

## PRESS RELEASE

After two years, the Bologna Children's Book Fair returns as an in-person event on 21 March.

The market for books for children and young people is growing: +19.3% in 2021. The first in-person edition of BBPlus, the BolognaFiere format in collaboration with AIE

The market for books for children and young people is growing again: in 2021 it reached a size of 286.6 million (+19.3% compared to the previous year) with 24 million copies sold, 18.2% more than in 2020. Children's books continue to be very successful also internationally: in 2020 the rights to 2,812 titles were sold, 33% of the total. It is the most popular genre in other countries, more so than fiction and non-fiction. Suffice to say that children's books account for 10% of the titles published every year in Italy.

After a two-year hiatus as a result of the pandemic but boosted by the strength of the abovementioned figures, children's publishing is back at the Bologna International Children's Book Fair from 21 to 24 March. The **Association of Italian Publishers (AIE)** will be present with a stand (Hall 25 - A1) and a series of initiatives for the professional operators in attendance.

Last year's event saw the first edition, albeit held entirely online, of **BolognaBookPlus**, the Bologna Children's Book Fair initiative aimed at the generalist professional public and organised in partnership with AIE. This year's edition, however, will be held in person. BBPlus will take place at the same time as the Fair in an exhibition area that will host the exchange of copyrights alongside events and professional seminars on the most topical issues in the sector.

*"In a dramatic historical period like this," announced AIE president **Ricardo Franco Levi**, "once again we are stressing the importance of interactions between countries that unite peoples and cultures. Our thoughts go out to the Ukrainian people, to our fellow publishers and to the world of culture, committed to keeping freedom of thought and expression alive, values that are at the heart of democracy and the mission of every publisher."*

*"The Bologna Children's Book Fair is one of the most important international events for our sector," added Levi, "and we are delighted to be able to meet again in person, to further encourage the exchange of ideas. Publishing for children and young people is central to our strategy of promoting Italian publishing and culture abroad. But that's not all: alongside our partner BolognaFiere, through BolognaBookPlus we aim to extend the reach of the fair to all segments, not just children's publishing. This is a key project for the publishing industry as a whole."*

The initiatives organised by AIE include the meeting on **21 March at 11.30 am** ***The Italian Book Market: facts & figures*** that will offer an overview of the Italian book market in 2021 presented to 80 foreign operators, complete with data on production, sales, reading and the import and export of rights. The event takes place in cooperation with ALDUS UP, the European network of book fairs coordinated by AIE and co-financed by the European Commission as part of the Creative Europe programme.

On **21 March at 2 pm**, Ricardo Franco Levi, in his capacity as vice-president of FEP - the Federation of European Publishers, will be the speaker at the seminar ***The Impact of E-lending on Book Purchasing Habits in Europe*** organised by FEP in cooperation with ALDUS UP as part of the BBPlus event.

On **22 March at 2 pm** the **Fondazione LIA** (a non-profit organisation created by AIE and UICI (The Italian Union for the blind and visually impaired) will hold a conference on accessibility as part of the BBPlus programme and in cooperation with ALDUS UP. Also on **22 March**, at 6.30 pm the Fair will host the opening event of the project BACIS - Bologna per l'Accessibilità della Cultura e l'Inclusione Sociale (Bologna for the Accessibility of Culture and Social Inclusion), where the Foundation, with the support of the Fondazione del Monte di Bologna and Ravenna, will organise a ***Reading in the dark*** at the San Filippo Neri Oratory in Bologna.

On **23 March at 3 pm** there will be a meeting entitled ***I mestieri del fumetto*** (Comic strip professions), in collaboration with ALDUS UP and Eudicom, during which the steps that lead up to the publication of a work will be discussed. An appointment for all those who dream of working in a comic book publishing house, told by those who work in one.

Finally, the winners of the tenth edition of the BOP, the **international Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publishers of the year**, organised by the Bologna Children's Book Fair and AIE, in collaboration with IPA (the International Publishers Association), will be announced. Every year, the prize is awarded to publishers on each continent that have stood out for their innovative publishing proposals. The winners will be chosen by the publishers exhibiting at the Fair.

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