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FEP GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Report from Ireland

Ireland Keypoint Summary

- 1. Trade Statistics**
- 2. Copyright**
- 3. Projects and Services**
- 4. Governance**

Trade Statistics

The Irish Consumer Market (ICM) has seen sales to the end of April of €27.6m. This figure is down 4.5% on last year and up by 0.4% (2.5m units). Non-Fiction has continued to in go down in both value (10.5%) to €13.4m and volume (8.9%) to 918.4k. Children's has grown by 2.4% to €6.9m (up 6.0% in volume to 859.3k), with Fiction up 1.4% to €7.2m and 6.9% to 700.7k. Fiction for both children and adults fill the top titles in Ireland year-to-date.

Funding Concerns

Publishing Ireland ran a survey in 2016 and included questions specifically targeted at those members who did or did not receive funding from the Arts Council. Less than half of the respondents (which represent a large amount of small, independent publishers)

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received such funding and for those that did, this funding had seen a sharp decline since 2015.

Copyright: Changes to Cabinet

The proposed private members Copyright & Related Rights (Innovation) (Amendment) Bill 2015¹ which was based on the draft bill in the Copyright Review Committee's report "Modernising Copyright" did not pass through the senate and the situation remains extremely vague on foot of the recent cabinet reshuffle and appointment of a new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. The shifts in cabinet will, however, likely mean that any mooted copyright legislation will for the time being at least, be tabled.

Changes worth noting in Varadkar's new cabinet include the new Minister for of Jobs, Innovation and Enterprise, former Justice Minister Frances Fitzgerald and the re-merging of the departments of Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform. Heather Humphreys has been retained as Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with the additions of Regional and Rural Affairs. It is as of yet unclear what these additions will mean in terms of national arts policy. There have been rumours of the creation of a so-called 'Department of Culture, however, it seems that little has been substantively changed in the government's attitude towards the arts with the only tangible commitment from Humphreys being a framework document entitled [Culture 2025](#) outlining a strategic plan for culture over the coming years.

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MEP Representation

Levels of engagement at EU level continue to be disappointing with the continued absence of Brian Crowley from plenary meetings. This, in addition to the loss of Seán Kelly from JURI has decreased again windows of opportunity for lobbying at this level.

Projects and Services: Training

PI has increased its training activities in partnership with affiliate organisations to include public outreach programmes such as The Life Cycle of the Book series. This series involved 4 weeks of public talks to both publishers and authors on the processes and challenges of writing and publishing, having received support from the recently-formed umbrella organisation Words Ireland to help bridge the gap between author and publisher. The series was highly successful and will likely feature as a regular fixture in our programme going forward. PI also ran an academic training session in late February joining together national and international academic publishers on a panel to advise both authors and publishers in going forward with monograph and PHD publishing.

Dublin Book Festival Trade Event

PI held its sixth annual trade event as part of the Dublin Book Festival which included Philip Jones of The Bookseller as keynote speaker. The event was again very well-attended and provided a good opportunity for Irish publishers to meet. 2017 will host James Daunt of Waterstones as Keynote speaker and will also feature speakers from Booksellers Ireland and Publishing Scotland.

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The Dublin Book Festival is currently undergoing review as to its ongoing administration and management. Having been under the auspices of Dublin City Libraries for the last couple of years, there are tentative plans to return the festival to its original management under Publishing Ireland. The newly-constituted board of PI will, over the coming months work to investigate the viability of taking back the fair in the interests of an Irish trade focus for same.

Independent Bookshop Week: Shopfloor Project 2017

This year as part of Independent Bookshop Week, several of our publisher members will promote events in local bookshops by working in selected stores for a day. These members include both the current and outgoing president of PI and will hopefully provide some much-needed impetus in Ireland for the week. There will also be several authors taking part in readings and events in shops around the country including Donal Ryan- winner of the 2015 EUPL prize.

Frankfurt Book Fair 2017

PI's 'hot desk' arrangement at both London and Frankfurt continue to grow in popularity with our members whereby our smaller members (and indeed larger, non-fiction members) may avail of shorter time slots and cheaper rates to hold their meetings. This option is not currently available on the Irish stand as a whole and offers non-fiction publishers a tangible option to attend the fairs. As a result of this arrangement, there has been an increasing presence of non-fiction publishing on the stand which has balanced out a hitherto literary focus from publishers given access to the stand to exhibit.

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Governance: Board of Publishing Ireland

On foot of PI's AGM which was held in May, the board is now reconstituted with Ronan Colgan of The History Press expected to take over from outgoing President Ruth Hegarty (Royal Irish Academy). The position of Vice President will be filled by Ivan O'Brien (O'Brien Press).

Code of Practice for Illustrators

As part of Publishing Ireland's continuing efforts to expand its procedure regarding author complaints and membership communication, we have established a new code of practice to which we expect our publisher members and associate members to adhere on joining the association. We have also this year developed a working template on a code of practice for publishers working with illustrators on foot of some controversy experienced by one of our members dealing with difficulties earlier in the year. This code is intended to provide guidance to publishers unsure of how to navigate the trickier and more controversial aspects of working with illustrated books. PI has also continued to develop procedural guidelines in dealing with author complaints about member and non-member publishers. We have worked extensively with both the Irish Writers Union and with Publishing Scotland to develop a working document detailing best practice in this area. This year, as mentioned above, PI also partnered with the Irish Writers Centre in developing the Life Cycle of the Book series.