

# über:blick

German Book Industry Insight

International  
Issue  
in English

# Germany

## Literary Scene

*Melinda Nadj Abonji, winner of the German Book Prize. Litfests and literary magazines in Germany. Literary life on the Internet. Fellowship opportunities for artists and writers. Filu Archive – promoting graphic artists.*

## Publishing Industry

*E-books go massmarket. Editing enters the digital age. Green publishing. Funding and exchange programmes run by the Frankfurt Book Fair. German Book Offices worldwide. Iceland – Frankfurt Book Fair Guest of Honour 2011.*

## Marketplace

*Current industry trends – facts & figures. Translation sells. The German book market: non-fiction, children's and young adult books, the wholesale book trade. Bookstores rise to the digital challenge. German book publishers on the social web.*

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Auswärtiges Amt

German  
Language of Ideas

## German – Language of Ideas

Cornelia Pieper  
Minister of State  
Federal Foreign Office

It was the great German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who, in 1827, coined the term »world literature«. For him, however, it had nothing to do with any literary canon. World literature emerged and developed, Goethe believed, through face-to-face contact between living, striving writers inspired by their interests and public spirit to contribute to the world around them. Hence for Goethe world literature meant literary communication between real people from different nations, a form of intellectual exchange that seeks to influence society at large.

In contrast to the way we think about it today, Goethe saw world literature as international communication, originally based in Europe but which would soon reach out to encompass the whole world. In this sense Germany's book industry and the Frankfurter Buchmesse – Frankfurt Book Fair are indeed a vibrant part of world literature.

We at the Federal Foreign Office also want to play our part in promoting intellectual exchange and intercultural dialogue. Under the auspices of our cultural relations and education policy we support a range of activities geared to this end. We see the German language and culture, for example, as an excellent way to convey an accurate picture

of contemporary Germany. A Germany that stands for openness and freedom, for tolerance and values, for success and a willingness to work hard, for education and innovation. Beyond that, however, our language and literature hold the key to many of the riches in Europe's great cultural traditions and of course also to Europe's largest economy. For all of these reasons, over 14 million people are now learning German. And in Europe there are actually more native speakers of German than any other language. In an integrated Europe we see multilingualism as a top educational priority. For us this means making even more people – and young people in particular – interested in learning German. For otherwise diversity will surely lose out not only in Europe but also in the wider globalized world.

This is the background to the »Germany – Language of Ideas« campaign that Federal Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle launched in February 2010. Over the next few years we want to encourage young people abroad to learn German and decision-makers to support their efforts.

The Federal Foreign Office is naturally also very keen for German books and literature to become better known around the world. That is why for many years now

we have been working closely with the Frankfurt Book Fair and the German Publishers & Booksellers Association. Thanks to Federal Foreign Office funding, also small and medium-sized publishers now have a foothold in the international trade in intellectual property rights – through their participation in one or more of the over 20 collective German stands organized every year at international book fairs, through the work of our five German Book Offices abroad or through our translation promotion programmes. Diversity is a hallmark of our publishing industry and a reflection, too, of what Germany stands for: diversity of ideas, freedom of expression and a commitment to democratic values. And the diversity of the books themselves that are published here vividly testifies to German's importance as a language of ideas.

For all these reasons I am delighted that the new international Book Fair newspaper über:blick with its mix of cultural coverage and factual information was so well received last year. So I hope this latest branchchild of the Federal Foreign Office and the Frankfurt Book Fair will attract a host of readers in 2011 as well.

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