Another Brick Through Our Window

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Konsensus

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Contents

About this Piece **v**

1 Another Brick Through Our Window **1**

Source **4**

About this Piece

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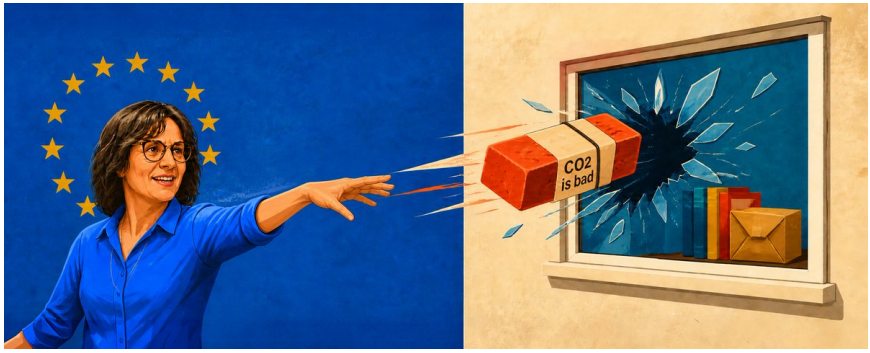
CHAPTER 1

Another Brick Through Our Window

In 1850, Frédéric Bastiat wrote about a broken window. On August 12, 2026, the European Union threw yet another brick through ours.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) took effect this week. For us, sending a book directly to a customer across an intra-EU border now means registration in the destination country, a local producer-responsibility arrangement, weight-based packaging reports, and a locally established representative. One registration does not cover the union, of course. Each country runs its own register and wants its own paperwork, for a paperback in a cardboard envelope that the warehouse bought and folded itself. All in the good name of "reducing carbon."

That goal is accomplished. Konsensus can no longer send those cardboard envelopes across an intra-EU border at all. This is what "reducing carbon" looks like in real time.



Bastiat's townspeople watched the glazier collect his fee after replacing the shopkeeper's broken window and saw prosperity, for it is easy to point at things that did happen. What the townspeople could not see was the shopkeeper now out of cash to buy a fur for his wife, or the fur maker who had lost a client. The compliance officers hired across Europe this month will show up in employment figures. The books that now stop at the border will show up nowhere, because nobody counts a book that was never sold. Hazlitt reduced the whole of economics to one line: trace a policy through to every group, not only the group you can see.

There is an even older failure underneath. Mises proved in 1920 that a planner without prices is working blind, and whoever drafted this moronic regulation had no price (opportunity or otherwise) for anything they were allocating. They had tonnage that — for political reasons — needed to go down. So the rule treats a publisher holding three thousand books in the EU the same as it treats a company with three hundred thousand, because tonnage was the only number on the desk and bringing it down at all costs was the only goal.

For eight years, we have printed the books no mainstream house would touch. Hard money, sovereignty, and the arguments that make editorial palms sweaty. The catalog runs to 101 titles by 48 authors in 31 languages, 94 of which are held as physical stock, and every copy was paid for by the proceeds from the last book we sold or out of our own pockets when that fell short. No venture money. No grants. Nothing from "the union" that has promised to facilitate trade in the EU area while running barbed wire around borders they were supposed to diminish. They practically closed the book on us.

What does this mean for our customers? For now, we will keep a heavily restricted selection available in Germany, France, and Finland through local distributors. Everywhere else in the EU, we stop as of today. Outside the EU, nothing changes at all, which tells you a little something about the ways of the world.

To tell you the truth, the margins were thin as they were, so losing more than half of our catalog means we are winding down print sales entirely this year. No more paper books for sats, unfortunately.

Konsensus is digital-first from here on out. Ebooks, audiobooks, and the whole digital catalog stay available everywhere, our publishing services keep running, and print survives through print-on-demand via Amazon, which can afford a compliance department in twenty-seven countries and was never a competitor this rule was written to eradicate.

WE ARE SELLING THE STRANDED STOCK AT PRODUCTION COST

We have 1,481 books stranded in Germany and France, whose readers live elsewhere. 62 titles in eight languages: English, Dutch, Spanish, Swedish, Arabic, Portuguese, Danish, and Italian.

To any operator legally able to distribute within the EU, we will sell at production cost. Take a language, take a warehouse, or take the whole lot. The books belong in circulation and the readers' shelves in the twenty-four countries we can no longer serve.

Write to hello@konsensus.net to strike a deal.

To everyone who bought, read, and supported us over the past eight years: thank you. It has been an absolute pleasure. Unfortunately, it is time for us to move on to other things now.

Who reads paper books anyway, right?

Originally posted by Konsensus (@KonsensusN) on 2026-08-14. Read it in the original.

Source

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