

RISE READING PROMOTION TOOLKIT

POLICY NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The latest PISA and PIRLS studies confirm a critical trend: **children's reading and literacy competences are declining across Europe**. Without urgent action, we risk leaving a whole generation ill-equipped to think critically, contribute to the workforce, or engage in democracy. For future generations to grow into curious, informed and resilient individuals, books must remain visible, accessible and valued throughout society.

Booksellers, in their multifaceted role as retailers, cultural facilitators, educators, and community builders, are uniquely positioned to foster the joy of reading and remove

barriers. Alongside the broader reading promotion ecosystem, they are working to reverse this trend, but **targeted policies at national and European levels are essential to address declining levels of reading proficiency and strengthen reading culture**.

The RISE Reading Promotion Toolkit, by the European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF), outlines concise recommendations for policymakers to address declining reading proficiency and enjoyment, and to strengthen booksellers and the children's reading ecosystem.

RECOGNISE BOOKSELLERS AS LITERACY & CULTURAL ACTORS

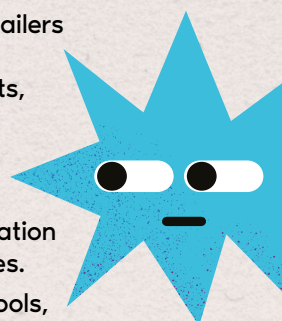
Policy makers at National and European Level:

Recognise the vital role booksellers play as providers of third spaces, facilitators of community building, and active promoters of literacy and reading.

Acknowledge the alignment of booksellers as cultural, literacy, and education stakeholders with a broad range of European frameworks, including those addressing Culture, Youth, Education, Equality, Diversity, and Democracy.

Culture and Education Stakeholders at National and European Level:

- Recognise booksellers as stakeholders in culture and education in their dual role as retailers and cultural actors.
- Ensure that funding schemes recognise the dual role of bookshops as both commercial retailers and cultural actors, and are open to bookseller participation in schemes targeting reading promotion for young people – with proportionate eligibility criteria, application requirements, and administrative procedures that reflect this dual identity.
- Include booksellers in national culture passes/vouchers and related schemes, ensure that books are eligible cultural products within these schemes.
- Systematically involve booksellers alongside schools and libraries in the design, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive national reading promotion strategies and literacy policies.
- Foster & incentivise partnerships across the reading ecosystem (including booksellers, schools, libraries, literacy organisations and community organisations) through dedicated funding opportunities.



STRENGTHEN BOOKSELLERS THROUGH DIRECT SUPPORTING MEASURES & SUSTAINABLE MARKET CONDITIONS

National Level:

- Reduced or zero VAT rates on books are an essential tool to directly support booksellers and readers.
 - Contributes to maintaining the affordability of books for families and sustains bookshops as accessible points of contact between children and books.
- Ensure that the procurement of books by schools, libraries and public institutions through local booksellers is both possible and incentivised, so that public spending supports local cultural and literacy ecosystems.
- Establish or expand book gifting schemes that channel public investment in reading directly through local booksellers, ensuring children's access to books while strengthening local cultural infrastructure.

European Level:

- Encourage Member States to introduce or expand book gifting schemes through EU literacy and childhood education policy frameworks, and support the exchange of good practice across national contexts.
- Encourage Member States to introduce or expand national culture passes/vouchers and related schemes, ensuring that books are eligible cultural products within these schemes. Additionally, support the exchange of good practice across national contexts.



SAFEGUARD CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO BOOKS

National Level:

- Establish and fund mechanisms that safeguard children's access to diverse, inclusive, multilingual, and representative literature, including through public procurement, library partnerships, and school reading programmes.
- Introduce cultural heritage designations, emergency support mechanisms, and formal inclusion of independent bookshops in education and culture policy frameworks, recognising their role as frontline defenders of young people's access to diverse books.

European Level:

- Develop a shared framework for monitoring and promoting children's access to diverse literature across member states, with particular attention to multilingual and underrepresented communities.
- Fund exchange programmes and capacity-building initiatives that strengthen booksellers' ability to counter restrictive policies, including book banning and other threats to freedom of expression and cultural diversity.
- Create dedicated funding streams – for instance through Creative Europe or equivalent programmes – and ensure that independent bookshops are recognised as eligible cultural actors within broader EU culture and education policy coalitions.



**Find out more in the
RISE Reading Promotion Toolkit!**

About RISE Bookselling

Resilience, Innovation and Sustainability for the Enhancement of Bookselling' (RISE Bookselling), is an EU co-funded programme run by the European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF) for its network members, aimed at upscaling, reinforcing and maximising the capacity and resilience of the European bookselling sector.

About EIBF

The European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF) is a non-commercial European and international umbrella organisation representing national booksellers associations and booksellers across Europe and worldwide. Our mission is to represent our members and their interests on a global platform, as well as to provide a forum for cooperation and foster the exchange of best practices.