



To
Cristina E. Fernández de Kirchner
President
Balcarce 50, piso 1. CP (1064)
Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
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República Argentina
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29 May 2012

Dear President,

OPEN LETTER: Import restrictions on Books threaten education, cultural diversity and human rights in Argentina

The International Publishers Association has been alerted to the harmful impact of various regulations, resolutions and decrees restricting the importation of books, paper and other publishing related goods. We submit that these measures violate important human rights of Argentineans. Moreover this weakens the free circulation of cultural, political and educational works. We appeal to your government to exclude books and related material from import restrictions, so as to ensure freedom to publish/freedom of expression in Argentina.

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the international federation of trade associations representing book and journal publishers worldwide. Established in Paris in 1896, IPA counts some 60 national, regional and specialised publishers associations from 55 countries among its members, and therefore the great majority of publishers, together generating world-wide sales of EUR 112 billion. IPA is an accredited non-governmental organisation enjoying observer status to United Nations organisations, including the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the UNESCO. IPA's main goals are the promotion of literacy and reading, freedom to publish and the development and protection of copyright.

We are alarmed by publisher reports and complaints from member associations regarding the increasing number of obstacles publishers face when exporting books to Argentina: import restrictions, certification requirements and payment limits. In practice this means that the flow of books into Argentina is severely hindered. This in turn means that Argentinean readers are prevented from accessing foreign literature, scientific publications, school and university textbooks or other text-based information resources.

Whereas it is arguable that other foreign goods may be substituted through home grown, Argentinean products, it is impossible to generate the variety of cultural content offered by publishers world-wide in Spanish and other languages solely through Argentinean creations. It is the global diversity of literary works that makes these imports so invaluable to Argentinean society. In the long term, this will impact on all aspects of the cultural social and economic life

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of Argentina, and will thus have exactly the opposite effect than the one envisaged in the short term. In short: the measure restricting book importation makes Argentina poorer in every way.

We therefore urge you to review the various trade measures enacted under your government that impact on the importation of books and to create exemptions for books, publications or text-based materials wherever possible.

The restriction of imports of books and publishing materials does not strengthen the Argentinean economy; it weakens society as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jens Bammel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jens Bammel
Secretary General

Cc:

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