

## Joint Statement from the Society of Authors and the Irish Writers Union on the dangers of a no-deal Brexit.

Ireland and the UK have always enjoyed a close literary relationship, and the enduring popularity of Irish writers in the UK and vice versa is a testament to this.

The Irish and UK book industries are inextricably aligned, sharing the same VAT rates, Nielsen consumer data, territorial rights and Legal Deposit scheme.

But this unique and thriving relationship is now under threat as a consequence of Brexit, and it would be torn apart in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

In addition to the many concerns writers in the UK have about Brexit, the following issues pose particular threats to the close literary relationship between Ireland and the UK:

- The UK and Ireland enjoy a close trading relationship, and books are able to flow freely from one country to the other. The UK is an important market for Irish authors, many of whom are also published by UK publishers. For UK authors, Ireland is a more significant market than most other European countries. The introduction of tariffs and border controls in the event of a 'no deal' exit would be disastrous for this close trading relationship, hitting the wider industry in both countries.
- This strong trading partnership is underpinned by participation in the EEA's regional exhaustion framework, which prevents counterfeit books and books intended for markets outside Europe from entering Ireland and the UK. Leaving the EU without a deal could result in the UK adopting an 'international exhaustion' framework, meaning that books not intended for sale in the UK could enter the country at discounted rates, and publishers would be unable to set different rates for books bound for different countries. This would damage sales and trade, hitting authors and publishers in both countries.
- Literature and culture thrive on collaboration between people all over the world. In particular the ending of free movement to and from the UK will sever links within the community of European writers, to the detriment of both Irish and English authors.
- Brexit has already had a negative impact on the industry, the crash in sterling leading to a 6% reduction in the selling price of Irish books. A no deal scenario is very likely to lead to a sharp fall in sterling and exacerbate this problem further.

The Society of Authors and the Irish Writers Union believe that the risks posed by the current path of negotiations are unacceptable. They risk a financial, legislative, commercial and creative split in what has traditionally been a close literary bond. Such a split will benefit no one. We urge negotiators from all parties and all political persuasions to develop a clear strategy that will preserve this essential part of our shared cultural heritage – and to ensure that the UK does not crash out of the EU without a deal.

**The Society of Authors is the UK trade union for more than 10,500 writers, illustrators and literary translators, at all stages of their careers. We've been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession since 1884. Throughout our history we've had many Irish-born members, from George Bernard Shaw to Iris Murdoch.**

**The Irish Writers' Union is the main advocacy body for Irish writers and is open to Irish writers and writers of Irish interest publications, wherever they are based. The Union was founded in 1986 by authors wishing to resist censorship in Ireland and in general to provide a voice for the collective expression of writers on matters pertaining to their profession. The Union is managed by a steering committee elected annually at the AGM and is constantly working to achieve more favourable remuneration and conditions for writers.**