

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
1 Horse Guards Road
London, SW1A 2HQ

1 July 2026

Dear Chancellor,

Request for publishing exemption to EU import tax for small packages coming into force today (1 July 2026)

We are writing to you on behalf of the Publishers Association, the Professional Publishers Association, the Booksellers Association and the European Publishers' Council. Together we represent the broad publishing sector in the UK, including books, journals, magazines and print media. Our members are deeply concerned with the EU's customs duty reforms. We are requesting the government's urgent support in advocating a sectoral carve-out for publishing.

As you will be aware, the EU is eliminating its de minimis customs duty exemption and, from July 2026, introducing a new flat fee of €3 on all small parcels entering the EU. The practical effect is that books, journals, magazines and print media exported to the EU, particularly directly to consumers, will be subject to the fee.

We ask that the UK government engages with the EU urgently to request an exemption for books, journals, magazines and print media imported into the bloc, in line with the 1950 UNESCO Florence Agreement.

The imposition of the tariff will put UK publishers' significant trade with the EU at risk. This additional cost makes reaching European markets that much more difficult, especially for smaller independent publishers. Some of the data obtained by our organisations shows the huge demand that EU customers have for UK publishing. Statistics released by the Publishers Association shows that in 2025 the UK exported £521.6 million in print books to the EU. This is up from £517 million in the previous year, which suggests rising demand. Additionally, the Professional Publishers Association has obtained data from one postal fulfilment service which shows that, across their top 30 customers, 1.1 million magazines were dispatched to the EU via the Import One-Stop Shop (IOSS) service in 2025. This would equate to an additional £3.3 million in additional customs fees from 1 July.

There are several unintended consequences of the EU's reforms and we urge you to query the Commission on the rationale for its policymaking:

- **The imposition of customs duties on books and journals is contrary to the 1950 UNESCO Florence Agreement** that cultural, educational and academic materials should always as a matter of principle travel freely amongst countries for the good of global society. The Agreement set a longstanding, internationally recognised precedent that books should not be taxed. We do not believe that the EU has taken this into account in its decision-making.

- **Taxing books and other printed matter is not in keeping with the objectives of the reforms.** The European Commission stated that the changes are intended to address the influx of cheap Chinese imports sold on e-commerce sites, not reading materials. The publishing sector is exporting high-quality products which EU customer demand. The publishing sector is in-scope as an unintended consequence.
- **Imposing the tariff will lead to diminishing media plurality and consumer choice,** and undermine the cultural and democratic value of publishing and the media. In an era of misinformation and disinformation, it would be counterproductive to create trade barriers for high-quality, trustworthy and educational reading materials. The current arrangements allow for the free flow of information across borders.

In the National Year of Reading, where your government is celebrating the power of reading and learning, we hope that you will be able to intervene on this matter with EU counterparts as soon as possible and would be pleased to discuss this further with your team.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Conway
CEO, Publishers Association

Sajeeda Merali
CEO, Professional Publishers Association

Meryl Halls
Managing Director, Booksellers Association

Angela Mills Wade
Executive Director, European Publishers' Council