



SPAIN
Spilling Creativity

SPAIN
GUEST OF
HONOUR AT THE
FRANKFURT BOOK
FAIR 2022



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO
DE CULTURA
Y DEPORTE

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL
DEL LIBRO
Y FOMENTO DE LA LECTURA

AC/E
ACCIÓN CULTURAL
ESPAÑOLA

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1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2022 Spain will be Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest trade fair for books, where approximately 80% of global rights and licences are negotiated.

31 years after Spain's participation as Guest of Honour in 1991, we will take over from Canada. A broad programme of events and activities will become an opportunity to introduce Spain and Spanish culture not only at the Fair but throughout in Germany. In short, the project has two aims: to place value on the book industry and those who write, translate, edit, read; and to show how Spain has developed culturally, socially, and economically over the past thirty years.

Spain's presence at the Fair is directed by the Ministry of Culture and Sport and carried out by Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) in collaboration with Instituto Cervantes; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism; the Ministry of Finance and the Spanish Association of Publishers' Guilds (FGEE). An Organising Committee with broad representation from public and private institutions in the book and cultural sectors will be created for that purpose. In addition, there will be working groups including the whole book industry, the Autonomous Communities and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces as well as other institutions and organisations.

It is a State project that includes everyone and depends on everybody.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of Spain's presence at the Fair are:

- to show the strength of Spanish culture focusing on the book industry;
- to improve Spanish literature awareness abroad (including all the country's official languages) at one of the most interesting moments in recent history, with sustained growth both in internal sales and exports.

In addition, the Spanish participation as Guest of Honour will highlight our

belief in the cultural and creative industries as key anchors in a new model of economic growth based on creativity and innovation. Likewise, it reinforces the image of literature and books as critical agents of development and engines for growth in a new society that is both digital and global: creativity and talent in connection with sustainability, demographic challenge, equality, economic growth and digitalisation.

3. KEY INFORMATION

During the five days of the Frankfurt Book Fair (three of them reserved for professionals and two for the general public) the image of the Guest of Honour is visible in the most prominent points of the city.

Additionally, as Guest of Honour, Spain is expected to develop a literary and cultural programme in Frankfurt and other German cities that will culminate during the celebration of the Book Fair (19-23 October 2022).

The Guest of Honour has a specific 1,500 – 2,000 square metre space in the exhibition grounds, separate from the professional stands, to build its pavilion and program activities throughout the five days of the Fair. The pavilion receives between 50,000 – 70, 000 visitors per day, which include both professional guests (booksellers, journalists, editors, etc.) on weekdays and general public at the weekend.

The professional area at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2022 will host the stands of the Spanish Association of Publishers' Guilds, the Autonomous Communities and the publishing houses that will participate with their own space.

The Fair is not only the most significant platform in the world for exhibiting books and trading rights, but also a major cultural opportunity: around 3,000 events (roundtables, readings, debates, exhibits, etc.) covered by 10,000 journalists from 75 countries.

In the last years, the Fair has developed from an exclusively professional model to a literary and cultural event. Nowadays, in the different grounds of the Fair encounters with authors are being promoted. Throughout the whole city literary festivals, concerts, theatre and dance productions, film screenings, etc. are being held.

4. PILLARS OF THE PROJECT

4.1 MULTILINGUALISM

Spain's proposal for Frankfurt 2022 is to highlight the importance of the linguistic plurality in our country, which is reflected in the literary richness of its official languages.

Almost any European country is monolingual (except, perhaps, Iceland and Portugal). Therefore, Spain's reality as a multilingual country is actually a common fact for the majority of its European neighbours.

This multilingualism is guaranteed by the Spanish Constitution and further developed in the regional legislation of the Autonomous Communities with two official languages (Catalonia, Valencian Community, Balearic Islands, Galicia, Basque Country, and Navarra). There are also dialects and linguistic varieties subject to special protection and promotion by the regional authorities. Among the 76,000 books published in Spain in 2018, 12% were written in Catalan, Galician or Basque. Many of those authors are bilingual and write in both languages. A good example for this is the 2019 Cervantes Prize winner Joan Margarit, who recently passed away.

4.2 SPANISH AS A BRIDGE WITH LATIN AMERICA

On the other hand, the Spanish language unites more than 500 million people throughout the planet and holds the second position in terms of the total number of speakers.

The number of translations from Spanish into other languages, and vice versa, increases every year.

The entire book industry is aware of the international strength of literature and the potential readers in Spanish.

4.3 BIBLIODIVERSITY

It is also important to highlight the concept of *bibliodiversity* in our publishing industry: a rich, diverse network of different-sized companies, with large publishers and a growing number of small, specialized publishers. This evidences the ongoing commitment to quality and innovation of the sector to adapt to technological changes in the digital

environment and the new ways of reading.

4.4 GENDER EQUALITY

Women are at the top of reading rates, theatre and entertainment audiences. They are also in the majority in the publishing and bookselling sectors, as well as in cultural institutions.

Moreover, our country is at the forefront in the defence of women's rights and the fight against gender violence. Specifically, Spanish advances in legislation have made Spain a model for many surrounding countries.

In the recent literary scene stands out a new generation of female authors who write about the roles of women in contemporary society, motherhood or feminism. They are recognized with awards and prizes for their works in all genres (essay, novel, theatre and poetry for readers of all ages) and they follow the path of Spain's celebrated female writers who succeed inside and outside Spain.

4.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The commitment to innovation in order to achieve book sustainability, one of the great challenges faced by the publishing industry, can be appreciated in different aspects such as materials, distribution channels, as well as new formats and platforms to make reading more accessible.

In this sense, eco-publishing, which involves publishing with paper from certified forests –among other measures, is of great importance in order to neutralise the carbon footprint of books. Aspects such as ecological packaging and the use of renewable energies are very significant, too. Bookshops are also working on the concept of becoming green bookshops.

In addition to the environmental concerns of booksellers and publishers, some authors are expressing their commitment to the environment, the situation in rural areas and nature in their works.

4.6 DIVERSITY

Ibero-American literature is part of the patrimony we share with this region. The Latin American *boom* in the 1970s brought together an important generation of writers in Barcelona, a city that has welcomed Ibero-American writers, as has Madrid and Seville, among others. Latin American writers who live in Spain or have dual nationality will be part of

the SpainFrankfurt 2022 project.

At the same time, a young generation of writers who emigrated to Spain or come from migrant families is breaking through in Spanish literature. Approximately 10% of the Spanish population is of foreign origin and the majority of immigrants come from Ibero America, followed by the EU and Africa. New voices that write in both Spanish and their parents' languages are beginning to find an echo in our country.

Spain's reality as a diverse country is evidenced in the literature written in Catalan, Basque, and Galician, which is plural and multilingual as well.

In 2019 the Frankfurt Book Fair dedicated space to Roma literature for the first time. In Spain, the Institute of Roma Culture, which belongs to the Ministry of Culture and Sport, aims to promote Roma culture and expressions such as flamenco, which are part of the Spanish heritage, as well as Castilian words that come from the *caló*.

Our publishing market is also open to other cultures. This is evidenced by the fact that translations from other languages into Spanish represent 21% of publications, faced to the 5% of Spanish works translated into English.

4.7 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS: CHILDREN'S & YA LITERATURE AND COMIC

Children's and YA literature has established itself as one of the most important categories in our country. Reading rates in the earliest years are high and go down during the teenage years. Although recent studies show an increase, it is a slow one.

Spanish children's and YA literature authors are translated into many other languages. In addition to conventional fiction, they also dare to approach philosophy and deal with subjects such as homophobia, equality between men and women, social media and drug consumption, among others. The rise of literary adaptations to streaming series and films means that audiovisual culture has become a round-trip journey back to books.

We are also witnessing the rise of a new generation of illustrators specialised in children's and YA literature, as well as a growth of the comic as an independent genre.

The promotion of a critical spirit to create independent readers and access to equal educational and professional opportunities through reading are the aims of the pact for literature that will unite the Ministry of Culture, publishers, and the book industry as a whole.

4.8 STRENGTH OF THE BOOK INDUSTRY

In these three decades since Spain was Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, our country has experienced a permanent growth and vitality in both its economic and creative activity.

Specifically, due to the transformation accomplished by the book industry it has become the main cultural activity in Spain. Novels, comics, illustration, and children's literature in Spanish are the flagship of the entire publishing sector. The sale of translation rights into other languages has also increased year after year.

4.9 A MODERN AND INNOVATIVE SECTOR

The book industry, from publishers to bookstores, has invested in innovation and nowadays it has become one of the most modern areas –it creates more and better-quality employment and serves as an economic model for other branches in Spain.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the book industry has especially suffered from the decline in purchases, the closing of bookstores and the cancellation of fairs and festivals. Nevertheless, it has shown how to adapt quickly to new realities (online sales, digital subscriptions, e-commerce) and continues to make exemplary efforts.

4.10 THE BOOK AS TERRITORIAL BACKBONE AND SOCIAL GLUE

The rise in life expectancy and demographic growth is undoubtedly a positive aspect of the demographic change in Spain. However, there are also negative trends, such as the drop in birth rates, a low demographic density in large areas of the territory and a decline of rural population. This situation threatens our welfare state and our social and territorial cohesion model. Therefore, actions that support an increase in equal opportunity wherever you live are a Government priority, and books play a fundamental role in it.

Small literary festivals organized in rural Spain or the *bibliobús*, which travels to more than 2,000 towns and villages where there are no public libraries, are some examples of how literature, books and reading are essential tools for facing demographic challenges.

In this sense, it is important to highlight the efforts carried out, on the one hand, by the network of public libraries regarding its programming, the organisation of book clubs, the availability of board games and comics, and the access to digital lending and WiFi. And on the other hand, bookstores also play a key role as cultural movers and shakers, organizing a large number of activities with writers.

During the lockdown due to the pandemic, Spanish public libraries also played a critical role in providing the population with free and legal access to reading at home through digital lending services.

4.11 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPANISH ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

The Spanish publishing industry has successfully adapted to technological challenges and to the digitalisation that society demands. As proven throughout the pandemic, the demand for digital change is a key factor in public projects and policies. Companies have also taken steps in order to overcome difficulties resulting from COVID-19 and face the future by adapting themselves to the new reality.

Spain's proposal for Frankfurt 2022 aims to underline the digital transformation in the book sector as a desirable model for economic growth and added value. In this way, Spain intends to show the opportunities digitalisation offers to our book industry regarding the increased accessibility, the structural strength of the industry, as well as the employability and competitiveness in processes, products, training, strategy and technology. Digitalisation is also a key factor for reader's access to libraries: the number of users of the public library website *eBiblio* grew 127% during the March-April 2020 lockdown.