

# ROOTS IN THE FUTURE



ITALY

GUEST OF HONOUR 2024  
FRANKFURTER BUCHMESSE

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## PRESS RELEASE

### ITALY GUEST OF HONOUR 2024 FRANKFURT INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR – ROOTS IN THE FUTURE

Frankfurt, 28 May 2024 – The role of Guest of Honour comes back home. The successful formula, unveiled for the fortieth edition of the Buchmesse this year, speaks the language of the pioneering country. Thirty-six years after that first time, in fact, Italy is once again **Guest of Honour at the most important international book fair**. This unique showcase for our literature is also an exceptional opportunity for the general diffusion of Italian culture abroad. Italy will present itself in Frankfurt with an editorial programme curated by **the Italian Publishers' Association (AIE)**, alongside the professional programme of the collective stand, deliberately including **all literary genres** and hosted by **over one hundred authors and guests**.

From **poetry to social insight**, from **detective fiction to graphic novels**, from **non-fiction to romance**, from **art to children's content**: the Italian offering will give full right to all genders, rejecting the idea of a hierarchical order among them.

#### Variety is wealth

A variety of genres and generations: two 'veterans', **Claudio Magris and Dacia Maraini**, who were present in the Italian delegation thirty-six years ago, will return to Frankfurt, alongside authors born around and after 1988, such as **Anna Giurickovic Dato, Maddalena Fingerle and Alice Urciuolo**. The pen has no age and, Italian literature in particular, can boast an intergenerational appeal, with novels passed from parent to child that become moments of family sharing, conversational starters and exchanges of mutual knowledge. It is this aspect

the Italy Guest of Honour programme aimed to enhance in its choice of the authors and themes.

## We make the history

The programme will shape the motto of this Italian participation: **'Roots in the future'**. It's not an oxymoron because the history of Italian literature represents a brand so well-known and appreciated abroad that its presence in such a prestigious showcase dedicated to the world of our contemporary publishing is indispensable. With this in mind, tributes will be given to figures such as **Aldo Manuzio** and **Andrea Camilleri**, and to institutions such as **the University of Naples Federico II** on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of its founding.

## News, geopolitics, religion and youth

Italy in Frankfurt will be taking a look at the recent happenings, through moments of reflection on **Europe**, its **relations with Russia**, and **the role of intellectuals in society and politics**. Such moments of reflection should also include sessions dedicated to the more spiritual and religious spheres, designed to question the contribution that certain common values can make to social coexistence in an age of divisions.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow: the attention paid to new generations of readers (and beyond) is evidenced by the space daily dedicated to the best **names in children's and young people's publishing**, and by sessions with the stars of the very trendy **romance** genre.

## The merits of the method

Another strength of the programme is its focus not only on *what* but also *how* to write. Listening to the authors speak about their methods to bring their works to life is not an everyday experience. This format is entrusted to journalist **Loretta Cavaricci**, who will meet the writers on a journey to discover the secrets of this fascinating profession.

## Stefano Boeri's pavilion, the Italian piazza

Past and future, tradition and modernity: everything meets and intertwines in the Pavilion imagined and designed by architect **Stefano Boeri**, a physical place reflecting the Italy Guest of Honour motto. The **typical Italian piazza**, with its arcades and open spaces, expresses

the idea of sociality and a sense of community, for which Italians are famous around the world. Inside are the **Arena** and the **Caffè Letterario**, the two venues dedicated to the editorial programme, where more than 100 authors and guests will be hosting the five Italian days of the Book Fair. They will do so in **everyday situations**, a method chosen specifically to enhance the expression of different, if not contradictory, points of view and sensitivities. The dialectical comparison will be the real protagonist of the Italian participation, with no urge to reach identical or overlapping positions. This is the spirit with which Italy Guest of Honour will try to demonstrate in Frankfurt that **culture unites**, even in diversity.

### Exhibitions spanning ancient and modern times

The Italy Guest of Honour Pavilion will visually enliven the story of a country of excellence. A theme consistent with the **'Roots in the future'** motto is the relationship with ancient times, which will be represented in the 2,000 square metre exhibition **'Instant and Eternity: Between Us and the Ancients'**, fresh from a successful run at the Museo Nazionale Romano – Terme di Diocleziano. It is a proper tribute to Greco-Roman culture, however, in the presence of works from the medieval, modern and contemporary eras that testify to the ability of humans from all ages to draw inspiration from antiquity without losing the will to reinvent themselves. Inside the Pavilion, there is an unmissable exhibition dedicated to **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**, the most enamoured German of the Italian peninsula, who was able to strengthen those 'elective affinities' between the two nations through his famous travel diary. The two exhibition events, curated by Luigi Gallo and organised by the **Ministry of Culture's General Directorate of Museums**, will give Book Fair visitors the opportunity to admire in person extraordinarily representative pieces of one of the world's unmatched historical and artistic heritages.

### The short but intense century: a tribute to twentieth-century literature

From Goethe's Italy of the 1700s, we take the time machine to the 1900s with the **'Written in the Face'** photo exhibition. Designed by The Italian Literary Agency and curated by Alberto Saibene, this exhibition will take Pavilion visitors on a **photographic journey** of 100 years. A century of great tragedies for Italy, but a silver age for its literature. Images of around **60 authors** will define a kind of twentieth-century literary pantheon in Stefano Boeri's piazza. Just to name a few: **Italo Svevo** and **Alberto Arbasino**, **Oriana Fallaci** and **Dario Fo**. The exhibition will celebrate them for their fundamental contribution to immortalising twentieth-century Italian literature.

## Tomorrow's pencils

The symbol of Italy Guest of Honour is certainly the poster created for the occasion by master **Lorenzo Mattotti**. The illustration is dominated by the figure of the young reader on a lily. It is thus inevitable to give the world of **illustration** a prominent space inside the Pavilion. New trends, ideas and talents are on view in the exhibition “*Young Pencils between Illustration and Comics*”, curated by the **Accademia Drosselmeier** and organised by the **Bologna Children's Book Fair**. The very name of the most important exhibition dedicated to children's books and content is itself a guarantee that the best young talent in this special publishing sector, in which Italy has long been a top performer, can be admired in the Italian piazza in Frankfurt.

## Dining with books

In the frantic race between past, present and future to which visitors are called, our invaluable literary tradition of wine and food should not be forgotten. At the initiative of the **National Historical Library of Agriculture**, some **antique, valuable books on the subject will be coming to Frankfurt**. Dating from **1596 to 1892**, these copies will be available for interactive consultation. These herbaria, recipe books and botanical manuals are a significant testimony to the enogastronomy's integral role in the Italian cultural heritage, including literature. Not only is it wrong to say you cannot eat culture, on the contrary, we can say that, in Italy, what you eat often becomes culture. This exhibition isn't the only Frankfurt initiative of the **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry**, that will be actively involved in Italy's participation as Guest of Honour in promoting **food and wine *Made in Italy*** during the days of the Fair.

## The year ahead: a bridge to 2025

Italy's historic participation in this year's Book Fair will also mark a symbolic bridge to next year's most important cultural events. In 2025, we will have **Nova Gorica and Gorizia European Capital of Culture** and the centenary of the founding of the **Instituto della Enciclopedia Treccani [Treccani Institute]**.

There will be an *ad hoc* space in the Pavilion to promote **GO! 2025 Nova Gorica – Gorizia**. Also, in light of the continuity with the Frankfurt experience, last October Italy received the traditional *Guest Scroll* of the Book Fair from Slovenia. Treccani, on the other hand, will further embellish the piazza with an exhibition focusing on **Renaissance studios**, but projected in the contemporary world. Inside, high-quality ancient works will alternate with

multimedia elements, in an apotheosis of timeless beauty. Also, in the context of “**Roots in the future**”, there are exhibitions centred on two connected figures: **Niccolò Machiavelli** and **Aldo Manuzio**.

### Culture without (all) barriers

Italy aims to bring a barrier-free culture to Frankfurt, with no exceptions made for architectural, physical, cognitive or sensory barriers. **Inclusion** is a keyword of the Italy Guest of Honour 2024 programme. To this end, thanks to the **Fondazione LIA – Libri Italiani Accessibili** [Accessible Italian Books] the Pavilion will be hosting ‘**Reading in the dark**’, a highly engaging experience demonstrating digital accessibility and the sociocultural inclusion of people with visual disabilities. Through the absence of light, ‘**Reading in the dark**’ eliminates any distinction between those who read with their eyes and those who do so with their hands or ears. This initiative aims to ensure full accessibility of the national literary heritage, giving people with disabilities the opportunity to be autonomous when choosing their cultural pathways.

### Italy in notes, from the opera to Sanremo

By slightly altering an Italian famous proverb, we could say that the Italian programme at the Book Fair puts the book 'at the centre of the village'. In Frankfurt, we will see an all-around **celebration of Italian culture**, not just literature.

**Music**, the queen of the arts, will accompany the route to the Book Fair and will continue to be the pride of the Italian programme even in the long-anticipated week of October. There are stereotypes that the Italian participation intends to dispel and others that it aims to consolidate: in the latter category falls Italy's reputation as the land of *bel canto*. The greatest help will come from the **opera**, a vehicle for spreading the Italian language around the world. In its cultural programme for the Book Fair, Italy Guest of Honour will pay tribute to the musical form that has best expressed a confluence of art, music, literature, and images, ready to confront and meet one another. In music, however, there are no boundaries between the sacred and the profane. The cultural programme will highlight this by looking at both **operatic and popular traditions**, right up to the best performers of the **contemporary Italian song**.

## Heading towards Frankfurt via the European Championships

The programme will begin on **Wednesday 12 June** at the **Dortmund Konzerthaus** with the symphonic concert *'Italian Passions, from Rossini to Puccini'* by the **Nuova Orchestra Scarlatti**, directed for the occasion by maestro **Beatrice Venezi** and accompanied by the tenor **Vittorio Grigolo**. This event will also coincide with the opening of the **Casa Azzurri**, the headquarters of the Italian national football team, in the North Rhine-Westphalia city, defending champions of the European Championship being held in Germany in 2024. On **Thursday 29 August**, maestro **Riccardo Chailly** will conduct **La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra** at the **Philharmonie Berlin** as part of the prestigious **Berlin Musikfest**, the most important event on the German music scene, with an international tribute to **Luciano Berio** and **Wolfgang Rihm**, and the performance of **Maurice Ravel's** two suites from *Daphnis et Chloé*.

## The 100 Years since Puccini's death and the popular music tradition

During the Book Fair week, Italy will present itself to the German audience in style with a **concert** by the **Arena di Verona Orchestra**, honouring **Giacomo Puccini** on the centenary of his death. On the evening of **Tuesday 15 October**, a few hours after the opening ceremony, **the arias of the great composer from Lucca will be performed** at Frankfurt's *Alte Oper*, built in the Italian Renaissance style.

Almost all the Italian days at the Book Fair will end in notes at the Frankfurt theatres: on **Wednesday 16 October**, maestro **Ambrogio Sparagna** will be in the company of the **Orchestra Popolare Italiana** and the **Corpo di Ballo Popolare dell'Auditorium Parco della Musica di Roma** to get the *Alte Oper* audience out of their seats with the show *Taranta d'amore e balletti italiani* [Taranta of Love and Italian Dances], in honour of the musical traditions of the Italian regions.

## Rigoletto and the grand finale with Il Volo

Great music will return to Frankfurt on **Friday 18 October** at Oper Frankfurt with the opera *Rigoletto*. **Giuseppe Verdi's** masterpiece will be conducted by maestro **Giuseppe Mentuccia** and staged in partnership with the Frankfurt theatre. The Book Fair week musical programme will end with three of the world's most famous and appreciated Italian voices: those of the tenors **Piero Barone** and **Ignazio Boschetto** and baritone **Gianluca Ginoble**. The awaited concert of the trio **Il Volo** in the **Festhalle**, scheduled for **Saturday 19 October** will be part of the Italy Guest of Honour activities. The Italian delegation will prepare for the next day's

**transfer ceremony** to the Philippines, singing the repertoire of the winners of the 2015 Sanremo Festival.

### The preparatory journey to Destination Frankfurt.

Italy's participation as a Guest of Honour is not limited to the five days of the Book Fair. The opening ceremony on 15 October will mark the completion of a journey that began at the previous edition of the Fair and has continued since in Italy, Germany and beyond. The main objective of this historic occasion remains to **increase the knowledge of Italian literature** among publishers, insiders and international audiences who have always been present in Frankfurt in the week of October. To this end, preparations were made during this time with the **Destination Frankfurt** programme organised by the five **Italian Cultural Institutes** operating in Germany (**Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich and Stuttgart**), in cooperation with the **Italian Publishers Association (AIE)** and with the coordination of the **Italian Embassy in Berlin**. The run-up to this grand achievement will culminate on **Monday 14 October** with a debate at the Goethe University Frankfurt organised by Villa Vigoni in collaboration with the Institut historique franco-allemand, with the sponsorship of the Institute's Faculty of Catholic Theology. The debate, dedicated to the themes of Professor **Jörg Lauster's** book *Il Cristianismo* and Mauro Mazza's *Lo Stivale e il Cupolone* [The Boot and the Dome], will have the authors as speakers, accompanied by the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani General Manager **Massimo Bray** and moderated by **Christiane Liermann Traniello** and **Xenia von Tippelskirch**.

### Objective: translations

The Book Fair's publishing programme, focused on the debate model and combining established authors and emerging young talents, has the ambition of becoming a driver of further growth of the already quite robust national publishing market. Given that exporting copyrights is synonymous with exploring our culture, this participation in the Book Fair promises to strengthen the creative and dynamic image of Italian publishing. This joint goal will be pursued not only by the activities in the Italy Guest of Honour Pavilion but also by the encounters and spaces of the collective stand – organised by **ICE, the Italian Trade Agency**, in collaboration with the **Italian Publishers Association, AIE** – where numerous publishing houses and regional entities will be represented. In the wake of the Book Fair's 76th edition, contributions to **incentives for translations** of literary works, promoted by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)** and the **Ministry of Culture (MIC)** through the grant notices of the **Centre for Books and Reading (CEPELL)** will be key to

further momentum in the effort to internationalise the Italian publishing market. Precisely in view of this year's Book Fair in the **2023 and 2024 grant notices**, it was decided to pay special attention to German translations. **MAECI** and the **MIC** data show that in the **four-year period between 2020 and 2023**, this programme led to the funding of **173 German-language works**, equal to about a quarter of the total German translations of Italian works published in Germany.

## A team effort

The work for the participation of Italy Guest of Honour at the Buchmesse, carried out under the coordination of the **Extraordinary Commissioner for the Government Mauro Mazza**, is the result of a team effort involving several institutions: **the Ministry of Culture; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry; the Italian Embassy in Berlin; the Italian Publishers Association AIE; the Agency for Foreign Promotion and Internationalising of Italian Businesses ICE; and the Centre for Books and Reading.**

## The press conference

Italy's Guest of Honour programme will be **presented on Tuesday 28 May 2024** at 11:00 at the *Literaturhaus Frankfurt*, Schöne Aussicht 2, Frankfurt during there, at a **press conference**, where the Italian Pavilion will also be unveiled.

Participants:

- **Juergen Boos**, Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair;
- **Armando Varricchio**, Italian Ambassador to Germany;
- **Mauro Mazza**, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Government for the coordination of activities related to Italy's participation as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair;
- **Innocenzo Cipolletta**, President of the Italian Editors Association AIE;
- **Stefano Boeri**, architect and designer of the Italian Pavilion;

Introduced by **Ines Bachor**, PR Manager Frankfurter Buchmesse, the speakers will be presented by **Incoronata Boccia**, Deputy Director Tg1 RAI.



Anna **Giurickovic Dato** and **Geneva Lamberti** will be present in the room to represent the publishing programme. The two authors will lead a conversation about Italian literature, moderated by Ines Bachor.

The press conference, in Italian and German with translation, will be broadcast live on <https://italiafrancoforte2024.com/it> and <https://www.aie.it/>.

## Statements

'Italy returns after thirty-six years with "Roots in the future" as Guest of Honour country at the Frankfurt International Book Fair, with a Pavilion that explicitly recalls one of the symbolic places of the Italian identity: the piazza.

The multifaceted encounters, meetings of ideas and exchanges of opinion leading to the community's civil, social and cultural growth are well represented in this expository synthesis conceived by architect Stefano Boeri, where the Italian participation will be welcomed.

Thanks to the work of the Extraordinary Commissioner Mauro Mazza and the agreement with the Italian Editors Association AIE, chaired by Innocenzo Cipolletta, more than one hundred Italian writers will be the protagonists of roughly one hundred sessions between 16 and 20 October, honouring Italian literary creativity.

The day before the opening, Italy will already be in the spotlight at the Goethe University Frankfurt with a debate on the roots of Christianity, organised in collaboration with Villa Vigoni and attended by Treccani Institute General Manager Massimo Bray, Professor Jörg Lauster, and Extraordinary Commissioner Mauro Mazza. The initiative concludes a run-up to the Book Fair that has already seen and will continue to see a programme of events capable of promoting Italy and its culture, starting with participations in book fairs in London, Leipzig and Tunis; the concert Italian Passions from Rossini to Puccini, performed by the Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples directed by maestro Beatrice Venezi at the Dortmund Konzerthaus for the opening of Casa Azzurri at the European Football Championship; and the concert of La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by maestro Riccardo Chailly at the Berlin Musikfest.

The Italian music tradition will also be showcased at the Book Fair with the Orchestra dell'Arena di Verona performing Giacomo Puccini's arias on 15 October at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt and the performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* on 18 October at Oper Frankfurt.

The choice of the Turin International Book Fair to welcome German as a Guest Language this year is another building block of an ideal bridge of collaboration and great friendship that rests on ancient and deep links between Italian and German cultures: common roots that we intend to renew to give life to a European future in which culture is a cornerstone.

'The Italian Pavilion and the collateral activities have the ambition of being a real "trip to Italy", and it could hardly be different in the city of Goethe, which through books, concerts and exhibitions is able to speak of the plurality of talents that Italy is able to express and which, in turn, are the foundations for creating a positive Italian image in the world.'

*Gennaro Sangiuliano, Minister of Culture of the Italian Republic*

“With its Guest of Honour programme, the Frankfurt Book Fair puts the literature and culture of a specific country in the spotlight. The Guest of Honour agreement with Italy was signed in 2018, and preparations have been in full swing since then. More than 150 new publications from the Italian literary scene have already been published in German as part of the Guest of Honour programme – and the list is continuing to grow! Many publishers are seizing the Guest of Honour showcase to invite authors from their programme to Frankfurt. This means the fair’s audience can look forward to hearing from a wide and diverse range of young literary voices from Italy. Authors who will no doubt inspire us in Frankfurt include names such as Claudia Durastanti, Igiaba Scego and Vincenzo Latronico, whom we recently met at the Turin International Book Fair, as well as Ginevra Lamberti and Anna Giurickovic Dato, whom we welcomed at the press conference. We will be presenting our first reading tips during Pride Month in June.”

*Juergen Boos, Director of the Frankfurt Book Fair*

'The great year of Italy continues in Germany. The approach to the Frankfurt Book Fair is an extraordinary opportunity to further strengthen the close friendship between Italy and Germany and the close relationships between our societies. The programme of initiatives promoted by the Italian Embassy and Italian Cultural Institutes in Germany is more comprehensive than ever, ranging from participation in various literary festivals throughout Germany, to cultural events in music and the arts, as well as science, innovation and sport. Among them is the triptych of exhibitions hosting works by Giacomo Puccini, Amedeo Modigliani and Liebermann in Italy, which in these months will be enriching the Berlin art scene with a new tribute to our country. Rereading the great authors and discovering

emerging talents means looking back, reflecting on who we are and consciously and creatively thinking about the future. This is what we are doing together with our German friends on the road to the Frankfurt Book Fair, which has always been an ideal place for meeting and engaging in dialogue'.

*Armando Varricchio, Italian Ambassador to Germany*

'It's not easy to represent Italy at the world's leading book fair. Our literary history and the cultural heritage on which we pride ourselves around the world inevitably make our expectations very high. This glorious past doesn't scare us, but rather makes us so proud that we use it as a strength to enhance the contemporary literature we bring to Frankfurt. That is where we find the roots in the future motto that will accompany us through the decisive week of October 2024.

The wealth of yesterday is a paradigm for the perspective of today and tomorrow.

If I were to summarise the publishing programme of our second participation as Guest of Honour at the Book Fair, a role we inaugurated 36 years ago, I would definitely choose exactly this: the culture that unites. Yes, culture also unites where everything else divides, distances or opposes. This spirit is reflected in the space for discussion, the abundance of genres and the variety of speaker profiles. I would therefore like Italy's presence as Guest of Honour at the Book Fair to convey the message that culture unites, not conforms.

We arrive in Frankfurt with the awareness and determination of those who want to defeat the commonplaces that too often accompany the image of Italy in the world and our relationship with Germany itself. There is a recurring cliché, according to which "Germans love Italians but do not appreciate them, while Italians value Germans but don't love them". We are ready to debunk it through literature, as well as art, photography, theatre and music. In Frankfurt, I am convinced, culture will help both to be loved and appreciated at the same time, clearing the field of prejudices.'

*Mauro Mazza, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Government for the coordination of activities related to Italy's participation as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair*

"When Italy was the first Guest of Honour in Frankfurt in 1988, 50 million books were bought in our country annually. Now it is 112 million, more than double, and Italian publishing has become fourth largest in Europe and open to the world with thousands of translation rights

bought and sold abroad every year. Over 600 Italian titles have been published for translation in Germany in the last three years alone, and the number will grow significantly in the coming months. In Frankfurt, you will meet a modern, solid, forward-looking Italy of books that will speak to you through authors of varying age, personal history, literary genre and publishing house, in a plurality of voices that is emblematic of our country. We will also tell you about the book industry and its complexity through the voices of the many protagonists who have agreed to be our travel companions.”

*Innocenzo Cipolletta, President of the Italian Editors Association AIE*

“The Italian Pavilion will have a piazza at its centre: a small piazza that for four days will be venue of meetings, presentations and concerts, as well as the daily lives of Fair visitors. More than any other place, the piazza represents the deep, restless and generous soul of our cities and beautiful country.’

*Stefano Boeri, architect and designer of the Italian Pavilion*

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