



## ***Books make a difference!*** ***Children's right to read in challenging times***

IBBY European Regional Conference

Thursday, 3 April 2025 Sala Concerto, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Wing D, Centro Servizi, Bologna Children's Book Fair

### **Speakers**

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**Marie Aubinais** (France) is a journalist and author of children's books. She currently works as a freelance writer in the countryside near Angers. Marie was a member of the editorial team at *Pomme d'Api* magazine for over twenty years and has collaborated with various publishers. Her involvement with ATD Quart Monde began in 1976, when she was a high school student; ATD Quart Monde established its first street libraries in Angers. In 2005, she joined the movement's Action Enfance initiative, where she oversaw the street libraries. She is the author of *Les bibliothèques de rue. Quand ouvrez-vous dehors ?* Additionally, Marie participates in ATD Quart Monde's ecological efforts aimed at promoting social and environmental justice.

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**Eva Berghmans** (Belgium) is an expert in human rights, including children's rights. She previously worked at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Catholic University of Louvain (KU Leuven), the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), and Amnesty International Vlaanderen. Since May 2024, she has taken up work at Iedereen Leest, the Belgium Flemish organisation for reading promotion, where she coordinates the annual *Voorleesweek* (Read Aloud Week) and *Jeugdboekenmaand* (Young Readers Book Month).

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**Gvantsa Jobava** (Georgia) is President of the International Publishers Association and the head of international Affairs at Intelekti Publishing, one of the biggest publishing houses in Georgia. She was previously chairperson of the Georgian Publishers and Booksellers Association, and head of the publishing programme for Georgia's guest of honour activities at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair. From 2013 to 2022 she was the organizer of Tbilisi International Book Festival. Since 2013, she has lobbied for the Georgian publishing industry, advocating Georgian publishers' interests and rights, standing for copyright and freedom to publish and freedom of expression in Georgia.

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**Basarat Kazim** (Pakistan) is the current president of IBBY. Basarat Kazim is the director of the Alif Laila Book Bus Society, which began as a children's library and evolved into a centre for educational innovation. She has written children's storybooks in Urdu and focused on improving education for disadvantaged children, particularly girls. Her initiatives include project-based learning, innovative mobile libraries, a technology bus, an Urdu literacy kit, and child-to-child teaching programmes. A recipient of national and international awards, she won the 2024 IBBY iREAD Outstanding Reading Promoter Award and was elected President of IBBY International at the 2024 Congress in Trieste. She continues to inspire a love of reading in Pakistan.

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**Nicky Parker** (UK) is a specialist in children's literature and human rights. Former head of Amnesty International UK's publishing programme, she is currently lead consultant on *Seen and Heard: Young People's Voices and Freedom of Expression*, with Amnesty Poland and the Universities of Malta, Humboldt-Berlin and Wroclaw. She is author of *These Rights Are Your Rights: An empowering guide for children everywhere* (Andersen 2024), and co-wrote *Know Your Rights and Claim Them: A Guide for Youth* (2021) with Angelina Jolie. She is an English PEN Trustee and on CLPE's Reflecting Realities steering group.

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**Elena Pasoli** (Italy) graduated in Classic Literature from the University of Bologna in 1980. She joined the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 1987 as a special-events manager and went on to become its project manager. In 2006, she directed the Communications department of the University of Bologna Foundation. She returned to the BolognaFiere in 2011, where she was appointed director in 2014. After the first editions of the Global Kids Connect Conference, created in New York in partnership with Publishers Weekly, Elena contributed to the creation in 2018 of the New York Rights Fair (NYRF), which was held for two editions before the Covid 19 pandemic. Her international activities continue with the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF), which, since 2018, is co-organised by BolognaFiere through its subsidiary company BFChina. Elena was elected to the IBBY EC in 2020 and in 2022.

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**Chris Riddell** (UK) is the creator of an extraordinary range of books which have won many illustration awards including the UNESCO Prize, Greenaway Medal (three times) and Hay Festival Medal for Illustration. As an author his work includes the highly-acclaimed *Ottoline* titles and the 2013 Costa Children's Book Award-winning *Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse*. He is also a renowned political cartoonist whose work appears in the Observer, the Literary Review and the New Statesman. Appointed Waterstones Children's Laureate UK in 2015, he is an Amnesty International UK ambassador and a valued member of the *Seen and Heard* team.



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**Farriba Schulz** (Germany) is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Education at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Universität Potsdam. Her research interest centres on construction of childhood, (visual) literacy and inclusion. Working collaboratively with schools, cultural institutions, and artists on projects, she has explored diversity and inclusivity in children's literature. She is a member of the *The Child and The Book* advisory board, and co-editor of *Political Changes and Transformations in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Children's Literature* (2023). Since 2023 she has been the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin coordinator and academic lead in *Seen and Heard: Young People's Voices and Freedom of Expression*

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**Valentina Stoeva** (Bulgaria) has been actively promoting reading in Bulgaria since 2008. She is the founder and chairperson of the Children's Books Foundation (Bulgaria) and the Reading Foundation (Bulgaria). She is the initiator of several reading promotion campaigns, including the Magic Pearl Children's Choice Award, the Reading Relay Campaign, the Reading Clubs Network, and the nationwide Day of Reading. Valentina has been appointed as the Libraries' Ambassador by the Bulgarian Library and Information Association and has been honoured as a Knight of the Book by the Bulgarian Book Association. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Theory of Reading at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sofia University. Since June 2024, Valentina has served as a co-chair of EURead.

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**Mateusz Świetlicki** (Poland) is Associate Professor at the University of Wrocław's Institute of English Studies, Director of the Center for Young People's Literature and Culture, as well as Vice-Dean for Student Affairs and Extramural Studies at the Faculty of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. His most recent book, *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory* (Routledge, 2023), examines the transnational entanglements of Canada and Ukraine. He has recently co-edited *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Children's Literature* (with Anastasia Ulanowicz, Routledge 2025) and *Navigating Children's Literature through Controversy: Global and Transnational Perspectives* (with Elżbieta Jamróz-Stolarska and Agata Zarzycka, Brill, 2023).

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**Ken Wilson-Max** (UK) is an award-winning author, illustrator, and children's books publisher born in Zimbabwe with close to 80 books published worldwide. His stories have always been naturally inclusive, and he advocates for a more inclusive, representative publishing industry.

He has been nominated for the Astrid Lingren Memorial Award three times, the Carnegie Awards in the UK twice. Most recently he set up a new imprint at Harper Collins Children's Books in the UK called Kumusha Books which is focused on improving representation by publishing stories from around the world.

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## Organizing Committee



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**Doris Breitmoser** (Germany) studied at the universities of Passau, Germany, and Parma, Italy, and completed a MA degree in International Cultural and Business Studies. She began her career in a publishing house and has been employed since 1997 at the head office of the German IBBY Section, the Association for Children's Literature/Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur (AKJ), in Munich. In 2003 she became the managing director of AKJ.

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**Hasmig Chahinian** (France) holds a PhD in children's literature from the University Sorbonne Paris Nord. She works in the International Division of the National Centre for Children's Literature, a service of the French National Library. Hasmig is the liaison officer for IBBY France. She contributes to the publications of the National Centre for Children's Literature, promotes reading and children's literature, and conducts training sessions in France and abroad. With her Armenian, Lebanese, and French heritage, Hasmig is particularly interested in multicultural identity and languages. From 2010 to 2014 and again from 2016 to 2020, Hasmig was a member of the IBBY Executive Committee and served as liaison officer for Europe. She was also the vice president of IBBY from 2012 to 2014. Currently, she holds the position of treasurer of IBBY.

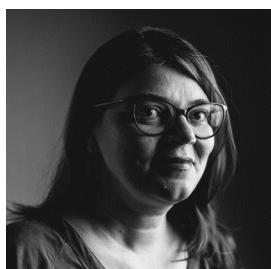
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**Charalambos Demetriou** (Cyprus) holds a master's degree (M.Ed.) in Curriculum Development and Instruction, focusing on Literature. With 21 years of teaching experience, he has been a counsellor to the Cyprus Ministry of Education since 2017, supporting literacy, creating materials and workshops. As an active reading promoter, he organizes and participates in educational conferences. In 2019, he joined the Cyprus IBBY board, representing it at international book fairs and conferences. In 2023, he contributed to organizing the IBBY European Regional Conference in Bologna. He currently serves on the IBBY EC and as the liaison officer for Europe (2024-26).

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**Eva Devos** (Belgium) studied Comparative Cultural Studies, Communication studies and Library Science. She started working for the National Centre of Children's Literature in 2000 and since 2006, has worked for the Flemish Reading Association, *Iedereen Leest* (Everybody Reads). She is the librarian at a professional library for children's literature and reading promotion, and coordinates a reading advice website for children and young people. In 2002, she joined the Flemish branch of IBBY Belgium as the liaison officer and in 2015 she became president of the Flemish branch.

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**Pam Dix** (UK) is the Chair of IBBY UK. She has worked as a librarian and a university lecturer. She runs a small charity, the Akili Trust, which establishes community libraries in rural areas in Kenya, and is on the board of Book Aid International. She has written on school libraries and co-edited the proceedings of the IBBY Congress in New Zealand (*Children's Literature in a Multiliterate World*). Her current research area of interest is illustration in information books for children. She is a member of the 2025 Bologna Ragazzi Award judging panel.

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**Sabine Fuchs** (Austria) studied Theology and German language and literature in Graz, Austria. At the TU Berlin, Germany, she wrote her PhD thesis on Christine Nöstlinger. She worked as a research assistant at the University of Graz, as a teacher at secondary schools, and taught children's and youth literature at universities. From 2013 until her retirement in 2022, she taught and researched as a professor of children's and young adult literature and didactics at the University of Teacher Education Styria in Graz. In 2017, she founded and directed the KijuLit Center for Research and Didactics of Children's and Youth Literature. She is still active as researcher, as Liaison Officer for IBBY Austria and as member of the 2024 HCAA Jury.

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**Laia López** (Spain) holds a degree in Communication Sciences and a postgraduate degree in Strategic Planning in Business Communication. She has been the Communications and Press Officer of IBBYcat, the Catalan section of IBBY Spain, since 2022. She is a communications consultant with a wide experience in different sectors. In recent years, she has specialised in developing strategies for brands that want to make a positive difference in the world. Her deep passion for education and children's well-being led her to the children's publishing industry, where she worked for several years as an editor, focusing on children's literature communications. She is strongly committed to promoting reading and culture among children and young people, believing that this provides a powerful opportunity for developing the individual, their sensitivity and critical thinking skills. She currently collaborates with various blogs and media and hosts a podcast on education, childhood and motherhood on Betevé (Barcelona TV).

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**Marta Roig** (Spain) has a degree in Library Science and Documentation and a Masters in School Libraries and Reading Promotion. She has been the Technical Secretary of IBBYcat (the Catalan section of IBBY Spain) since 2019. She joined the IBBYcat Executive Committee in 2008 as a representative of the Official Association of Librarians and Documentalists of Catalonia (COBDC), when she was coordinator of the *Born to Read* programme (2008-2011), later becoming the coordinator of the Reading Municipality programme (2016-2019). She has designed, developed and coordinated projects and activities to promote reading and school libraries, and has set up and run several reading laboratories. She has also trained and advised professionals, institutions and companies in the cultural and educational sectors.

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