

Report on the State of Publishing in Italy
Consolidated 2024 and first nine months 2025 trade market
by AIE Research Department

Summary

Italian publishing in 2024 – the year that saw it Guest of Honor at the Frankfurter Buchmesse – increased its foreign rights sales by 8 percent to 8,484 and its rights purchases by 5 percent to 9,810. On the domestic market side, 2024 was a down year, with the market value standing at 3.234 billion euros, -1.4 percent compared to 2023. Included in these numbers are the trade market, scholastic, professional and university publishing, export, and sales to libraries.

The downturn became more pronounced in the first nine months of 2025: from January to September, the trade market alone (printed nonfiction and fiction sold in bookstores, online, and large retailers) fell by 2 percent in value (€995.3 million) and 2.7 percent in copies (68 million copies), due to the lower impact of demand support measures. Net of young voucher's purchases, the trade market would be growing compared to 2024.

These are the main figures for Italian publishing – photographed by the Report on the State of Publishing in Italy 2025, edited by the Italian Publishers Association – presented at the Frankfurter Buchmesse.

The market in 2024

The €3.234 billion in 2024 includes €1.735 billion in the trade market, including sales of print books in physical and online bookstores and supermarkets (€1.517 billion), sales at trade fairs, festivals and in stationeries (€104 million), e-books (€84 million) and audiobooks (€30 million in subscriptions). Educational publishing is worth 790 million euros, professional publishing 557 million euros, and university publishing 155 million euros. Sales to libraries worth sixty-three million euros, Italian book sales abroad worth 53 million euros.

The first nine months of the trade market 2025

According to data collected by NielsenIQ BookData Panel Market Books Italy, in the first nine months of the year, compared to 2024, 1.9 million fewer copies were sold out of a total of 68 million (-2.7%) equal to a lower expenditure of €20.7 million out of a total of €995.3 million in sales (-2%). Voucher purchases for new 18-year-olds, on the other hand, dropped from €97.5 million in 2023 to €66.6 million in 2024 and €39.5 million in 2025, a loss of €58 million in two years: net of these purchases, market dynamics between 2023 and 2024 and between 2024 and 2025 would be positive. Moreover, since July, the monthly trend has returned to positive ground, although it has not recovered the decline accumulated in the first six months.

Italian fiction (plus 3 percent), foreign fiction (plus 0.1 percent) and children's and young adult books (plus 3.9 percent) grew. All other genres are down: general non-fiction (minus 3.3 percent), practical manuals and self help (minus 4.7 percent), comic books (minus 5 percent), and specialized non-fiction (minus 10.9 percent).

In sales channels, physical bookstores are still growing, which now have a market share in the nine months of 55.5 percent, while online stores decline to 40.2 percent and supermarkets to 4.4 percent.

Internationalization.

In the year of Italy Guest of Honor at Buchmesse, 8,484 contracts were signed for the translation of Italian titles abroad, the second best result since AIE began the surveys in 2001, following the 8,569

contracts closed in 2019. In 2024, children's and young adult titles sold abroad were 3,424, general non-fiction 1,709, fiction 1,518, practical manuals and self help 664, specialized non-fiction 360, religious books 339, art and illustrated books 262 and comics 208.

Contracts signed with European publishers made up the vast majority (5,160), followed by Asia (1,247), Central and South America (872), the Middle East (670), North America (262), Africa (102), and the Pacific region (48). In 123 cases, the geographical area was not specified.

Production

In 2024, 85,872 print titles were published in Italy, of which 69,168 titles were for the trade market (80%). Self-published titles accounted for 16%, school textbooks for 4%. For the first time, the catalog of available titles from which Italians can choose which books to read has surpassed the 1.5 million title mark, at 1.53 million. 37,659 e-books published during the year should be added to the numbers of printed books published in 2024.

Reading and consumption habits

Italy confirms itself as a country divided in reading indices: 73 percent of Italians between the ages of 15 and 74 say they have read at least one book in the past 12 months, even partially, according to data from the AIE Observatory on Reading. In absolute terms, this is 32.4 million Italians, down slightly from 32.8 million a year earlier. But while 77 percent of Italians in the Centre-North read, the percentage drops to 62 percent in the South and Islands (Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Sardinia and Sicily). Thirty-eight percent of Italians aged 15 to 74 have not bought any books in the past 12 months, 30 percent 1 to 3, 11 percent 4 to 6, 12 percent 7 to 11, and 9 percent more than 12. The latter, however, buy 47 percent of all printed books sold in Italy in a year. E-book buyers, on the other hand, are 31% of the population 15-74 years old, audiobook buyers 14%.

The State of Publishing in Italy 2025 Report is available for sale in EPUB and PDF formats on major online platforms. All materials and the video presentation of Italian publishing are available on the AIE website (<https://www.aie.it/buchmesse2025.aspx>).