

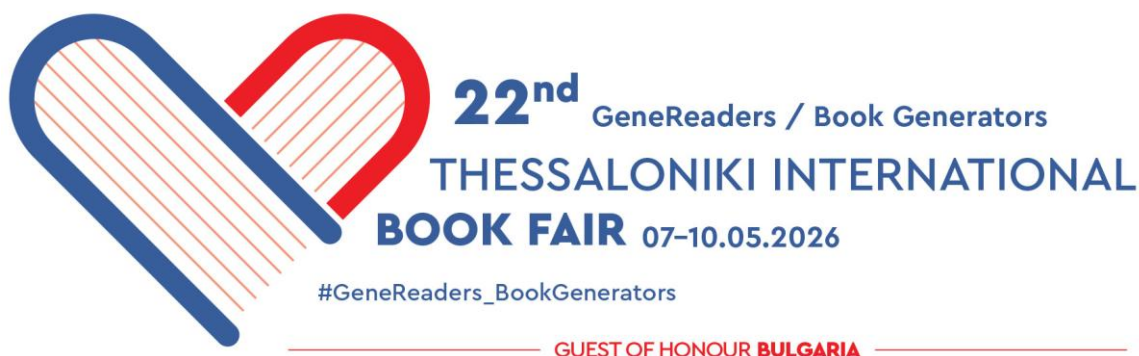


HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Culture

HFBC HELLENIC
FOUNDATION
FOR BOOKS
AND CULTURE

TBF / THESSALONIKI
INTERNATIONAL
BOOK FAIR

PRESS RELEASE
22nd Thessaloniki International Book Fair
May 7-10, 2026
Guest of Honour: Bulgaria
A first "reading" of this year's fair!



The **22nd Thessaloniki International Book Fair** will take place from Thursday, **May 7, to Sunday, May 10, 2026**, at the TIF-HELEXPO International Exhibition and Congress Center.

This marks the second year the event is organized by the **Hellenic Foundation for Books and Culture (HFBC)**, established in 2024. TBF is one of the most important pillars in a series of HFBC actions and programmes that now extend throughout the year, both within Greece and abroad.

Bulgaria is the Guest of Honour for 2026.

This year's theme is: **Generation of Readers / Book Generators (GeneReaders_BookGenerators)** and is linked to the **Year of Reading Culture** declared by the HFBC for 2026-27, with actions across Greece. This year's fair will feature **318 exhibitors** (publishers and institutions), with **30 publishing houses** participating for the first time. **330 events for adults will be held**, starting as early as the morning of Thursday, May 7. **25 foreign authors** are coming to Thessaloniki, while **40 distinguished professionals** from major global publishing houses are participating in the **Fellowship Programme**. The **Professional Programme** will include **8 prominent representatives of international organizations and ministries** and **3 authors** associated with the **European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL)**. There are **106 events for children and young adults**, organized by **40 publishing houses and 17 educational & cultural organizations**. The fair will welcome **more than 50 organized school groups from kindergartens, elementary, middle, and high schools** from Thessaloniki and neighboring prefectures, with **approximately 2,500 students participating** in coordinated events. Additionally, **more student groups** will visit the Fair for tours independently of the scheduled events.

Key Themes of the 22nd TBF:

TBF focuses on reading culture promotion while exploring how the new **GeneReaders / Generation of Readers** is cultivated. This theme permeates the entire TBF program. At the same time, starting from reading culture promotion, specifically in the Professional Programme, we will have the opportunity to delve into the following thematic axes: **The future of publishing and bookstores, International publishing markets: the Spanish phenomenon, Small languages / Great literatures, Books & Media, and Rights Market and Sales: literary agents and international trends.**

Professional Programme

HFBC has prepared a programme featuring exciting, original topics and dialogue with some of the most important and innovative names in the international professional book industry.

Lisa Keil, Project Manager for Volunteering at Stiftung Lesen (a non-profit organization in Germany promoting reading and literacy) and **Miha Kovač**, professor at the University of Ljubljana, will present research and reading promotion tactics in Germany and Slovenia.

The **EURead “Investing in Reading”** roundtable, organized by “**Diavazontas Megalono**” (“**By Reading I Grow**”) will feature **Valentina Stoeva** [President of the **EURead** network promoting reading and literacy in Europe] and **Lovisa Fhager Logothetis** [Secretary General of the **Bonnier Family Foundation**, which implements programmes to promote reading among minors].

Senja Požar [Managing Editor of the Journal for Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Development (JAISD) and Financial Officer at IRCAL under UNESCO at the Jožef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana] will present research on Artificial Intelligence, and Dr. **Jessica Sängner** [Director of European and International Affairs at the **German Publishers and Booksellers Association**] with **José Borghino** [Secretary General of the **International Publishers Association**] will discuss the challenges of freedom of expression and the new AI legislative framework.

José Manuel Anta [Managing Director of the **Spanish Federation of Book Publishers**] will speak on the “**Spanish Phenomenon**”. Specifically, he explores how the Spanish publishing industry has maintained a steady upward trend and rapid growth over the last decade compared to other European markets, thanks to the global Spanish-speaking audience, exports, and a strong domestic book culture. Also, **Jesús González González** [Deputy Director General for the Promotion of Books, Reading, and Spanish Literature at the Spanish **Ministry of Culture**] will discuss translation funding tools for the Spanish language.

The European Union Prize for Literature (**EUPL**) will host a roundtable with three of its authors: **Makis Malafekas** [Greece], **Lusine Kharatyan** [Armenia], and **Anja Mugerli** [Slovenia], who won the 2021 prize. It will be moderated by **Anne Bergman-Tahon** (Director of the Federation of European Publishers). The **Greek section of IBBY – Circle of the Greek Children's Book** will hold a roundtable on children's books and the book as an object of memory and identity, while **Book Press – Network of 8** is organizing a discussion for librarians on the role of children's libraries in creating readers.

Panels will be held on the success of the TikTok community, BookTok, as well as the relationship between literature and sports, cinema, and music.

Guest representatives of bookstores from Northern Greece will also participate in the programme to discuss the challenges facing regional bookstores.

Book professionals visiting the fair as part of the fellowship programme will participate in three panels focusing on international book markets and applied AI practices.

In addition, representatives of the publishing sector of the Guest of Honour country will present elements of their publishing industry to the Greek public and discuss the challenges and opportunities for their literature in Greek.

Fellowship Programme

In its fourth year, the popular fellowship program at the “Dialogue” Rights Center received 191 applications from 61 countries. **20 professionals from 15 countries** (Armenia, Romania, Poland, Egypt, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Netherlands, Turkey, Germany, France, Brazil, Italy, Spain, UK, USA) **were selected by HFBC and publishers' associations. Ten additional professionals will represent the Guest of Honour country, while another ten book professionals have registered independently for the program.** More than 20 events will take place in total.

This year there is an increased number of applications from the UK, Italy (Guest of Honor in 2025), Spain, Turkey, and India. The participation of major publishing houses is also worth highlighting, such as **Farrar, Straus and Giroux (US), Penguin Random House UK, Grupo Planeta (Spain), Mondadori Group (Italy), Editions Gallimard (France), Harper Collins (Holland), etc.**

Authors from Around the World

Thessaloniki becomes a meeting point for Greek and foreign authors, illustrators, and translators. Among the visitors from abroad, we will have the opportunity to meet **Christopher King**, award-winning author of the popular book *Lament from Epirus* (Doma Books) on the occasion of his new book's release. **Vanessa Springora**, who recently visited Athens for her high-profile book *Consent* (Metronomos Editions). **Dominic Amerena**, one of the promising new voices in Australian literature, who will present his award-winning debut *I Want It All* (Gennitria Editions). International Cuban poet **Víctor Rodríguez Núñez**, being translated for the first time into Greek (Eirini Publications). Icelandic poet **Haukur Ingvarsson** (Saixpirikon Editions) or Palestinian poet **Najwan Darwish**, who will present the bilingual edition of his book *Every Time I Approach a Storm* (Kyverti Editions). Iranian-Swedish author **Athena Farrokhzad** and Greek-Swedish translator and author **Antonis Bogadakis** (Thrace Books).

Dato Magradze from Georgia will present his poetry collection *The Fertile Land* (Entypois Editions), while **Virgjil Muçi**, one of Albania's most dynamic literary voices, will introduce us to the *Princess of the Moon* (Eurasia Books). Present at the fair will also be **Haydar**

Ergülen (Govostis Publishing), one of the most important poets of the new generation of contemporary Turkish literature.

Tudor Dinu, Professor of Neohellenic Studies at the University of Bucharest (Akritas Publishing), comes to Thessaloniki as a guest of the Romanian Ministry of Culture; Slovenian academic and author **Miha Kovač** presents his essay *I Read Therefore I Am* (To Mellon Editions) while Crete University Press invites **Robert Hayden**, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh.

The **Goethe-Institut** brings to Thessaloniki **Carsten Henn** with his novel *The Book Walker* (Metaixmio Publications), **Valentin Groebner** with his book *Retroland* (Lemvos Editions), and **Leif Randt** with his novel *Allegro Pastell* (Elkystis Editions). Following an invitation from Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki, distinguished Austrian author **Ursula Poznanski** will present her award-winning youth thriller *Erebos* (Patakis Publishers). The **French Institute of Thessaloniki** invites author, playwright, and screenwriter **Kaouther Adimi** with her book *In the Belly of the Night* (Polis Editions), while **Orianne Lallemand** visits the children's corner with her *Little Wolf* (Papadopoulos Publications). The **Embassy of the Republic of Poland** introduces us to **Urszula Honek** with her *White Nights* (Vakxikon Publications).

Children & Young Adults Programme

There are 106 events for children and young adults organized by 40 publishing houses and 17 educational & cultural organizations. 40 of these are aimed at organized school groups.

On Thursday, May 7, and Friday, May 8, with the approval and valuable cooperation of the Regional Directorate of Education of Central Macedonia and the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education of Thessaloniki, the Fair will welcome more than **50 organized school groups from kindergartens, elementary, middle, and igh schools** from Thessaloniki and neighboring prefectures, with **approximately 2,500 students participating** in coordinated events. Additionally, **more student groups** will visit the Fair for tours independently of the scheduled events.

Simultaneously, an **exhibition of Greek illustrators** themed “**The Library of Heroes Ex Libris from Fantasy Literature**” will take place in collaboration with the Greek section of IBBY – Circle of the Greek Children's Book, as well as a corresponding **student exhibition** with the participation of schools from Thessaloniki, and a tribute to the Guest of Honour, Bulgaria, titled “**BGR – Letters that Unite. Bridges and Passages**” – in collaboration with the **Center for the Study and Dissemination of Myths and Folktales**, featuring podcasts and live narrations from the oral folk tradition of Bulgaria and Greece.

Also, workshops for children will be held by the **National Library of Greece**, the Greek section of **IBBY – Circle of the Greek Children's Book**, “**Diavazontas Megalono**” (“**By Reading I Grow**”), the **Network for Children's Rights**, and the **Center for the Study and Dissemination of Myths and Folktales**.

Guest of Honour:

Over the last decade, Bulgarian literature has gained increasing visibility internationally. Prominent voices in contemporary Bulgarian prose are winning global recognition, while numerous translations are being published in various languages. Bulgarian literature is proud of Georgi Gospodinov's International Booker Prize (2023), as well as Rene Karabash's selection for the prize's shortlist (2026). In 2024, 2025, and 2026, dozens of novels, poetry collections, and short stories were published in many languages around the world. Bulgarian authors and their translators are becoming more widely known domestically and abroad through EUPL awards and PEN nominations, while talented illustrators participate in significant artistic events and international book fairs.

Participants specifically from Bulgaria include: **Elena Alexieva**, one of the most iconic contemporary Bulgarian authors and playwrights, whose short story collection *The Interruption of Samsara* was recently released in Greek by Vaxikon Publications. **Iana Boukova**, member of the editorial team of the poetry magazine FRMK. Her poetry collections are available in Greek from Ikaros, FRMK, and Mikri Arktos, with her novel soon to be released by Antipodes Publishing. **Rene Karabash** (*Irena Ivanova), author, screenwriter, and playwright who made a sensation with *She Who Remains* (Metaixmio Publications), a queer reflection on same-sex love, family, and honor; her new book *Omar's Letters to His Future Wife* is also expected soon. **Teodora Dimova**, member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and one of the most recognized Bulgarian authors, known in Greece for her books *Mothers* and *The Stricken* (Enastron Editions), with her third book *I Don't Know You* in preparation. **Ina Valchanova**, journalist, author, and radio plays producer, whose book *The Crack-Up Island* will soon be released by Vaxikon Publications. **Alexander Sekulov** is one of the most interesting contemporary award-winning Bulgarian authors and a playwright at the Drama Theater – Plovdiv. The distinguished **Kapka Kaneva**, author, illustrator, and book designer. **Todor P. Todorov**, philosopher and prose writer. **Zornitsa Hristova**, author and editor-in-chief of the children's news outlet *Vijte*, who "enjoys the variety of children's questions, and the challenge of answering them." Also coming to the TBF is **Spyros N. Pappas**, a researcher in the field of literature, author, and translator who has written extensive tributes to the work of Georgi Gospodinov and Svetoslav Minkov, as well as **Blagorodna (Rony) Filevska-Panagou**, historian-ethnologist (PhD), journalist, and award-winning translator from Bulgarian and Greek, and member of PEN Greece.

Ten publishers from Bulgaria will participate in the professional program of the Thessaloniki International Book Fair, giving Greek authors active in the fields of prose, children's books, poetry, and non-fiction the opportunity to gain greater visibility in Bulgaria through more translations of Greek titles into Bulgarian.

A separate update will follow for the full program of the Guest of Honour.

In addition to the Municipality of Thessaloniki and TIF-HELEXPO, strategic partners of the TBF, there will be collaborations this year with institutions such as the Thessaloniki Film Festival, the National Theatre of Northern Greece, the Municipal Library, MOMus, ERT, while for another year, Fraport provides spaces for the promotion of the fair at the airport.

Within the framework of the exhibition, outward-looking reading promotion actions and artistic events will be organized in the city, which will be announced soon along with the programme. More information and details about the program of the 22nd TBF will be announced in the near future. You can also visit the official website <https://www.thessalonikibookfair.gr/>, which, along with the social media managed by HFBC, will be constantly updated and enriched.

The Thessaloniki International Book Fair (TBF) is organized by the Hellenic Foundation for Books and Culture (HFBC) in collaboration with TIF-HELEXPO, Greek publishers, and the Municipality of Thessaloniki, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and the Region of Central Macedonia. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund under the Central Macedonia ROP 2021-2027. TBF is a member of the International Book Fairs Forum and the ALDUS UP European Book Fairs Network.

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