



THE
ANNUAL BOOK
CONFERENCE
2026



THE ECONOMY AND THE BOOK

8th May 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton,
St. Paul's Bay, Malta

ORGANISED BY

The National Book
Council (Malta)

THE CONFERENCE

The Annual Book Conference is a new platform dedicated to critical reflection on the book industry and its relationship to cultural and economic policy. Launched in 2026 as the first conference of its kind in Malta, it is intended to become a recurring annual forum bringing together local and international stakeholders to examine the structures, challenges, and opportunities shaping the book ecosystem.

The inaugural edition, *The Economy and the Book*, focuses on how publishing, bookselling, and reading cultures function within small and micro economies such as Malta's. Through discussions that consider scale, language, readership, and consumption patterns, the conference aims to foster informed debate, generate ideas to support future policy development, and situate Malta's book sector within a broader European and international context.

Authors, illustrators, translators, editors, academics, researchers, publishers, booksellers, economists, policymakers, politicians, government entity representatives, cultural institutions and other interested individuals are invited to attend and contribute to this year's conference theme of 'The Economy and the Book'.



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CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

Attendees shall have the opportunity to directly contribute to ongoing conversations regarding beneficial policies for all stakeholders across the Maltese book industry. All discussions including the survey findings and focus group conclusions shall be collected by the National Book Council and collated into a single official document, presented to the relevant authorities and published to the general public.



08:00

REGISTRATION | WELCOME COFFEE

Welcome coffee and attendee registrations shall take place outside the conference hall

09:00 – 17:00

FULL-DAY CONFERENCE

Morning Session – PUBLISHING IN A MICRO ECONOMY

The morning session will include a keynote speech by Stephen Reid, Publishing Manager at the Lilliput Press, followed by a presentation of qualitative and quantitative survey findings.

A panel of experts in their respective fields from literary creatives, publishing, economy and enterprise shall form the first panel.

Panel I

Moderator

Loranne Vella – Author, and co-founder, co-editor and co-publisher at Aphroconfuso

Panelists

Stephen Reid – Publishing Manager, The Lilliput Press, Dublin

Prof. Marie Briguglio – Economist and Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy, University of Malta

Paul Abela – President, Chamber of SMEs

Prof. Mario Thomas Vassallo – Associate Professor, Department Of Public Policy, University of Malta



12:00 – 13:00

NETWORKING LUNCH

Afternoon Session – BOOKSHOP, BOOKSELLER AND CONSUMER DYNAMICS

The afternoon session will commence with a second panel, formed of literary creatives, cultural entity representatives and academics.

Panel II

Moderator

Dr Simone Inguanez – Author and poet

Panelists

Glen Calleja – Author and publisher, Kotba Calleja

Alex Farrugia – Director, Culture Directorate, Ministry for Culture, Lands and Local Government

Maria Galea – President, Malta Entertainment and Arts Industry Association

Bradley Cachia – Writer and actor

The second session shall also dedicate time for **facilitated focus groups**. All participants will be invited to discuss a series of questions related to the conference theme. At the end of the allotted time attendees will present the focus group outcomes and findings.
