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European Writers' Council: Authors' Rights are fundamental for culture, freedom of expression and a diverse Europe

The new elected Board of the European Writers' Council (EWC) sets its agenda: to strengthen the moral and economic rights of authors and keeping the diversity of literature alive, the most powerful and independent instrument of democracy

Nina George, international best-selling author from *Germany*, has been elected as President of the EWC at its general assembly in Riga, Latvia. The Vice-President is **Daniel Cristea-Enache** (*Romania*), Director of Communications at the Writers' Union of Romania and Associate Professor in the Department of Literary Studies at the University of Bucharest. The new elected board includes Poet **Ružica Cindori**, Secretary General of the *Croatian Writers' Association*, Non-fiction writer **Markku Löytönen**, Professor of human geography at the University of Helsinki (*Finland*), and **Alena Makouskaya**, Director of the Civil society organization "Homeland", and member of the Secretariat of the Union of the *Belarusian Writers*.

Representing professional writers and translators from 27 countries and 43 associations, the EWC defends and encourages the interests of 150,000 authors in the book and fiction creative industry, writing in 31 languages.

The new EWC-Board sets its agenda on three major tasks:

- Protecting the authors' moral and economic rights in the digital era
- Promoting the values of Literature, to transfer knowledge, independent opinions and cultural narratives not only to the next generations
- Defending the freedom of expression, to stand for the values of a democratic, pluralistic and diverse Europe

Integer societies need a diverse culture and protected authors' rights

«The digital era is a challenge for protecting authors' rights and empowering the voice of writers and translators in the level-playing field», says **Nina George**, President of the European Writers' Council, on the upcoming challenges for the new EWC-board.

«Digitization, biotechnology, AI and robotics have also changed the communication, the cultural consumption, the common views on legal issues like ownership and responsibility.

The post-factual-era and politic-hacks have their impact on the upturn in the right-wing parties throughout the Union. In order to cope with these developments, which bring about technological, political, legal, ethical and economic upheavals, Europe needs visions and concepts for an inclusive and integer society. The EWC could be the ideal think-tank.»

Vice-President **Daniel Cristea-Enache** confirms the meaning of EWC: «The European Writers' Council stands for a united Europe, for the ideal of diversity, for independent literature, as well as for a wide range of culture and art. EWC, a federation which brings together the

individualists, also represents individualism within a pluralist community. As it is widely acknowledged, each writer creates a personal, unique fictional world. Therefore, let us share the large-scale literary system of meaning and value, of forms and significance. Above all, we will endeavour to support and defend the writers' and translators' rights.»

Defending the food chain of literature – not only in the European Union

«The 'information food chain' starting with those producing and providing – be it literature, articles, e-media, or something else – must be kept alive and flourishing», Finnish non-fiction writer **Markku Löytönen** points out clearly. «The starting point i.e. the author, is often the weakest element in this chain and should be protected through legislation and international agreements. If authors are left alone with no proper compensation, soon there will be no food chain to provide readers, teachers, students, or decision makers. If you think that facts and information are expensive, try ignorance!»

Poet **Ružica Cindori** from Croatia sees the upcoming chances also in collaboration: «The European Writers' Council raises the public awareness on the importance of the respect for copyright and the problems within the book chain that affect not only writers but also publishers, booksellers, translators», she said. «It is my belief that these problems should be solved foremost at the European level and in European institutions. In this context the voice of the EWC is of crucial importance. It is also my opinion that we should extend our help to the writers from countries that are still not members of the EU with the aim of respecting their authors' rights and increasing the creative freedoms. Together we are stronger!»

Creative freedoms are based also on freedom of expression

Alena Makouskaya, Director of the Civil society organization «Homeland» from Belarus, stresses the importance of freedom of expression: «The purposes which the European Writers' Council pursues in its activity are very important to me, among which the most significant one is the protection of freedom of expression. There are still cultural organizations in Europe that are faced with censorship, limitations and violations of the rights of its members. It is especially actual for some countries of Eastern Europe. I hope that EWC maintains an active communication with democratic cultural organizations of this region as they are a very important component of the development of the region and its safety. I would like very much for the European Writers' Council to increase its potential in this direction.»

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About the European Writers' Council

Representing professional writers and translators from 27 countries and 43 associations, the EWC defends and encourages the interests of 150,000 authors in the book and fiction creative industry, writing in 31 languages. Safeguarding the professional interests of authors (copyright, authors' rights, social, economic rights, droit moral, contract law, equitable remuneration etc.) in the book and text-sectors; freedom of expression; cultural policy and networking in Europe.

<http://europeanwriterscouncil.eu>