

# European book market 2022

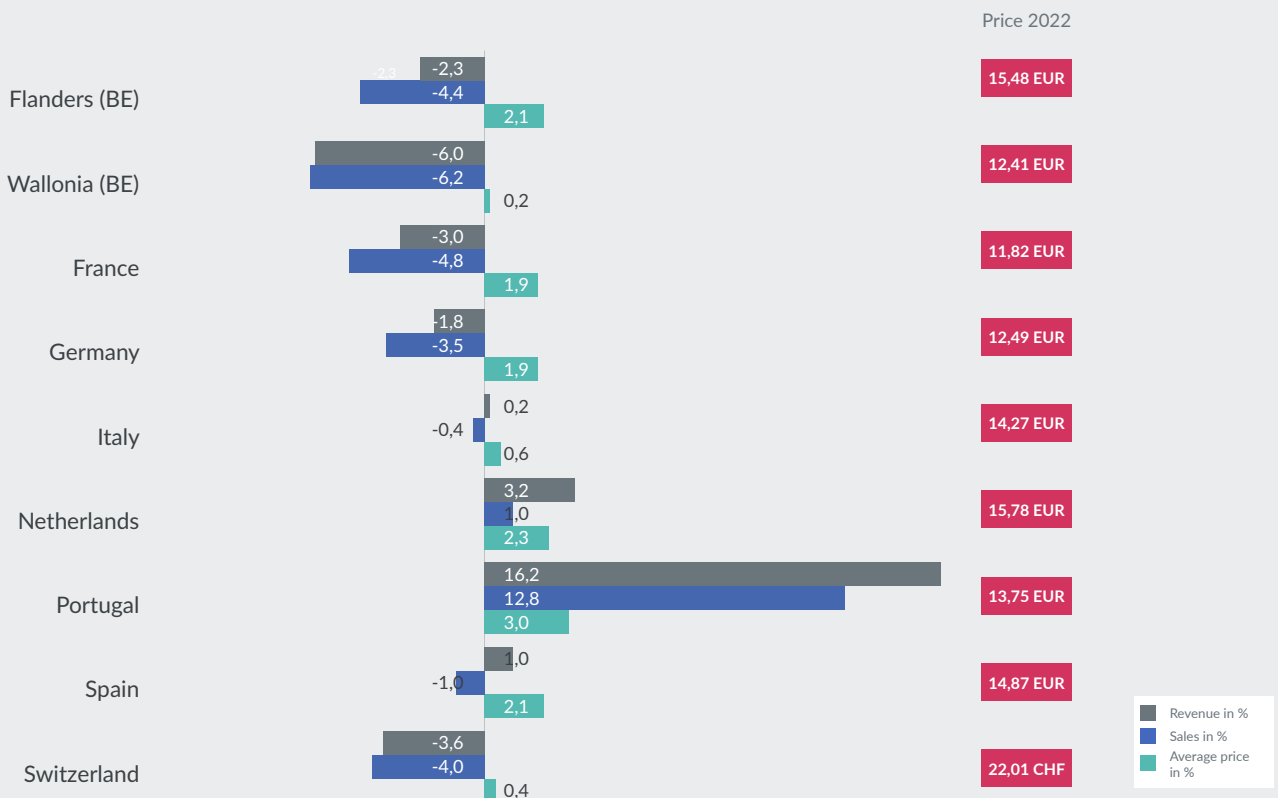


# European book market: rising prices, falling sales and booming travel guides

Rising prices can only partially compensate for falling sales in many places on the European book market. This was revealed by a special survey covering seven countries carried out for the past year by GfK Entertainment. In Germany, for example, books cost 1.9 percent more but 3.5 percent fewer titles were sold, meaning that sales also declined by 1.8 percent. The situation was similar in 2022 in neighbouring France, where average prices, which also rose

by 1.9 percent, were unable to compensate for the drop in sales (-4.8 percent), resulting in the market closing the year with a 3.0 percent loss in revenue. In Switzerland (-3.6 percent) and the Belgian regions of Flanders (-2.3 percent) and Wallonia (-6.0 percent), revenues were also down significantly.

## Book market development 2022



## Netherlands and Spain post the strongest results in years

Although the Spanish book market recorded a 1.0 percent decline in sales in 2022, revenues rose by 1.0 percent, ensuring the strongest sales figures since the launch of the GfK Book Panel in 2011. The Netherlands even notched up the best returns since 2006 with very respectable revenue growth of 3.2 percent. Portugal reported strong growth too (+16.2 percent), whereas Italy was only just in positive territory (+0.2 percent).

Compared with the pre-pandemic year 2019, 2022 saw double-digit growth in many countries, with rates exceeding 18 percent in Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, for example. In Germany, on the other hand, sales posted negative growth (-1.4 percent). However, if the figures for digital audio books and streaming subscriptions from the GfK Consumer Panel, which incorporates the data for physical book and audio book sales as well as e-books, are added, this provides a picture of total retail sales and shows that the book market grew there too (+2.6 percent).

## High demand for travel guides, mangas and English-language books

After a two-year break due to the pandemic, many people were once again gripped by the travel bug in 2022. This was evidenced by sales of travel guides, which went up by at least 30 percent in all the countries surveyed. Interest was particularly high among Portuguese and Swiss holidaymakers (+84.5 percent and +73.2 percent respectively).

Mangas/Manhwas continued their upward trend from previous years, with an impressive 6.3 percent rise in France, 13.0 percent in Switzerland and 8.2 percent in Italy. The growth in revenue of English-language literature was in many cases even higher – a real boom by any measure. The increases ranged from +3.8 percent in Spain and +20.1 percent in the Netherlands to +75.0 percent in Wallonia.

## Fiction performed better than non-fiction

Overall, fiction came through the past year much better than non-fiction, and this is also reflected in the top titles for 2022: in addition to novels, such as

Delia Owen's *The Song of the Crayfish* and thrillers, like Joël Dicker's *The Alaska Sanders Affair*, the New Adult segment in particular saw a rise in popularity. Among others, mention may be made here of Erin Doom's *Fabbricante di lacrime*, which, like a growing number of bestsellers, became known via the Wattpad and BooTok communities.

Other recurring themes on the book market were Russia (e.g., Giuliano da Empoli's novel *Le Mage du Kremlin (The Magician in the Kremlin)* and Sergueï Jirnov's KGB report *L'éclaireur*), the climate crisis (e.g., Jean-Marc Jancovici's comic *World Without End* and the French-language non-fiction book *Climat, crises* by the French think tank The Shift Project) and lifestyle guides (e.g., James Clear's *Atomic Habits*).

## Topseller per country

Flanders (BE)	Merho <i>Dood wakker worden</i>
Wallonia (BE)	Joël Dicker <i>L'affaire Alaska Sanders/The Alaska Sanders Affair</i>
France	Jean-Marc Jancovici <i>Le Monde sans fin/World Without End</i>
Italy	Erin Doom <i>Fabbricante di lacrime</i>
Netherlands	Delia Owens <i>Daar waar de rivierkreeften zingen/Where the Crawdads Sing</i>
Portugal	José Rodrigues dos Santos <i>A Mulher do Dragão Vermelho</i>
Spain	Marian Rojas Estapé <i>Cómo hacer que te pasen cosas buenas/How to Make Good Things Happen</i>
Switzerland	Delia Owens <i>Der Gesang der Flusskrebse/Where the Crawdads Sing</i>

# About the study

The analysis is based on the physical book market figures for 2022, including eBooks (where available), using data from the retail panels in Belgium (Flanders/Wallonia), France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland and on the GfK Consumer Panel for Germany, in each case excluding subscriptions and downloads.

The results, together with the press release and additional information, can be downloaded at [www.gfk-entertainment.com](http://www.gfk-entertainment.com).

If you would like further data or information, please contact Senta Wolf at [senta.wolf@gfk.com](mailto:senta.wolf@gfk.com).