

## PRESS RELEASE

Bologna Children's Book Fair - In 2024, after the growth seen in 2023, children's and YA publishing closes with a slight decrease: -0.2%

Cipolletta (AIE): "Reading among the youngest is changing: we will talk about it on March 31 in Bologna with the presentation of the new Kids Observatory. Strategic collaboration with Bologna Children's Book Fair continues, starting from BolognaBookPlus"

In 2024 selling of children's and YA books in Italy is worth 258.2 million euros, closing with a slight decrease (-0.2%) after growth the previous year. If we also consider children's and YA comics, we arrive at an expenditure value of 276.8 million euros, with a decrease of 0.4% compared to the previous year. Copies bought were 22.9 million (-0.6%), 24.2 with comics (-0.8%) (*all industry data attached*).

Behind these numbers, which confirm the absolute centrality of the sector within the Italian publishing industry, there are profound changes in the reading behavior and cultural consumption of younger people, one of the topics of discussion that the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) intends to address this year at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, scheduled from March 31 to April 3. Confirmed for the fifth consecutive year is the partnership for the organization of BolognaBookPlus, the initiative for generalist publishing that takes place on the same days.

"In Europe, as in the United States, we are witnessing a double movement that is deeply questioning the book industry and scholars," explains AIE President Innocenzo Cipolletta. "On the one hand, we see a strong diffusion of books dedicated to preschoolers, with a decisive commitment of reference adults in accompanying reading in this age group; on the other hand, there's a difficulty in keeping girls and boys anchored to the book in later years, when they begin to read independently. We will talk about this on March 31 in Bologna with the presentation of our new Kids Observatory as well as talk about accessibility, together with Fondazione LIA – Libri Italiani Accessibili, and internationalization. Bologna Children's Book Fair is one of the entities that contributes most to the growth of Italian publishing in the world, and with this edition we confirm a partnership in which we believe a lot."

Within BolognaBookPlus, the Italian Collective Exhibition organized by AIE will be 150 square meters large to host publishers exchanging translation rights (BBPlus Hall 29 Mall1). For the second year, the Italian Collective Exhibition will also open to companies in the publishing supply chain (printers, distributors, publishing services, etc.). Fifteen exhibitors are attending this year: 4Graph, Atene del Canavese, Conversa, Fondazione LIA, Forestae, Il Leone Verde Edizioni, IT Publishing, Legatoria IGF, Lina Brun Edizioni, Messaggerie Libri, Piemonte Agency, Printer Trento, Reggio Children, Tomolo EdiGio' Edizioni, Weiji Lab.

Also this year there will be the award ceremony for the BOP, the international Bologna Prize for the Best Children's Publishers of the year, organized by the Bologna Children's Book Fair and AIE, in cooperation with IPA - International Publishers Association.

The calendar of meetings opens on March 31 with the traditional presentation of Italian market data to foreign operators, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm at BBPlus Theatre: "**The Italian general book market 2024, including a focus on the children's market**". Bruno Giancarli (AIE research office) will speak.

It continues, also on March 31 from 2 to 4 pm, with "**Reading among 0-14 year olds today. Fourth Edition of AIE's Kids Observatory**", in Overture Hall. The meeting presents the latest data from the Observatory, which has been active since 2018 on a biennial basis and explores not only how many readers there are among the youngest, but how people read and with what evolutions as they grow. After greetings from AIE director Fabio Del Giudice, AIE research office manager Giovanni Peresson will present the data. Discussion will follow with Carlo Gallucci (AIE Children's Commission), Miriam Giovanzana (Terre di Mezzo) and Nicoletta Gramantieri (Biblioteca Salaborsa). Moderator: Samuele Cafasso (Giornale della Libreria).

On April 1 in Wagner Hall from 2:30 to 4 pm the meeting "**#ioleggoperchéLAB-NIDI: the value of reading in very young children**" will be held. The results of the experimentation that AIE has been carrying out for three years in close collaboration with Fondazione Cariplo to bring children from 0 to 3 years old closer to reading and to strengthen school libraries in nurseries in the most disadvantaged areas will be presented. #ioleggoperchéLAB-NIDI now involves 350 kindergartens in Lombardy and eastern Piedmont provinces. Greetings by AIE President Innocenzo Cipolletta, speeches by Renata Gorgani (AIE Vice-President) and Claudia Sorlini (Vice-President Fondazione Cariplo), data presentation by Giovanni Peresson (AIE Research Office). Followed by a workshop for all Italian kindergartens with psychotherapist Paolo Pellai and Giovanni Malgaroli of Nati per Leggere on the importance of reading to very young children.

On April 2, from 2:30 to 3:20 pm in The content cafe room, there is the traditional meeting dedicated to **I mestieri del fumetto** and this year it will focus on translation.

Finally, two events dedicated to accessibility organized by Fondazione LIA - Libri Italiani Accessibili (a nonprofit founded by AIE with UICI - Unione Italiana dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti), as part of APACE - Accelerating Publishing Accessibility through Collaboration in Europe, a project funded by the European Union.

On March 31 from 10:30 to 11:15 am at the BolognaBookPlus Theatre is the meeting "**Bringing stories to life: Inclusive strategies for accessible illustrations in children's books and more**", which will address the topic of alternative descriptions of images versus making illustrated content accessible to readers with visual impairments.

Also on March 31 from 2 to 4 pm in Sala Notturmo is "**Accessibility Meet Up on image description**", a networking, exchange and information event with international accessibility experts with whom to discuss the topic of alternative image description.

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#BCBF25

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