

PRESS RELEASE

Buchmesse - Italian publishing is getting ready for Frankfurt 2024.
Levi: "It will be the Expo of Italian culture and creativity"

After significant growth in 2021, concern about the resilience of the publishing market due to rising
paper costs and inflation weighing on consumers

Italian publishing will be in attendance at the Frankfurt Buchmesse, consolidating its position as Italy's leading cultural industry with a growing projection abroad that will now be further strengthened by the event to be held in 2024, when the country will be guest of honour at the International Book Fair.

Ricardo Franco Levi, President of the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) and Special Government Commissioner for Italy, guest of honour at the Buchmesse, explained that "2024 will have to be an Expo of culture and creativity for Italy that will enable the country to make itself even better known throughout the world, not only in Germany. We are already at work: we will shine the spotlight on Italian books, but it is an event that should not only concern publishing, but rather the cultural industry as a whole. The figures we are presenting today testify to the robust nature of the Italian publishing industry, but we cannot hide the fact that the continuing rise in paper costs coupled with the burden of inflation on consumers are causing us to look at the immediate future with concern.

The Italian stand was inaugurated by the **Italian Ambassador in Berlin, Armando Varricchio**, who stressed "the special value of Italian-German cultural exchanges, the foundation of the wide-ranging and special relationship linking the two countries." "The Germans curiously seek out the products of our writing," continued the Ambassador, "and the Cologne Cultural Institute and the Berlin Cultural Institute have once again dedicated themselves to promoting these this year, at various events organised in the city during the days on which the Fair is being held. They are regular visitors to our country and are passionate about it. They appreciate its quality of life, beauty and creativity - all qualities highlighted and promoted in our stand."

Roberto Luongo, Managing Director of ICE - the Italian Trade & Investment Agency, commented: "For this edition of Buchmesse, in cooperation with AIE, the ICE Agency is organising a qualified collective participation of 76 publishers, more than twice as many as last year, and delegations from the regions of Lazio and Veneto. ICE therefore continues its commitment alongside AIE to promote the work of small and medium-sized publishers on international markets, in view of and in preparation for our country's participation as guest of honour at the 2024 edition of Buchmesse."

Paola Passarelli, Director General of Libraries and Copyright of the Ministry of Culture - stated "here, as a representative of the Ministry of Culture, I assure that the Administration's best energies are concentrated - in synergy with the other partners of the Committee coordinated by Commissioner Levi - on the organisation of the event that will see our country play a leading role. Among other aspects, the 2024 Buchmesse will be an opportunity to present a tangible representation of our diverse and complex cultural fabric. The Italian stand will not only act as a showcase, on display to the other participating countries, but, with its appointments, also a valuable moment for reflection and awareness for us, on what - positively - makes Italy Italy."

Simona Battiloro, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, reminded us that "the Farnesina supports the internationalisation of Italian publishing through a programme of incentives

for the translation, subtitling and dubbing of Italian works which, in the last three years, has seen its budget more than triple. Germany is a reference country for translations from Italian and one of the leading markets for the sale of rights. Translations into German will therefore be a key aspect when it comes to Italy's role as guest of honour in Frankfurt in 2024. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's investment in translations into German has made it possible to support the translation and subtitling of around 80 works between 2020 and 2022."

Figures for 2022. Figures available for the current year and referring only to the trade market (fiction and non-fiction sold in physical and online bookshops and in major retail chains) indicate that sales in the first nine months of 2022 were substantially stable: 1.022 billion books were sold, down 1.9% compared to 2021 but still up 14.4% compared to 2019. The number of copies sold was 70.905 million, down 1.7% on 2021 but up 16% on 2019. The gap compared to 2021 has been narrowing in recent weeks, but at the same time, publishers' margins are shrinking due to rising production costs and the cost of paper in particular. That is why there is particular concern about the last quarter of the year and the Christmas period, which are always decisive in determining the overall result for the year.

The State of the Publishing Industry Report - During the inauguration of Spazio Italia, a collective Italian stand organised by ICE - the Italian Trade & Investment Agency in collaboration with AIE, the *State of the Publishing Industry Report* was also presented (summary attached), which takes a snapshot of the 2021 market as a whole (not only the trade sector). Post-pandemic publishing not only withstood the shockwave but even recorded significant growth in all sectors last year with total sales of €3.429 billion (+10.7%). It thus confirms itself as the country's leading cultural industry and the fourth largest publishing industry in Europe behind only Germany, the United Kingdom and France. In addition to the trade market (printed fiction and non-fiction books sold in physical and online bookshops and in major retail chains), the data also include the educational sector, the professional sector (books, e-books, databases and internet services) and book exports.

The trade market in 2021 was worth €1.701 billion, up 16% from the previous year. The educational sector (textbooks used in schools only) €780.1 million, up 5.1%. Databases and internet services recorded a turnover of €335 million, up 6.1%.

On the production side, the boom in e-commerce has prompted publishers to develop their offerings even more, focusing above all on the catalogue. In 2021, there were 1.331 million titles up for sale, excluding self-published works, up 5.3% from the previous year.

Last but not least, our country invests more than €1 million each year in translation grants and, over the last twenty years, the gap between rights bought and sold abroad has narrowed: in 2020, the latest data available, 8,586 titles were sold and 9,127 bought.

All the materials from the presentation and summary of the Report:
<https://www.aie.it/buchmesse2022.aspx>

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