Tunisia

Information about Tunisia’s economic situation in numbers

Area: 162,155 sq km

Population: 10.5 million (estimate 2009)

Illiteracy rate: 14.2 % (2005)

Gross Domestic Product: 40.8 billion USD (2008)

GDP per capita: 3,955 USD (2008)

Rate of inflation: 3.5 % (estimate 2009)

Unemployment: 14.2 % (2008)

(Source: gtai – Germany Trade & Invest / Gesellschaft für Außenwirtschaft und Standortmarketing mbH, May 2010)

Information on book production in Tunisia

Sales
The book industry is not recorded or identified separately in the statistics on industrial production and domestic trade provided by the Institut National de la Statistique in Tunisia. The Tunisian Publishers Union also does not collect data. Sales can only be estimated indirectly on the basis of surveys of household budgets (Enquête Nationale sur le Budget, la Consommation et le Niveau de Vie des Ménages 2000) and on the basis of public expenditure (libraries, education).

Share of educational and cultural expenditure per household (2000): 3.3 % (Tobacco: 3.1 %)
Ministry of Culture’s budget for book purchases (2004): 3.5 million TND
Circulation of schoolbooks at all educational levels 2004-2005: 15.6 million copies

Title production / new releases per year
The Tunisian national library is the authority for documenting title production. The statistical gathering of UNESCO and ALECSO is extremely incomplete and thus not reliable. The number of titles published per year grew from 853 in 1992 to 1,383 titles in 2003, with a significant portion attributable to children’s
books and school textbooks. A breakdown by category reveals the following averages over the period from 1992 to 2003 (in percentages):

- General knowledge / reference books: 2
- Philosophy / Psychology: 3
- Religion: 2
- Social sciences: 21
- Exact sciences: 6
- Applied sciences: 6
- Arts and leisure: 2
- Language and literature: 50
- History and geography: 8

**Average book price (in USD)**
- Paperback: 5.4
- Hardcover: 11.7

**Fixed book pricing**

Prices are essentially uniform, according to the custom of the Tunisian book industry, with variations primarily occurring during specific selling events (like book fairs, for example).

**Copyright laws**

Berne Convention for the protection of works of literature and art, since December 1886.

National law: Loi no 94-36 du 24 février 1994 relative à la propriété littéraire et artistique. Observance of this law is fundamentally ensured by the OTPDA (Organisme tunisien de protection des droits d'auteur), established in 1996, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture (Order Nr. 2230 from 11 November 1996). World Trade Organisation (TRIPS-WTO), since March 1995.

**Licensing statistics**

In the period from 2004 to 2008, there were no German licenses sold to Tunisia (Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2009). Licensing statistics are not administered in Tunisia. Translations from European languages are funded by foreign cultural institutes and diplomatic missions (French, Italian, Spanish), while Tunisia’s national translation programmes exist on a very small scale.

**Export / Import**

Exports in the category HS 4901 (Harmonized System Code for books, brochures and similar printed products) grew unevenly from 0.8 million TND in 2000 to 4.1 million TND in 2004 (1 TND = 0.78 USD). This is attributed to increased business with French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. Exports to France account for 0.3 million TND and trade with neighbouring countries in the Maghreb is declining in some cases. Imports in the category HS 4901 increased from 16.1 million TND in 2000 to 18.6 million TND in 2004 and are thus significantly more substantial than exports. Main suppliers are France (2004: 9.9 million TND), Lebanon (2004: 5.3 million TND), Egypt (2004: 1.2 million TND) and Great Britain (2004: 1 million TND).

**Number of publishers and bookstores**

The exact number of publishers is difficult to determine and varies between 57 (according to current trade directories) and 42 (according to the number of members of the Tunisian Publishers Union, as of 2005). Higher figures usually include companies with an emphasis on printing or periodicals. The number of points of sale for books is estimated to be around 100, including direct sales by the publisher.
Tunisia has a relatively large proportion of publishing in the public sector, mainly consisting of the Centre National Pédagogique (all educational materials, nearly 300 titles per year), the Centre de Publications Universitaires (approx. 60 titles per year) and the Beit Al-Hikma (Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts). Private publishers are more abundant, but produce fewer titles annually (generally 10 to 15), in print runs of 1,000 (academic books) to 5,000 (children's books) copies.

**Sales / Distribution channels**
Books are primarily sold directly by publishing houses. Only in urban areas are there a few retail bookstores that offer a general selection. Sales are primarily commission-based for publishers, who take back copies that have not been sold or replace them with new releases. Domestic book fairs (Tunis International Book Fair; Sfax Children’s Book Fair) are aimed directly at supporting the retail trade and expanding the wholesale trade.

**Book fair**
The 28th Tunis International Book Fair (Foire Internationale du Livre de Tunis: [http://www.foiredelivre.nat.tn/](http://www.foiredelivre.nat.tn/)) was held from 23 April to 2 May 2010. It was attended by 328 exhibitors from 35 countries (mostly indirect participation).
A smaller trade fair is the children’s book fair in Sfax, which also takes place annually. Tunisian publishers participate only rarely and to a small extent at regional or international book fairs.

*(As of: May 2010)*