

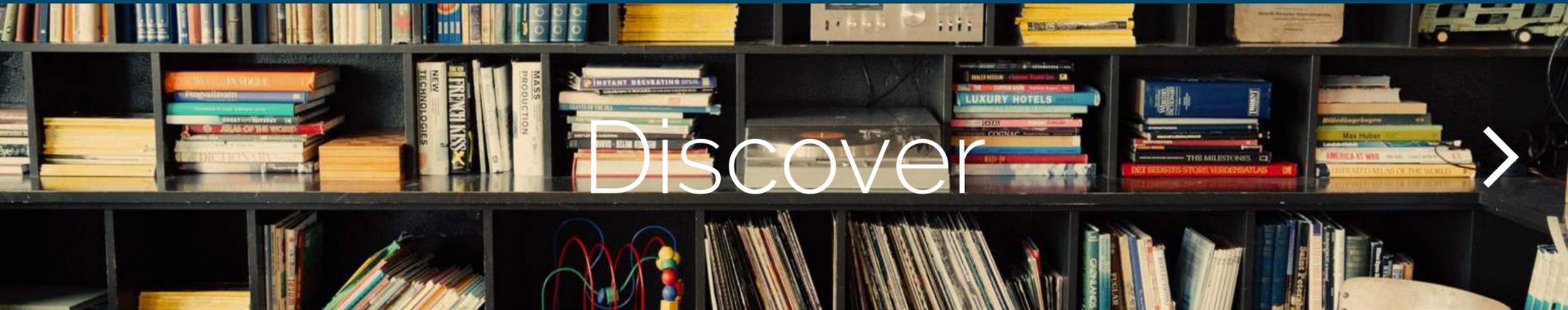


# THE BOOK CHARTER

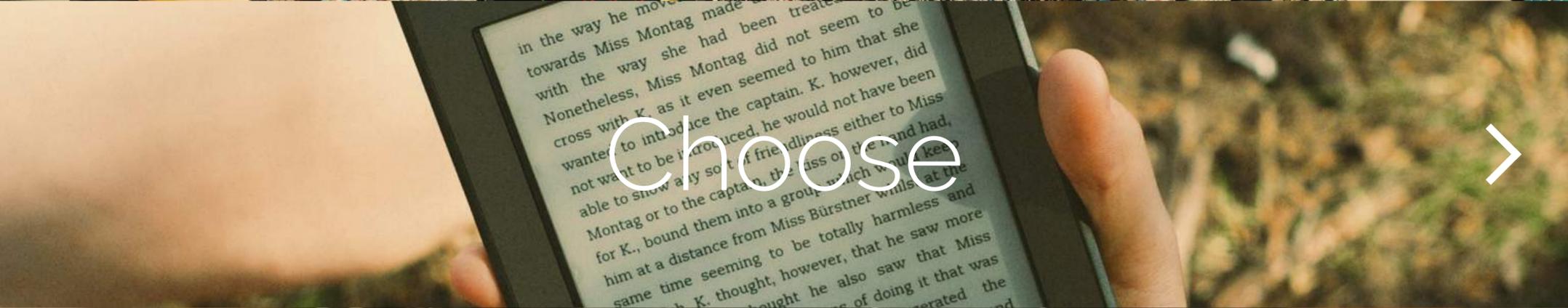


an initiative by the European and International Booksellers Federation

Introduction



Discover



Choose



Join





# The Book Charter

There is nothing more important for everyone in the book industry than to continually broaden consumer access to books - in whatever format readers choose. In a world that is changing rapidly - all of us - authors, publishers, booksellers, distributors, agents, librarians, etc. - have an obligation to work together to ensure that nothing interferes with the ability of consumers to read what they want, when they want, in whatever format they want. And, at the same time, to recognize and to acknowledge that despite all the quantum leaps forward in technology, physical places - bookstores and libraries - remain the best places for consumers to discover books.

There are two indispensable principles to be remembered always: public funds need to be used to continue the support of public libraries and, public policies need to promote a competitive business environment.

In the end, readers lose when funds to support libraries are reduced or when government policies reduce the ability of community-based retail bookstores to compete on a level playing field. *The book sector is an eco-system: a chain of interdependencies where all members are dependent on each other, and where big and radical changes will always affect every member.*

**European Consumers want to buy print, electronic and audio books easily and have access to a wide range of titles from across the EU.**



## Consumer choice

Consumers should be able to buy their books at the bookshop of their choice: the more bookshops there are, the richer is the offer to consumers, who have the benefit of a variety of shopping opportunities and styles: they can choose to buy their books either in their community, or on bookshops' websites, in the high street or in specialized bookshops; they can relax and socialize in bookshops' cafés and restaurants; they can enjoy readings by authors and various events organised by bookshops to enhance the cultural life of their community.

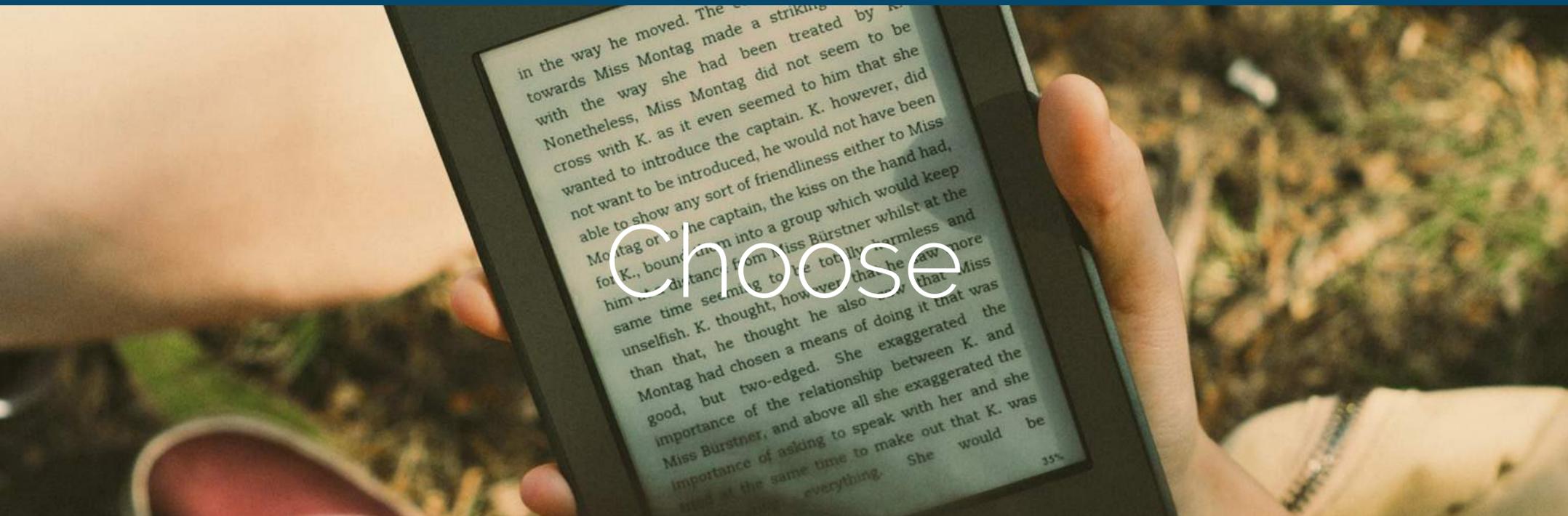
## Borrowing print books, e-books and audio books

European libraries are a great asset for consumers and play a major part in the promotion of literacy. Booksellers very much value the crucial role of public libraries. The common objective of both booksellers and librarians is to put books into the hands of readers, and they both fulfil complementary roles in their community.

Booksellers and librarians are indeed cultural agents providing the public with unbiased, reliable and informed advice and promoting literacy and reading – the fundamental basis of a knowledge society.

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: booksellers have embraced new technologies and implemented new business models.



## **Creating a competitive environment**

Creating the conditions for maintaining a strong presence of bookshops in communities locally guarantees access to a great variety of books, as well as shopping & entertainment opportunities for consumers. Consumers suffer when single companies monopolise the market whether in the USA or in Europe. And consumers are the ultimate beneficiaries of a level playing field governing commercial conditions and healthy competition between retailers.

## **Benefit from a reduced rate of VAT both on paper and on e-books**

Whether a book is paper or digital, ordered online or bought in a shop, tax discrimination that hampers access to books should be avoided. Reduced or zero rate of VAT should be applied across all formats.

## **Be able to switch suppliers easily and be able to switch e-book devices easily**

European consumers should have the right to read the e-books they have legally acquired on the device of their choice and should not be locked into proprietary systems. All e-books should be interoperable, whatever platform they are bought on. Consumers should enjoy full interoperability between files and devices when they buy e-books. They should have easy access to the e-books they have acquired legally and be able to read them easily on the device of their choice. Consumers should have the freedom to purchase e-books from any supplier – and not be locked into one supplier's ecosystem. When buying from any given supplier, they should be able to enjoy open systems, and transfer the e-book to the tablet or e-reader of their choice.



Millions of consumers are choosing to shop in locally-owned bookstores - not just because of the great selection of books and superlative level of customer service - but, because they recognize that money spent locally gets re-invested in one's own community at a far higher rate than when spent elsewhere. And, just as importantly, a diverse array of locally owned retail businesses helps communities retain their unique character and personality.

The book chain is working at solutions which are sustainable for authors, publishers and booksellers while guaranteeing a healthy and diverse offer to consumers.

Booksellers look forward to making joint efforts with librarians in promoting access to books for the benefit of all European consumers - whether they choose to borrow, hire, or temporarily access the book, with full respect for the rights and the role of all existing parties in the book chain.