, librarians, booksellers across Europe – we are all in this together and each one of us can have impact. Our dream is that everyone feels invited to join and have fun while we #ReadForReal!’ – the Consortium members conclude.

Instagram : [@read.forreal](https://www.instagram.com/read.forreal)

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