

Monday, 2 February 2026

THE ILSE SCHWEPCKE PRIZE



Submissions open for the world's most valuable travel writing prize for women

The Ilse Schwegcke Prize is delighted that Fiammetta Rocco will Chair the 2026 jury. Fiammetta is Emeritus Director of the International Booker Prize and former culture editor of *The Economist*. She will be joined on the jury by Arabella Friesen of John Sandoe Books, one of London's best-loved bookshops, and by the writer Jacky Colliss Harvey, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Red: A Natural History of the Redhead*. The Chair, Fiammetta Rocco, said:

"Travel writing is one of the best ways of stepping into another person's shoes; to learn about what other people see, how they feel, and how they make sense of the world.

Think of Dervla Murphy, Freya Stark, Martha Gellhorn, and in a newer generation: Cheryl Strayed, Robyn Davidson and Noo Saro-Wiwa.

In 2026, I'll be chairing The Ilse Schwegcke Prize, the world's most valuable award for travel writing by women. Come and join us for a tour of the great women travel writers working today."

The Ilse Schwegcke Prize, which honours the best travel book by a woman writing in English, has opened submissions for its second year. Since 1 January 2026, publishers have been able to submit books first published between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.

In October, two authors will be crowned winners of the prize – one writing in English, and one in German through the sister prize, Der Ilse-Schwegcke-Preis – and will be awarded £5,000 and €6.000 respectively.

The inaugural Ilse Schwegcke Prize was awarded in October 2025 to Ursula Martin for *One Woman Walks Europe: From Wales to Ukraine and Back Again* (Honno).

Submissions for the 2026 prize close on 31 March 2026. A shortlist will be announced in September, and the winners of the English and German prizes announced at a ceremony during the Frankfurt Book Fair on 9 October.

The Ilse Schwegcke Prize is administered by the Society of Authors.

For more information about the prizes please visit:

<https://www.ilseschwegckepriize.co.uk/>

<https://www.ilseschwegckepreis.de/>

Contact:

Daisy Wilkins
Ilse Schwegcke Prize
4 Cinnamon Row
London SW11 3TW
+44 7785 745 343

info@ilseschwegckepriize.co.uk

Kirchner Kommunikation
Gneisenastrasse
10961 Berlin
+49 30 84 71 18 0
+49 30 84 71 18 11

kirchner@kirchner-pr.de