

SACE and SIMEST at the front line with AEFI for the internationalisation of Italian Trade Fairs

The Force for export and internationalisation within the CDP Group has signed a memorandum of understanding with AEFI for joint initiatives aiming towards the international development of the sector.

A dynamic sector which in the first months of 2017 showed signs of recovery, in part thanks to the internationalisation of the offering.

Turnover of 60 billion euros generated by the Trade Fairs that in turn generate 50% of the exports of our companies.

Rome, 19 July 2017 - SACE and SIMEST, which together constitute the Force for export and internationalisation within the CDP Group, have signed a memorandum of understanding with AEFI, the Italian Exhibition and Trade Fair Association, aimed at identifying areas for shared intervention to promote and facilitate the process of internationalising Italian trade Fairs and businesses.

The agreement was presented today at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Contributions were made by Benedetto Della Vedova, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ettore Riello, Chairman of AEFI - Italian Exhibition and Trade Fair Association, Beniamino Quintieri, Chairman of SACE, Salvatore Rebecchini, Chairman of SIMEST and Pietro Piccinetti, Coordinator of the AEFI Internationalisation Committee.

*"A national trade fair system with a strong impetus for internationalisation is essential for attracting visitors from abroad and providing support to the presence of our system of business in the trade fairs of the whole world. Precisely to boost and lend solidity to this mission, this agreement formalises and structures a strategic collaboration between the financial and trade fair dimension of our exports. The aim is to consolidate and further reinforce the success of Italian businesses on international markets, decisive factors in the recovery that's starting to become gradually more substantial," observed **Benedetto Della Vedova, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**. "The record exports achieved by Italy last year, which continue to grow in the first months of 2017, demonstrate the capacity of our businesses to compete not only within the single market, but also in a changing and complex context like that outside the EU. The Government is fully committed to ensuring the necessary institutional support, also through the network of Embassies, Consulates and ITA offices and systematic collaborations like those between AEFI, SACE and SIMEST."*

*"The agreement is part of the association's activities aiming to promote the development of a national industrial policy in which trade fairs are the vehicle for promoting companies and excellence made in Italy abroad," stated **Ettore Riello, AEFI Chairman**. "Thanks to the finance and insurance solutions specially designed by SACE and SIMEST for AEFI, our members can benefit from a further opportunity for development on foreign markets. We're sure that the various resources provided will lead to growth in the direct attendance of Italian trade fairs abroad."*

*"In a scenario such as the current one, full of risks but also opportunities, companies need to draw up a strategic plan to increase their own visibility and awareness. In this planning," stated **Beniamino Quintieri, SACE Chairman**, "one of the most effective tools is trade fair activity, which despite the digital age that we live in remains a crucial strategic asset, for big companies just as much as SMEs. Today's agreement confirms SACE's capacity to provide a concrete response to the needs of those who, like AEFI, showcase and support Italian manufacturing and all those businesses ready to show off Italian excellence all over the world."*

*“SIMEST recognised long ago that the trade fair system is an important element in Italian industrial policy to support the foreign outward reach and local consolidation of Italian SMEs,” stated **Salvatore Rebecchini, SIMEST Chairman**. “Supporting Italian trade fairs in their process of internationalisation is a goal that SIMEST has pursued for years, participating as a significant minority shareholder in the JVs undertaken by Italian Trade Fairs abroad, assisting the strengthening of capital of the Fairs themselves with competitive conditions. Today’s agreement will also allow us to consider the possibility of new dedicated instruments that can be adapted even better to the requirements of the sector.”*

*“I promoted the agreement between AEFI, SACE and SIMEST with great conviction,” added **Pietro Piccinetti, AEFI Internationalisation Committee Coordinator**, “because I firmly believe that internationalisation is a strategic lever for the Italian economic and industrial system and that Trade Fairs are the ideal bridgehead for entering foreign markets. Trade Fairs generate 50% of Italian export and are the main vehicle for spreading the image of our country and Italian manufacturing throughout the world. In order to carry on doing this, and do it ever better, it’s vital that they receive all possible support from the Institutions and appointed bodies and I’m sure that what has been established today will develop in this direction.”*

The agreement – which will have an annual duration and be renewable – will launch various activities dedicated to AEFI members, including the establishment of a discussion group that will be instrumental in producing initiatives to support and increase the international character of Italian trade fairs. In detail, informative workshops and webinars will be organised to present SACE and SIMEST’s solutions for growth on global markets to companies. The agreement also envisages the construction of synergy between AEFI, SACE and SIMEST to support the trade fair sector and work alongside the examples of Italian excellence that are part of it.

AEFI INFO

Chairman: Ettore RIELLO (second mandate)

Vice Chairmen (members of the Executive Board):
Franco BONI, Lorenzo CAGNONI, Giovanni LAEZZA

General Secretary: Loredana SARTI

Committees:

Administrative/Legal Committee, Coordinator: Giovanni BARBATO

Trade Fairs Network Committee, Coordinator: Giovanni LAEZZA

Internationalisation Committee, Coordinator: Pietro PICCINETTI

Exhibition Hub Technical Committee, Coordinator: Giovanni GIULIANI

MEMBER EXHIBITION HUBS: 35

THE FIGURES FOR THE ITALIAN TRADE FAIR SECTOR IN 2017

- **Exhibition space:** 4,200,000 square metres, of which 2,270,000 covered
- **2017 exhibitions:** Total: 955 (200 international; 266 national; 400 regional/local; 89 organised abroad)

- **2017 international exhibitions:** 200
which refer principally to the following sectors: textiles (17%); sport, hobbies, entertainment and art (11%); jewellery, watches and accessories (9%); food, drink and hospitality (9%); mechanics (9%).

92% of exhibitions take place in AEFI-member exhibition hubs

- **Total exhibitors:** 200,000; (**International exhibition exhibitors:** 98,000, approx. 28% of which from abroad)
- **Total visitors:** 22,000,000 (**International exhibition visitors:** 13,000,000, of which 10% from abroad)
- **Deals** worth 60 billion euros reached each year during trade fairs
- 50% of **exports** generated from contacts made during trade fairs
- 75.3% of companies recognise trade fairs as an **essential tool for their development**, especially for direct contact with the market and communicating their expertise while actively seeking new buyers.

SACE, wholly owned subsidiary of Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, offers services of export credit, credit insurance, foreign investment protection, financial guarantees, bonds and factoring. With 87 billion euros of guaranteed transactions in 198 countries, SACE supports the competitiveness of businesses in Italy and abroad, guaranteeing more stable cash flows and transforming business insolvency risks into opportunities for development.

SIMEST, 76% controlled by SACE and with investments from leading Italian banks and business associations, operates at all stages of the development of Italian businesses, with subsidised loans to support internationalisation, with interest subsidies to support exports and by participating in capital.

SACE together with SIMEST constitutes the Force for export and internationalisation within the CDP Group.

The AEFI, Italian Exhibition and Trade Fair Association is a non-profit, founded in 1983, which represents the interest of the Italian trade fair system. The AEFI presents itself as a privileged partner for operators and institutions alike and supports its members through the development of initiatives aiming to develop the international character of Italian trade fairs and through specific activities and programmes in the sphere of training, marketing, promotion and research, in addition to the provision of services for trade fairs through the activities of its Committees: Exhibition Hub Technical, Legal-Administrative, Internationalisation and Trade Fairs Network.

On the internationalisation front, the AEFI supports members through agreements with operators in strategic markets. The AEFI promoted the foundation of ISFCERT, the Certification Institute for Exhibition Industry Statistics which, by means of rigorous methodology, enables Italian operators to present and recognise standardised data, in the name of transparency and reliability.

The AEFI represents Italian trade fairs in UFI - Union of International Fairs. Chaired by Ettore Riello, AEFI includes 35 member exhibition districts, which organise over 1,000 events a year over an overall exhibition area of 4.2 million square metres. 92% of international trade fairs, and 85% of all trade fairs, which take place each year in Italy, are held in AEFI-member exhibition hubs.

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