



## The EWC Burning Issues Forum Writers On The Storm

at the National Library of Norway, the hall Målstova

Saturday 24 May 2025, 13:00-17:15



The programme of the forum was developed by EWC together with the Norwegian hosts and will address issues of the present within the book sector about “Writers On The Storm”. The topics will be introduced by different experts in the form of inputs and discussions. There will be various opportunities to exchange ideas with the experts, but also among the delegates of the member organisations.

Bring your most burning questions to the topics, and our experts in the field will answer them after their respective interventions, stimulating the debate and knowledge sharing among delegates.

### Programme summarised

13:00-13:15	WELCOME
13:15-13:25	The EU AI Act – and now? A short introduction in EWC’ Burning Issues on AI
13:25-13:40	The Mimir project – a Norwegian initiative
13:40-14:25	Discussion: In License we trust? Practice, challenges, chances and risks.
14:25-14.40	Literary break
14:40-15:10	Coffee break
15:10-16:10	Breakout-sessions: The work for authors in Europe under the threat of AI.
16:10-16:20	Input: Learning to read authoritarian signals
16:20-17:20	Discussion: Constraints and censorship: how politics and big tech erode writers’ rights
17:20-17:35	Literary break
17:35-17:45	Closing Remarks



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## Programme detailed

### 13.00-13:15 / WELCOME

- Welcome speech by Miguel Ángel Serrano, EWC President.
- Welcome speech by the chair(wo)men of the host organisations.
- Introduction by Monika Pfundmeier, EWC Board member and moderator of the Burning Issues Forum.

### 13.15-13:25 / The EU AI Act – and now? An introduction in EWC' Burning Issues on AI

The European Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) of the European Union entered into force on 1 August 2024. It is the first regulatory framework on AI worldwide. What is the EWC doing now on the issue? Nina George, EWC President of honor and Commissioner for Political Affairs, presents EWC' Burning issues on the matter.

### 13.25-13:40 / Presentation: The Mimir project – a Norwegian initiative

The Mimir project, presented by Svein Arne Brygfeldt, aims to evaluate the importance and influence of copyrighted material on the development and performance of generative large language models for Norwegian languages and Norwegian conditions. This work involves 3 leading institutions: the National Library (NB), the University of Oslo (UiO), and Norway's University of Science and Technology (NTNU/NorwAI). The ultimate goal of the project is to establish knowledge that can form the basis for the design of a possible compensation scheme for rightsholders where content from works under copyright is used to train AI. A basis that could be used also in other countries. The presentation will focus on the overall principles of the project, the results so far, the work ahead and the challenges they have had and will meet going forward.

### 13:40-14:25 / Discussion: In License we trust? Practice, challenges, chances and risks.

With Svein Arne Brygfeldt (Mimir Project, Norway), Jens J. Kramer (Syndikat, Germany), Ambre Morvan (SoA, UK), Annemarie van Toorn (Auteursbond, The Netherlands), Marte Blikstad-Balas (Board member, NFFO, Norway) and Alexander Løken (NBU, Norway). Moderation: Maïa Bensimon.

### 14.25-14:40 / Literary Break

Reading by Khaleda Froagh who is one of the Friby/ICORN authors living in Norway.

### 14:40-15:10 / Coffee Break

### 15:10-16:10 / The work for authors in Europe under the threat of AI

How is the work to secure writers' rights concerning the use of texts in AI progressing around Europe? Can we look at other industries for help and inspiration? Best and worst scenarios/practice in different countries. Breakout-sessions in different groups to discuss experiences among EWC member associations, moderated by the EWC Board Members. **You are invited in bringing use cases and/or expected impacts in your country in order to present them (max. 2 min.).**

Short presentation of outcomes of the breakout-sessions. Moderation: Paula Havaste.



20 Years

## 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO)

### 16:10-16:20 / Input: Learning to read authoritarian signals

How authoritarian governments limit freedom of expression? What are the signals announcing that legislation can go against writers' and citizens' freedom of speech? Some reflections on the example of Hungary by the writer Ferenc Czinki, president of Szépírók Társasága (Society of Hungarian Authors). Discussion with the delegates.

### 16:20-17:20 / Discussion: Constraints and censorship: how politics and big tech erode writers' rights

What will it mean for freedom of expression in Europe and the world the double pressure (politics and tech companies) can exercise? Is AI content really an expression of freedom? What happens when the tech companies – as vigilantes and oligopolies – decide what is to be communicated and what is no longer acceptable? Which voices will disappear or being suppressed? What will this mean for cultural diversity? Is this a contagious political process across countries?

Discussion with: Ferenc Czinki (writer and president of Szépírók Társasága, Society of Hungarian Authors), Grażyna Plebanek (writer and delegate of the Polish Writers Union) and Hanne Ramsdal (Norwegian Authors' Union). Moderation: Eystein Hanssen.

### 17:20-17:35 / Literary Break

Reading by Anna Fiske from her book *How do you talk about death?*

### 17:35-17:45 / Closing Remarks

by Monika Pfundmeier who is moderating the entire Burning Issues Forum.



## SPEAKERS (in alphabetical order)

**Maia Bensimon**, Vice-President of EWC. Maia Bensimon was raised in a family of teachers, all readers attached to Culture and Education. After law school, Maia dedicated her work to authors' rights and intellectual property. First, as an attorney at law (2006-2015), then, as General Counsel for Society of French Literati (2015-2023) and lastly, as Secretary General of the National Union of Authors and Composers (since 2023). She was elected as VP to EWC in 2021.

**Marte Blikstad-Balas** is chair of The Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association. With 4800 members, this is the largest writers' union in Norway, bringing together authors and translators of non-fiction, educational and professional literature. Blikstad-Balas is Professor at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo, and one of Norway's foremost experts on literacy in schools. She is the author of several non-fiction and educational books, in addition to her extensive academic work.

Co-Organisers:



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**Svein Arne Brygfeldt**, has worked with AI for many years, and has, among other things, led the National Library's AI lab and the international network (ai4lam.org) for AI in archives, libraries and museums. He is now a special advisor for AI at the National Library.

**Ferenc Czinki** (November 7, 1982, Székesfehérvár, Hungary) was born in Székesfehérvár, Hungary in 1982. Journalist, essayist, and fiction author, he publishes in local and international newspapers, literary journals. His novel *A pozsonyi metró* ("The Bratislava Metro") was published in 2017 in Hungarian and in 2019 in Slovak translation, and his short story collection *Egy kocsmá város* ("A Pub City") appeared in 2014. Former board member of the József Attila Kör Literary Society (2013-2018), and president of Szépipírók Társasága (Society of Hungarian Authors) since 2021. Advisory board member of the European Alliance of Academies.

**Anna Fiske** (b. 1964) is an author, illustrator, and cartoonist. Fiske's playful and distinctive style, both literary and pictorial, has earned her numerous awards and honours for her works. Several of her books have been published with great success in many countries.

**Khaleda Froagh**, (b. 1972) is one of Afghanistan's foremost poets. She has a PhD in Persian literature and has been a lecturer at Kabul University, editor and presenter on TOLO TV. Froagh's poems are translated into various languages, and she has won several awards for her poetry and research. Froagh came to Norway in 2022.

**Nina George** is a multiple award-winning novelist, born 1973 in Bielefeld/Germany, has been writing novels, non-fiction, essays, reports, short stories, blogs and columns since 1992. Her book *The Little Paris Bookshop* has been translated into 36 languages and was a New York Times Bestseller. Since 2023, Nina George is President of Honour and Commissioner of Political Affairs of EWC. [www.ninageorge.de](http://www.ninageorge.de)

**Eystein Hanssen**, (born 1965) is a Norwegian author, podcaster and leader of The Norwegian Society of Authors. He has so far published 10 suspense novels and one non-fiction book. He is educated in film, information technology, media studies, marketing, and has a master's degree in administration and management. Eystein Hanssen is member of the EWC Board.

**Paula Havaste** is a Finnish writer of fiction and non-fiction with more than 30 published books. She studied literature and philosophy at Helsinki University and made her PhD on cultural studies. Havaste has been active on positions of trust in cultural associations and foundations both in Finland and abroad.

**Jens J. Kramer**, born in 1957, studied ethnology and journalism in Berlin. He has been writing novels (historical, crime, romantic comedy) since 1999. Together with his wife, bestselling author Nina George, he has published Provençal thrillers and children's books. Kramer lives in Berlin and Brittany.

**Alexander Løken** (b. 1982) grew up and lives in Asker. He is trained as an art director from Westerdal's School of Communication and made his debut as a writer in 2014 with *Trollskallen*, a fantasy novel based on Norwegian folklore. It was, among other things, nominated for Ark's children's book prize, the Ministry of Culture's Debutante prize, and won the Boksluker prize. He has written a further six books, both for children and young people. Løken has been on NBU's board since 2018 and has been chairman since 2021.



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**Ambre Morvan** is a Senior Public Policy Manager and Contracts Advisor at the UK Society of Authors (SoA). After earning a law degree in Intellectual Property in 2017, she joined the Société des Gens de Lettres (France), where she spent five years as in-house counsel, working alongside Maïa Bensimon, EWC Vice-President. In 2020, Ambre completed a postgraduate diploma in UK, EU and US Copyright Law at King's College London, and in 2021, she moved to the UK to join the SoA. In her current role, she advises authors on publishing contracts and issues while also shaping the SoA's public policy. She has a particular focus on artificial intelligence and international matters.

**Grażyna Plebanek** – is a novelist, columnist, author of screenplays, theatre plays and short stories. She is the author of the bestselling “Girls from Portofino”, “Illegal Liaisons” and “Ms. Fury”, which was published in France and where it received a readers’ award. She is also the author of literary essays “Brussels, animalism in the city” and “Robber Maids”. Her latest novel is entitled “Madmuazelka”. She publishes in Polish, English, French and Dutch. Born in Warsaw, she lived in Stockholm for five years before moving to Brussels in 2005.

**Hanne Ramsdal**, a Norwegian author and playwright, is a board member of the Norwegian Authors’ Union (DnF). She has since 2023 been the head of DnF’s international committee.

**Miguel Ángel Serrano** is a Spanish novelist, essayist, and poet. Since 2023, President of EWC, previously Vice President for two years and for five years, Secretary General of Asociación Colegial de Escritores of Spain. He holds a PhD in Economic Sciences and Business Administration. As a novelist, he was awarded with José María de Pereda Short Novel Prize, Department of Culture of the Government of Cantabria and was finalist at Mario Vargas Llosa NH Hotels Prize. He has published several novels, poetry collections and a historic essay.

**Annemarie van Toorn** has been working as a (senior) lawyer for the Authors' Union, the Dutch professional organisation for writers and translators (<https://auteursbond.nl/>) since 2008. She studied Dutch Language and Literature and then Law, and worked as a researcher at the University of Amsterdam. At the recommendation of the Authors' Union, she is on the board of Platform Makers (<https://www.platformmakers.nl/>), a partnership of professional and interest groups for authors and performing artists. Platform Makers is committed to better copyright contract law and a stronger negotiating position for 30,000 professional makers in the cultural and creative sector

**MODERATOR:** "Courage creates the future!" **Monika Pfundmeier**, Member of the Board of the European Writers' Council, advisory board member of SYNDIKAT e.V., member of the Author's Rights Network, is an activist for authors' rights and an expert on generative AI in the literature field. She was awarded in 2018 as "one of the strongest voices in contemporary literature" and has published seven novels since 2016, most recently in August 2023 by Heyne Verlag. In terms of literary policy, she is committed to work and help creating a diverse, inclusive, liveable and sustainable society across Europe.



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