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THE EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL BOOKSELLERS FEDERATION DENOUNCES THE JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON E-LENDING

The EIBF – European & International Booksellers Federation - has taken note of the judgment handed down by the ECJ with the greatest concern.

Assimilating e-lending to the lending of physical books is a very dangerous decision which does not take into account the economic reality of the book chain and is likely to lead to serious disruptions on the nascent e-book market.

Booksellers have committed themselves wholeheartedly to e-bookselling, in order to be able to offer readers the possibility to read what they want, when they want, and in the format of their choice. Today, between 70% and 87% of booksellers are present on the e-book market, especially on the leading language markets such as those of Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands and Spain.

However, the e-book market is still a very uncertain one and at the present time, no retailer can claim that selling e-books and e-readers on national markets is a profitable activity.

For centuries, the activities of selling and lending have been able to co-exist and strengthen each other to the mutual benefit of both communities and readers. Things have changed recently with the emergence of e-books and e-readers. The book chain has been working at solutions which are sustainable for authors, publishers and booksellers while guaranteeing a healthy and diverse offer to consumers, and this should be continued.

European libraries are a great asset for consumers and play a major part in the promotion of literacy and cultural life more generally. Booksellers very much value the crucial role of public libraries. The common objective of booksellers and libraries is to put books into the hands of readers so bookshops and libraries play complementary roles in the community.

However this can only be possible if the eco-system of the book sector, a chain of interdependencies where all members are dependent on each other, is fully respected for the ultimate benefit of readers.

EIBF looks forward to continuing to work in that direction, along with the book chain and European decision-makers.

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