Press Release
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Italy: Compulsory Digital Textbook Discount Law Alarms Publishers

European and International Publishers are urging the Italian government to reconsider its draft law which will set a compulsory 50% discounted rate on digital versions of educational textbooks for schools and universities.

Gvantsa Jobava, President of the International Publishers Association said: *This new law is another example of governments putting limits on the freedom to publish in the educational publishing space. As we found in our new report* earlier this year, freedom to publish is not only suppressed by censorship but also by the erosion of the economic conditions necessary for publication itself.*

Phaedon Kidoniatis, President of the Federation of European Publishers said: *The demand from the Italian government to make available digital versions of printed textbooks with a 50% discount, with the additional condition that it must be allowed to print 15% of that digital file, is akin to a new exception to copyright law in contradiction with the three-step test that conditions exceptions. EU legislation requires that exceptions do not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work, which in this circumstance, will certainly be the case. FEP hopes that reason will prevail and the draft law will be withdrawn*.

Christoph Pienkoss, Chair of the Educational Publishers Forum within the International Publishers Association said: *The proposal that the Italian government is pushing is counter-productive and will setback Italian school education. The advantages of digital education tools and learning resources are widely accepted. At the same time, schools, teachers and progressive education policies recognise that a mixture of print material plus adequate digital tools as provided by educational publishers are the best way to achieve basic competencies for students (reading, writing, calculating). Digital-only policies became obsolete years ago. The education system relies on publishers' up-to-date learning resources. The Italian government's political intervention will weaken the abilities of and incentives for educational publishers to innovate and offer high-quality resources for teachers and students in the future. Italian education politics is holding back progress of students' education in Italy for no good reason.*

In a statement on Thursday 19 November, the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) President, Innocenzo Cipoletta said: *This is a measure that risks having extremely*

serious consequences for the entire supply chain. The value of a textbook is not limited to the cost of the paper on which it is printed: it encompasses the intellectual labour of authors, illustrators, editors and publishers, as well as investments in the design, updating and innovation of content, in addition to its validation and distribution. To impose by law that this content is worth only half as much simply because it is consumed in digital format amounts to denying the value of the creative and editorial work that produced it. It also sets an extremely serious precedent, particularly in terms of the protection of intellectual property and the infringement of the economic freedom of enterprise guaranteed by the Constitution, which will need to be carefully assessed in the light of national and European legislation. Even more serious is the cultural message that this decision risks conveying. Schools and universities need high-quality books and reliable, up-to-date and continuously improved content. If we truly wish to help families and guarantee access to education for all, we must strengthen public support schemes for the purchase of books, not devalue by law the work of those who write, produce and update them. With this legislation, it is not only the future of school and higher education publishing that is at stake, but also the quality of the resources we use to educate the next generation.

*The IPA's 2026 Report on the State of the Freedom to Publish Globally is available here.