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Czech Author Dora Kaprálová Wins 2026 EU Prize for Literature

A novella exploring a Slovenian city's cultural memory through the lens of magic and illusion has won the European Union's highest literary honour.

Dora Kaprálová, a Czech writer born in Brno in 1975 and based in Berlin, has been awarded the [2026 European Union Prize for Literature](#) (EUPL) for her novella *Mariborská hypnóza* (Maribor Hypnosis), published by *Větrné mlýny*. The winner was announced on 29 May 2026 by a seven-member international jury at a ceremony during the [Warsaw International Book Fair](#).

The jury's choice crowns a remarkable run for the book in Kaprálová's home country. In April 2026, *Maribor Hypnosis* received the [Magnesia Litera](#) — the Czech Republic's most prestigious literary prize — winning both the Book of the Year and the Best Prose category. The EUPL Grand Prix adds an international dimension to that recognition and brings with it €10,000 and funding for two translations of her work into other European languages.

The novella takes its title and setting from Maribor, Slovenia's second city, where Kaprálová spent several weeks in 2024 at the invitation of her publisher. The result is a fragmentary, poetic work in which the narrator is an ordinary housefly — a deliberately marginal observer moving through the city's streets and encountering its inhabitants.

Woven around this unusual perspective is a love story between Leo Svengali, a hypnotist, and his assistant Elis, in which elements of magical realism sit alongside meditations on illusion, disinformation, and the boundary between innocent imagination and dangerous deception. According to the official [EUPL author profile](#), the work "combines playfulness, humour and melancholy while reflecting on the phenomena of the illusion, fake news, and questions of difference between innocent imagination and dangerous lies."

Kaprálová is the author of several prose works for adults — including *Islands, Suffering and Other Genres*, and *A Winter Book of Love* — as well as children's books. She has also made radio documentaries and written reportage, and in recent years has collaborated with Czech theatres. She lives and works mainly in Berlin.

Special mentions were awarded to Hélène Frédérick of France for *Lézardes (Rivers of White)*, published by Gallimard, and to Vladimir Vujović of Montenegro for *Slobodni udarci (Free Kicks)*, published by Partizanska knjiga. Each special mention recipient receives €5,000 and support for one translation.

The EUPL, an [annual initiative of the Creative Europe programme](#), was established in 2009 to recognise emerging fiction writers across Europe and to encourage the translation and cross-border circulation of literary work. Fourteen authors from fourteen countries were shortlisted for this year's edition, drawn from the participating countries selected for the current three-year cycle: Armenia, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Sweden. The remaining eleven shortlisted authors will also receive support for one translation and promotion at major European book fairs.

Nominations are made by national organisations with expertise in promoting their country's literature abroad. A seven-member European jury then reviews translated excerpts from all shortlisted books before selecting the overall winner and special mentions.

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