

# Press release

## International book market: first half results between double-digit losses and positive signs

**Baden-Baden, July 30, 2020 - A special survey carried out by GfK Entertainment revealed that in many regions, the drop in sales was in double figures. Nonetheless, sales have gone up significantly since the easing of the coronavirus lockdown measures.**

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The international book markets ended the first six months of 2020 with a significant downturn in many places due to the coronavirus pandemic. This was revealed by a special survey carried out by GfK Entertainment for seven European countries plus Brazil. In most of the regions surveyed, the drop in sales was in double figures, for example in Italy (minus 10.1%), Brazil (minus 12.8%), France (minus 15.4%) and Spain (minus 18.4%). In Portugal, revenues even fell by nearly a third (minus 28.3%) compared with the same period last year. By contrast, the losses in Switzerland were comparatively small (minus 4.4%), while in Belgium's Flanders region and in the Netherlands growth of 1.6% and 4.2% respectively was generated despite temporary losses.

### **Solid sales before the coronavirus outbreak**

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the physical book markets recorded either solid sales figures (Portugal: plus 1%; Spain: plus 3.0%) or only a slight downturn (Italy: minus 0.3%). However, the lockdown and closure of many businesses resulted in sales falling by almost two-thirds in Portugal, a half in Spain or a third in Italy, and the online trade was unable to compensate for these losses. Nonetheless, sales have gone up significantly since the easing of the lockdown measures and the fact that books can once again be bought in bricks-and-mortar stores. For example, growth rates have risen to 13.5% in Italy in the past few weeks, but Brazil, which is still in the throes of the pandemic, has recorded a fall of 25.9% since the start of the lockdown.

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### **Sales of E-books and home-learning books up during the lockdown**

The few genres that recorded increased sales during the corona crisis include home-learning books, which were very much in demand in France (a rise of 62%) and Spain (plus 134%). There was also stronger demand for E-books, sales of which tripled in Spain. After the end of the lockdown, fiction and children's books were particularly popular. In France, for example, sales of contemporary literature shot up by 32%, children's and youth books by 27% and comics and mangas by 25%.

### **National authors and biographies still popular**

The half-yearly bestseller lists are generally headed by local authors, such as Guillaume Musso, Raul Minh'alma or Juan Gómez-Jurado. Biographies like Michelle Obama's "Becoming" and Woody Allen's "Apropos of Nothing" are still popular and ranked fourth in France and Italy. Mark Manson's "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck" topped the lists in Portugal and Brazil, and sales of Yuval Noah Harari's long seller "A Brief History of Humankind" are going strong in Switzerland and Spain.

The basis of the survey was physical sales for the first six months of 2020 compared to last year in the following countries: Belgium (Flanders/Wallonia), France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

If you would like further information or are interested in receiving the complete survey, please contact Senta Wolf at [senta.wolf@gfk.com](mailto:senta.wolf@gfk.com).

### **About GfK Entertainment**

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