



Italy – Country report

Stockholm - Turku, FEP meeting – June 2016

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1. Trade statistics

Considering trade publishing only, 2016 was the second year of increase in sales after the beginning of the crisis in 2011, though the growth was only +1.6% for paper books (source: Nielsen Book Scan), +2.3% if we include also e-books, which represent around 5% of the trade market. However, these figures do not include Amazon sales, which remains reluctant in sharing data. A rough estimate of the whole market (paper + e) registers a growth around 2.5%, which – in a period of inflation close to zero and after a long crises that resulted in a decrease of the market around 15% – is a positive signal and a hope that we are leaving the tunnel. Preliminary data from Q1 2017 seem confirming this trend.

As it is happening since years, the best performance are in the children books (+5.6%). For the first time after a severe decline in recent past, non-fiction books are growing back (+3.5%).

All the figures above are referred to values. The number of printed-book copies sold is instead declining (-1.3%), which indicates an increase of average price on sale. This does not correspond to an increase of average book prices. It is rather due to different mix in the customers purchases who – when buying paper books – is moving to more expensive ones. Possible reasons of this phenomenon are two: (a) during the crises customers moved on the opposite direction, and average price decreased significantly, so now they are coming back to previous preferences; (b) e-books are probably more a substitute of paperback and backlist titles, which influence the average price.

2. Legislative development

2.1. *Measures to sustain cultural consumption*

The Italian government is continuing in experimenting measures to support the demand of cultural goods and services through distributing vouchers to certain categories of citizens: school teachers and young citizens at the 18th birthday. These vouchers nows work like a credit card, including for online purchases. The measures, launch in 2015 for teachers and 2016 for the teens have been confirmed in 2017. Effects on the market is very hard to estimate.

2.2. *Fix book price*

A broad and live discussion is running in the country about the fix book price. On one side there are proposals to make our system more coherent with that existing in other European countries, allowing a maximum discount of 5% (today is 15%). On the other side, during the discussion on a new competition law in the Parliament, proposals to abolish the system emerged.

Difficult to say what will happen, though in next few years the most probable outcome is that everything remains unchanged.

3. Copyright

3.1. *AIE and Italian Blind Union joint position paper on the Marrakech Treaty*

Thanks to our excellent relation with visually impaired community in Italy, resulting from our LIA system, AIE and UICI (the Italian Union of Blind and Partially Sighted People) signed a joint position paper on basic principles



for the implementation of the Marrakech Treaty in Europe. The position paper recalls the importance of collaboration between rightholders and visually impaired people, recommends to have an authorisation process based on trust for “authorised entities”, and suggests that, *“in order to make books accessible for visually impaired, only necessary acts are to be authorized, considering the specific disabilities and the related different individual abilities, and - at the same time - avoiding the production of copies of books already available in accessible version, unless this is needed to serve specific needs of individual readers”*. We sent the paper to the Italian Government and MEPs and prepared an English translation for further dissemination. Some of the principles set in the position paper have been incorporated in the final text of the Directive, thanks to the initiative of some Italian MEPs.

3.2. Italian position in the European debate

We can confirm that the Italian Government is very supportive to copyright principles in the Council working group that deal with the Directive on Copyright and DSM. This also helps our lobbying with Italian MEPs, in particular of the S&D group.

A significant step was the joint declaration signed on May 2nd, 2017 by Italian and French Ministers of culture supporting a strong copyright regime. Cf. FEP press release at: <http://fep-fee.eu/Press-Release-European-publishers>.

3.3. Transposition of the CMO Directive

The Directive on copyright collective management has been transposed in the Italian legislation in April 2017. As we foresaw, the Parliament decided not to change anything in our system. The result is a law that is

paradoxical – to say the minimum. Essentially it reads: *“rightholders are free to choose their preferred CMO but the only CMO that is authorised to operate in Italy is the SIAE”*. The justification is that the Directive only regulate cross-border matter and does not interfere with the national system, so Italian rightholders are free to apply for membership in a CMO abroad, but foreign CMOs can only operate making bilateral agreement with SIAE.

We believe that this legislation is against the Directive and will be abolished by the Court of Justice.

4. AIE services

4.1. A new book fair in Milan

In April 2017 we launched a new book fair in Milan, Tempo di Libri (*Book Time* - www.tempodilibri.it).

The start up was successful: 552 exhibitors; 62,000 visitors; 2,000+ authors speaking in 720 events during the 5 days of the fair. Besides the fair, we also organised the MIRC (Milan International Right Center), inviting foreign agents and publishers to join. The result was over our expectation with 500+ foreign participants from 34 countries and 6,500 face to face meeting organised by the MIRC secretariat.

4.2. Interoperability of educational platforms

The last IT project at AIE is Zaino Digitale (*digital backpack* - www.zainodigitale.it) aimed at facilitating the access to publishers’ educational content and learning platforms by Italian students. We grant interoperability among publishers systems, which however remain independent. Zaino digitale is based on a federated infrastructure that allows managing digital



identities using a *Single Sign On* (SSO) system and enables student to easy access all digital content provided by publishers that join the project.

4.3. LIA

The AIE system to facilitate ebooks accessibility, managed by the LIA Foundation, is fully running since June 2013. Currently we have a catalogue of 14,000+ titles.

In May 2017 the Italian Blind Union (UICI) decided to join the Foundation, which is a very important step for the system.

In June 2017 we started a feasibility study in collaboration with the UICI and the Italian Dyslexic Association (AID) to innovate the documentation flow between publishers, authorised entities and schools for the production and distribution of accessible format copies of text books. The concept is setting up a system where schools inform about the need of a special format copy; entities ask for the master file of the work; publishers provide it; end-users access the special version; and publishers receive back the alternative file. The idea is to avoid duplication, reduce cost and time of the process while increasing publishers' capacity to control the use of their work. Everything will be built in the full respect of the end-users' privacy.

4.4. European projects

Aldus (www.aldusnet.eu) is the European book fair network to foster internationalisation, book professionals mobility and translations across Europe. The Aldus consortium includes FEP, EWC and the PAs, with respective bookfairs, in Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania, as well as the Frankfurt and Bologna bookfairs. One year after the kick off, the network also

includes the fairs in Antwerp, London, Madrid, Milan, Sofia, Thessaloniki and Vienna.

We organised several events in many fairs, including some with more political purposes, such as the *Innovation days* in Brussels (by FEP); *The politics of creativity - Innovation policies for the creative and cultural sectors* at the Frankfurt bookfair; and the interactive workshop on *European best practice for innovation support* in Milan.

Aldus is cofunded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Commission.

ARDITO (www.ardito-project.eu) is an innovation project within the Horizon 2020 programme focusing on new ways for dealing with right data and information so to facilitate creative industries in finding new business ideas through monetising the re-use of their content. In particular, the ARDITO objective is to develop solutions to embed in the content permanent link to right information, using object identifiers (in particular the ISBN and the DOI), DRM and watermarking solutions. The context is the Rights Data Network (RDN) which is the basis of the Copyright Hub ecosystem.

The project – started on January 1st, 2017 – is working in different creative sectors, including books, newspaper and magazines, still images and audiovisual.