

Dear Professor Monika Grütters – Minister of State for Culture and Media,

We are appealing to you because we are deeply concerned about one of the most renowned literary festivals in the world, for which, in terms of status and financing, you bear considerable responsibility. The internationales literaturfestival berlin (ilb) was founded in 2001 by the cultural manager and literature aficionado Ulrich Schreiber, who has served as the festival's director from the beginning. Since then it has gained considerable importance in the literary world, especially on an international scale. The caliber and scope of this festival are unparalleled: the high participation of world-famous authors, range of unusual events, level of international diversity, intercultural discussions, showcasing of up-and-coming talents from all continents, focus on literature for children and young adults, and, since 2011, increased presentation of comics and graphic novels, emphasis on political issues, as well as cross-genre approach and orientation towards topical scientific subjects, initiation of special projects (such as the Worldwide Readings), as well as visitors' enthusiastic feedback and – just as important – engaging hospitality, all reflect the spirit of Berlin and the festival's unique approach.

Germany is revered and also envied by many people around the world for its cultural wealth and public funding of the arts and culture. Which begs the question: how can it be that, after 16 years since its inception, the festival has failed to be reclassified as an institution by the Ministry of Culture, and continues to be categorized as a project, that is to say, is still only receiving basic state funding that is only granted after a comprehensive proposal is submitted every year? How can it be that the funding provided – for which we are definitely very grateful – has remained at the same basic level for 15 years, despite the sky-rocketing costs of living and organizing these kinds of events? Is it because literature is considered less “sexy” than film? After all, you yourself called the festival “The Berlinale of Literature” – leaving us all the more confused that, since you took office four years ago, the ilb's status remains unchanged?

Imagine what would be lost, should this particular festival cease to exist?

In the defense of literature and your own country we entreat you to approve our proposal that the internationales literaturfestival berlin be officially recognized as an institution and to grant the funding necessary for its continued survival.

With the best of wishes

Melinda Nadj Abonji, Hungary/ Switzerland

César Aira, Argentina

Pallavi Aiyar, India/ Indonesia

Karim Alrawi, Egypt/ UK/ Canada

Martin Amanshauser, Austria

Chloe Aridjis, Mexico/ UK

Homero Aridjis, Mexico

Ingeborg Arvola, Norway

John Ashbery, USA

Nadeem Aslam, Pakistan/ UK

Ricardo Azevedo, Brazil

Fadhil al-Azzawi, Iraq/ Germany

Dieter Bachmann, Switzerland

Liana Badr, Palestine

Doreen Baingana, Uganda

Vladislav Bajac, Serbia
Zsófia Bán, Brazil/ Hungary
Carmen-Francesca Banciu, Romania/ Germany
Chirag Bangdel, Nepal
Nir Baram, Israel
María Cecilia Barbetta, Argentina/ Germany
Israel Bar-Kohav, Israel
Priya Basil, UK/ Germany
Stefania Battistella, Italy
Oya Baydar, Turkey
Azouz Begag, France
Yahia Belaskri, Algeria
Gaston Bellemare, Canada
Bengt Berg, Sweden
Wolf Biermann, Germany
Mahi Binebine, Morocco
Carol Birch, UK
Tony Birch, Australia
Bjarni Bjarnason, Iceland
Marica Bodroži
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, Croatia/ Germany
Mirko Bonne, Germany
Meriam Bouselmi, Tunisia
Coral Bracho, Mexico
Anneke Brassinga, Netherlands
Hans Christoph Buch, Germany
John Burnside, UK
Rafael Cardoso, Brazil
Mircea Cartarescu, Romania
Brian Castro, Australia
Patricia Cavalli, Italy
Sampurna Chattarji, Ethiopia/ India
Amir Hassan Cheheltan, Iran
Boris Chersonskij, Ukraine
Yiorgos Chouliaras, Greece
Carll Cneut, Belgium
John Coetzee, South Africa/ Australia
Joshua Cohen, USA
Tom Cooper, USA
Bora Cosic, Serbia/ Croatia/ Germany
Beppe Costa, Italy
João Paulo Cuenca, Brazil
Beqë Cufaj, Kosovo/ Germany
Ankalina Dahlem, Germany
Louis-Philippe Dalembert, Haiti
Achmat Dangor, South Africa/ USA
Rachna Singh-Davidar, India
Michael M. Day, Canada
Radka Denemarkova, Czech Republic
Adriaan van Dis, Netherlands

Rita Dove, USA
György Dragomán, Romania/ Hungary
Flora Drew, UK
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Álvaro Enrigue, Mexico/ USA
Victor Erofeev, Russia
Ashur Etwebi, Libya/ Norway
Jeffrey Eugenides, USA
Richard Flanagan, Australia
Tope Folarin, Nigeria/ USA
Jack Foley, USA
Arturo Fontaine, Chile
Alissa Ganijewa, Russia
Paolo Giordano, Italy
Namita Gokhale, India
Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, Germany/ France
Katharina Greve, Germany
David Grossman, Israel
Carla Guelfenbein, Chile
Tarık Günersel, Turkey
Romesh Gunsekera, Sri Lanka/ UK
Rawi Hage, Lebanon/ Canada
JoeAnn Hart, USA
Milton Hatoum, Brazil
Paal-Helge Haugen, Norway
Frank Heibert, Germany
Christoph Hein, Germany
Finn-Ole Heinrich, Germany
Hallgrímur Helgason, Iceland
Sverre Henmo, Norway
Yuri Herrera, Mexico
Ala Hlehel, Palestine
Edward Hirsch, USA
Marjolijn Hof, Netherlands
David Howard, New Zealand
Stanka Hrastelj, Slovenia
Tendai Huchu, Zimbabwe/ UK
David Huerta, Mexico
Witi Ihimaera, New Zealand
Alexander W. Ilitschewski, Russia/ Israel
Mario Vargas Llosa, Peru/ Spain
Hilde Susan Jaegtnes, Norway
Drago Jan
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ar, Slovenia
Elfriede Jelinek, Austria
Louis Jensen, Denmark
Miljenko Jergovic, Croatia
Gail Jones, Australia
Lieve Joris, Belgium
Peter Stephan Jungk, USA/ Austria

Samir Kacimi, Algeria
Wolfgang Kaleck, Germany
Anja Kampmann, Germany
Yade Kara, Turkey/ Germany
Rafiq Kathwari, USA
Daniel Kehlmann, Austria/ Germany/ USA
Uzma Aslam Khan, Pakistan/ USA
Jemma L. King, UK
Alexandra Kleeman, USA
Jessie Kleemann, Greenland/ Denmark
Sheila Kohler, South Africa/ USA
Laszlo Krasznahorkai, Hungary
Guus Kuijer, Netherlands
Vyacheslav Kupriyanov, Russia
Goretti Kyomuhendo, Uganda
Yitzhak Laor, Israel
Sergey Lebedev, Russia
Jan de Leeuw, Belgium
Margitt Leibert, Germany
Julia Leigh, Australia
Christoph Leisten, Germany
Michael Lentz, Germany
Liao Liao, China
Dan Lungu, Romania
Jonas Lüscher, Switzerland/ Germany
Ma Jian, China/ UK
Alain Mabanckou, Congo/ France/ USA
Nikola Madzirov, Macedonia
Andri Snær Magnason, Iceland
Geert Mak, Netherlands
Vasyl Makhno, Belarus/ USA
John Marsden, Australia
Émile Martel, Canada
Yann Martel, Spain/ Canada
Maryia Martysevich, Belarus
Achille Mbembe, Cameroon
Paul McVeigh, Ireland/ UK
Zakes Mda, South Africa/ USA
Harry Merkle, Germany
Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, India
Amanda Michalopoulou, Greece
Pankaj Mishra, India
Paula Morris, New Zealand
Aju Mukhopadhyay, India
Herta Müller, Germany/ Romania
Birgit Müller-Wieland, Austria/ Germany
Veronica Murguía, Mexico
Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Kenya/ USA
Quito Nicolaas, Netherlands
Moni Nilsson, Sweden
Ostap Nožak, Poland/ Ukraine

Margaret Obank, UK
Norman Ohler, Germany
Anna Onichimowska, Poland
Marius Oprea, Romania
Galvarino Orellana, Chile
Håkon Øvreås, Norway
Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Kenya
Ruth Padel, UK
Michael Palmer, USA
Sigurdur Pálsson, Iceland
Orhan Pamuk, Turkey
Hermann Peter Piwitt, Germany
Elisabeth Plessen, Germany
Marko Pogacar, Croatia
Jean Portante, Luxembourg/ France
Francine Prose, USA
Ahmed Rashid, Pakistan
Laura Restrepo, Colombia/ Spain
Willem M. Roggeman, Belgium
Gabriel Rosenstock, Ireland
Meg Rosoff, UK/ USA
Jaroslav Rudiš, Czech Republic
Jacques Rupnik, France
Salman Rushdie, India/ USA
Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin, Sudan/ Austria
Alberto Ruy Sánchez, Mexico
Alejandro Sánchez-Aizcorbe, Peru
Luisa A Vicioso Sánchez, Dominican Republic
Boualem Sansal, Algeria
Mayra Santos-Febres, Puerto Rico
Sapphire, USA
John Ralston Saul, Canada
Allen Say, Japan/ USA
Robert Schindel, Austria
Michail Schischkin, Russia/ Switzerland
Peter Schneider, Germany
Raoul Schrott, Austria
Faruk Sehic, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Vikram Seth, India/ UK
Elif Shafak, Turkey/ UK
Nicholas Shakespeare, UK
Samuel Shimon, Iraq/ UK
Tajima Shinji, Japan
Sjón, Iceland
Rafał Skarż
ycki, Poland
Burhan Sönmez, Turkey/ UK
Flavio Soriga, Italy
Ersi Sotiropoulos, Greece
Patricia de Souza, Peru/ France

Wole Soyinka, Nigeria, USA
Peter Stamm, Switzerland
Christian Karlson Stead, New Zealand
Robert Max Steenkist, Colombia
Aleš Šteger, Slovenia
Ferenc Szijj, Hungary
George Szirtes, Hungary/ UK
Jüri Talvet, Estonia
Paulo Teixeira, Mozambique/ Portugal
Janne Teller, Denmark
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Alan Titley, Ireland
Camille de Toledo, France
John Tranter, Australia
Anja Tuckermann, Germany
Amir Valle, Cuba/ Germany
David Vann, USA/ UK
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Peter Völker, Germany
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