



Town Hall of El Pedroso
1 Plaza de España, 41360,
El Pedroso, Sevilla
Spain

January 15th , 2015

Attn. Mr. Jan Klovstad.
President of the International Organization of Bookstown
Tvdestrand, Norway

AYUNTAMIENTO DE EL
PEDROSO
REGISTRO SALIDA
2015-S-RC-53
19/01/2015 11:51



Dear Sir,

Please, receive our warmest greetings from El Pedroso, town located in Sierra Norte of Seville (Andalusia- Spain).

My name is Manuel Meléndez Domínguez and I am the Mayor of this town.

I am writing to you to let you aware of the express wish of our town to be declared "Booktown" and, by answering this letter, know by return the conditions to draw up this request before the International Organization of Bookstown you head.

First of all, I would like to present a brief overview of our town and the reasons leading us to make this request from this town council.

El Pedroso is a rural town of 2.200 inhabitants, mostly dedicated to the exploitation of natural resources. Our excellent geographical location, 60 km far from Seville and even less from its airport; well communicated by road and with a train station within the town centre, make us the natural gateway to the region, within the Natural Park of La Sierra Norte of Seville, in the Andalusian Sierra Morena. We form part of the European and Global Geoparks Networks in the Europarc Federation (European Letter of Sustainable Tourism in Preserved Areas), being integrated in the World Network of Biosphere Reserve as well.

In addition to this, our town has an important artistic heritage, part of which has been exhibited in the Metropolitan of New York or the National Gallery of London, just to mention the most relevant exhibition.

For the last 19 years, the Traditional Products Fair of El Pedroso is celebrated in the month of December, attracting every edition two millions of visitors.

But being the above a brief description of our current reality, we come from being an important mining centre, named La Fundición del Pedroso, which managed to be the main iron producer during the industrialization in the middle of the 19th Century, founding the first blast furnace in our environment. Avatars of history left that industry behind.

Everything is different today, and it is from culture and sustainable tourism, in this preserved rural environment, where our present will projects into a better future.

From that point of view, the Town Council, in close collaboration with the Cultural Association "La Fundición de El Pedroso", set us the aim of establishing our town as Booktown.

This approach is not a trivial issue as, to begin with, two of the most important Spanish Editors were born in our town: Mr. Antonio Herrero and the renowned Mr. José Manuel Lara Hernández, the founder of Editorial Planeta, creator of the award of the same name and first international editor in Spanish language. And we are surely not in error, if we say that the Group Planeta is nowadays one of the 3 or 4 most important of the world. Beyond figures, Lara, as was known by his fellow villagers, made a huge contribution, out of nothing, to the divulgation of the reading in times of great hardship of our country and his work has lasted. He was appointed at the time "Favorite Son" of El Pedroso and has always been emotionally linked to this town.

The Cuban poet Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda comes as well from a family of this town, where her grandmother was born and married the then Mayor of the town, and it falls under our plans to make her posthumously appointed Member of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, title prohibited to her in the 19th Century for the women discrimination of the time.

Let us add to all this, the restoration of a beautiful and singular building of the local heritage. "the old school", built in 1935, located in a plot of land of 3.167 m², with 1.326m² built, and its conversion into a Cultural Centre. Together with different facilities, it will host as well a permanent exhibition about the *History of the Writing*, as a Museum with didactic purposes.

A concept that goes even further, as contemplates in parallel both the *History of the Teaching of Writing* and *the History of the Book*, associated to the publishing, obviously previous to Aldo Manuccio, continuing the scan from him until the 20th Century, where our fellow country man are integrated and in particular the editor José Manuel Lara. A large gallery will host the History of Planata Awards, with all the original books since its creation in 1952, where every year the winner will add the new award-winning book in an official ceremony.

That ceremony will be one of the several programmed throughout the year, many of them aimed to children and young people, where we would like to place particular emphasis, as we consider crucial to stimulate the passion for reading in young people. We are promoting the creation of an important event in this regard, without forgetting the creation of an award aimed to this editorial sector.

For our cultural programme we have the support of the Foundation José Manuel Lara, located at Seville. Our library Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, also included in the same Cultural Centre, will have a Lecture Hall named Planeta nourished from this Foundation, with all the digitalized publishing collections of the Editorial.

Different actions to keep alive our aimed Booktown, as for example the Book Train, which will bring closer the tourism from Seville by train with an attractive programme taking passengers back to the time of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda; taking the book off the shelf and bringing closer to the town villagers and visitants; seasons of Summer Film and Literature, divulgating and analysing literary works brought to the cinema screens, where speakers and moviegoers will forward, share and contrast positions, bringing them closer to all.....These are only part of the wide ranging programme created, for all the culture and values of a town will be focused on becoming a driving force of development for its inhabitants, from a sustainable and cultural tourism.

All these approaches come from the will of its inhabitants who, from this Town Hall, and considering different cultural, historic, infrastructure and contextual factors, understand this alternative as an important impulse of projection and development for this town, and that, together with the Cultural Association La Fundición de El Pedroso, organization born with this aim, welcome all the social fabric.

Thus, and back to the beginning of this letter, we kindly request you, from the organization you head, to provide us with any information you deem relevant for the access to become a Booktown, in order to complete the appropriate formalities.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to our request.

Yours faithfully.

A blue ink signature is written over a circular official seal. The seal features a central emblem with a crown and a shield, surrounded by the text "AYUNTAMIENTO DE EL PEDROSO". A horizontal line is drawn across the seal and signature.

Manuel Meléndez Domínguez.
Mayor of El Pedroso.