

PRESS RELEASE



WORD EXPRESS

A train of thought spreads the word through South-East Europe

In the second half of October 2009, twenty young writers from South-East Europe and the United Kingdom will embark on a train journey with a difference. Travelling in three separate groups, the writers will set out from Sarajevo, Bucharest and Ljubljana as part of a literary project called *Word Express*. Their final destination will be Istanbul, but before reaching the Turkish capital, they will stop in a number of cities along the way to meet local writers and give readings, and eventually write about their impressions of the places they visit and the people they encounter.

The *Word Express* writers will arrive in Istanbul on 30 October and will spend five days meeting their Turkish colleagues and presenting their work in several venues, including the newly launched Istanbul Tanpinar Literature Festival and the annual Istanbul Book Fair.

Word Express is a new project for literary exchange in South-East Europe, coordinated by the UK-based Literature Across Frontiers in cooperation with Delta Publishing in Istanbul, as part of of the EU-supported Literature Across Frontiers programme and of the British Council's Creative Collaboration Programme which aims to enrich the cultural life of Europe and its surrounding countries and to build trust and understanding across communities by generating dialogue and debate. In a region marked with past and present conflicts, Word Express aims to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries and bring new literary voices of the region to the fore.

The project which started in May 2009 and will extend into 2010, aims to create opportunities for literary exchange and dialogue by establishing a network of young writers, translators, literary magazines and venues in twelve countries and connecting them with the UK.

Some fifty young authors and translators will be eventually involved in the project, exploring the region's cultural, social and political legacy and meeting their colleagues from the participating countries. The participants come from the following countries: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Israel, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey and the United Kingdom – and their work will be translated into the languages of the region and published in literary magazines in each of the participating countries. They will also have the opportunity to work collaboratively on projects combining writing with video and film art, photography and music, to be showcased in the second stage of the project in 2010.

For this project, led by Delta Publishing in Istanbul, the British Council and Literature Across Frontiers work with a range of other partners, including the National Book Centre and the Romanian Cultural Institute in Bucharest and Istanbul, Profil Books in Zagreb, Blesok in Skopje, *Sarajevske sveske* (Sarajevo Notebooks for Regional Culture), Treci trg in Belgrade, *Literaturen Vestnik* in Sofia, Young Writers Club in Ljubljana, *Endefktirio* magazine and literary venue in Thessaloniki, *Inknagir* literary magazine in Yerevan, and Helicon - the Society for the Advancement of Poetry in Israel and the *Helicon Poetry Journal* in Tel Aviv.

The project is co-financed by the British Council and Literature Across Frontiers (supported by Culture Programme of the European Union), with kind support from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Institute of the Translation of Hebrew Literature, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, the Scottish Arts Council and Wales Arts International.

www.wordexpress.org

www.britishcouncil.org/creativecollaboration

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