

Press release

European book market returning to normal after a bumpy few years

As an exclusive special analysis by GfK Entertainment for the first three quarters of 2022 shows, book sales in Europe were still buoyant or largely back to normal, compared to the pre-pandemic period.

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Baden-Baden, October 19, 2022. - In the first three quarters of 2022, the European book market recorded lower growth in many places and even posted reduced turnover in some cases. However, compared to the pre-pandemic period sales were still buoyant or largely back to normal. This emerges from an exclusive special analysis covering eight countries conducted by GfK Entertainment in the run-up to this year's Frankfurt Book Fair. The data show that, after a successful but turbulent previous year that saw the lifting of many lockdown restrictions, significant falls were reported by France (-3.7 per cent), Switzerland (-1.8 per cent) and the Belgian region of Flanders (-4.0 per cent), for example. However, if revenues are compared with the pre-coronavirus year 2019, strong growth continues to be achieved in France (+14.7 per cent), Switzerland (+6.5 per cent) and Flanders (+12.1 per cent).

- **Average prices show no clear trend**

In Portugal (+22.4 per cent), the Netherlands (+3.4 per cent) and Spain (+2.5 per cent), book sales again rose between January and September 2022 compared to the same period last year. The number sold was also up but by not quite as much. However, no clear trend can be identified as far as average prices are concerned: while titles became more expensive in Spain (+1.4 per cent) and the Netherlands (+1.6 per cent), prices fell in Switzerland (-0.4 per cent) and Portugal (-3.6 per cent), for example.

- **Non-fiction down but big demand for books on Russia**

Fiction has done comparatively well so far this year and is in positive territory in six out of the eight countries surveyed, with particularly notable developments in Italy (+10.9 per cent) and Portugal (+31.5 per cent). The most popular novels of the past nine months have included Joël Dicker's *The Alaska Sanders Affair*, Delia Owen's *Where the Crawdads Sing* and Isabel Allende's *Violeta*. The non-fiction sector, on the other hand, has struggled and only recorded gains in two countries, namely the Netherlands (+1.9 per cent) and Portugal (+13.1 per cent). There was, however, increased interest in non-fiction books on Russia. For example, José Milhazes' *Mais Breve História da Rússia* is the best-selling non-fiction title in Portugal in 2022, and Sergueï Jirnov's KGB insider report *L'éclaircur* (second place in Wallonia), Anna Politkovskaya's *Putin's Russia* (fourth in

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Italy), which was published in 2005, and Catherine Belton's *Putin's Web* (tenth in Switzerland) are also among the bestsellers.

- **The comics boom continues unabated**

While developments in the European children's and young adult book market vary considerably (from -9.5 per cent in France to +2.9 per cent in the Netherlands), interest in another product group, namely comics, has not waned. Thanks to the continued very good performance of mangas/manhwas, this market saw double-digit increases in Switzerland (+14.4 per cent) and Spain (+19.7 per cent), for example. In France, comics were even the segment with the highest growth rate.

About the survey

The survey was based on the physical book market figures for the first three quarters of 2022 provided by the trade panels for Belgium (Flanders/Wallonia), France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

If you would like any further information, please contact senta.wolf@gfk.com.

About GfK Entertainment

GfK Entertainment is an official charts and market research data supplier to the Books, Games, Music and Video industries. The company works closely with all industry trade bodies and is currently active in over 30 countries supplying official charts, tailor-made sales-, market- and product data analysis reports to content holders, retailers and trade body groups for all products, physical, digital and social media related in the entertainment sector.

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