



**Associazione Esposizioni e Fiere Italiane**  
Italian Exhibition & Trade Fair Association

**Press**

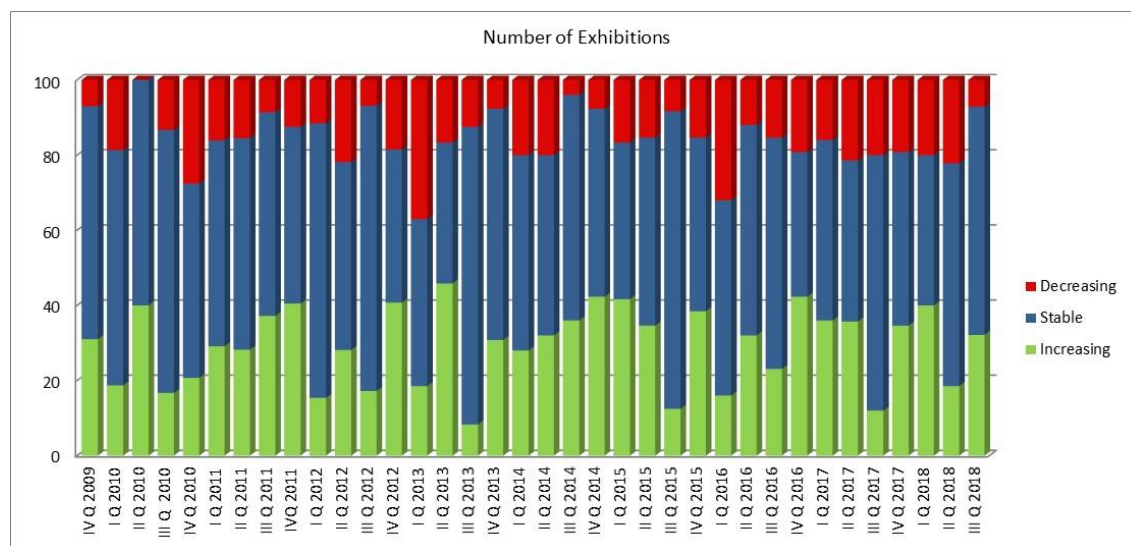
## **AEFI ECONOMIC OBSERVATORY ON THE TRADE FAIR SECTOR**

**Third quarter of 2018 on the up for Italian fairs:  
exhibitions, exhibitors, visitors and rented space all increasing.**

*Rimini, 12 December 2018* - The thirty-eighth quarterly survey of trends in the exhibition sector conducted by the [AEFI-Associazione Esposizioni e Fiere Italiane Economic Observatory](#) for the period **July-September 2018** shows a decidedly positive picture both compared to the previous quarter and compared with the corresponding period last year.

The qualitative survey, which involved 28 AEFI-member Italian trade fair districts – through the positive and negative balances defined on the basis of responses from members who took part in the analysis(\*) – highlights a firmly positive trend for all the indicators considered: number of exhibitions, total exhibitors and visitors, space taken and total turnover. The positive balances can be attributed above all to the Italian component. The forecast for the final quarter of 2018 is also positive.

The **number of exhibitions** is growing once again. The balance (net of the stationary component equal to 60.73%) is decidedly positive (+ 25%), with a strong growth both compared to the second quarter of this year and when compared to the same period last year (-8%).



The **number of exhibitors** is also increasing: over 46% of the 28 members who took part in the survey reported an increase; around 36% reported a static situation and another 17.85% a downturn in the quarter.

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The balance - the result of the difference between those who forecast an increase and those who forecast a decrease - is close to +29%, a sharp increase both compared to the previous quarter, when it stood at +11%, and to the end of September 2017, when it was +12%.

With regard to provenance, performance of both Italian and European exhibitors is good, with both showing a positive balance of +21%, followed by non-EU exhibitors with a positive balance of +18%.

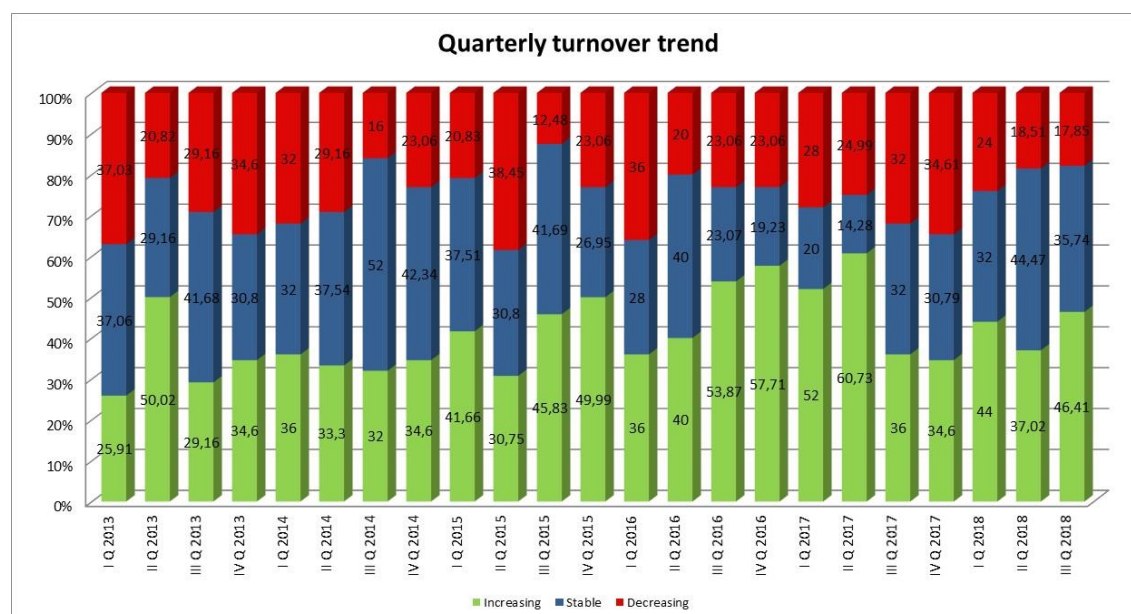
The trend in exhibitions and exhibitors is also reflected in the **rented space**: half of those who took part in the analysis recorded an increase. The balance, equal to +43%, is an important sign of recovery, especially when compared with the end of June (balance +4%) and with the end of September 2017 data, when the balance stood at +8%.

The greatest contribution to the total rented space overall was made by Italian exhibitors, with a balance of +36%, followed by other Europeans with a balance of +21%. Space taken by non-EU exhibitors totalled +14%.

The data on **visitor** intake was also positive: increasing for 40.74% of members involved in the survey, unchanged for a similar percentage and decreasing for just 18.51%. The balance of +22% is decidedly positive and shows a marked increase both compared to the previous quarter (zero balance) and to the end of September 2017 when the balance was +4%.

With regard to visitor provenance, the results highlight greater dynamism among Italian visitors, with a balance of +21%, followed by Europeans (balance +11%). Numbers of visitors from outside the EU remained stable.

The **development of turnover** was particularly significant: growth for 46.41% of the districts that took part in the survey and a downturn for just 17.85%. The balance of +29% indicates an improvement both with respect to the second quarter of 2018 (balance +19%) and compared to the same period last year (balance +4%).





**Forecasts for the final quarter of the year are optimistic.** For the majority of the members involved in the analysis, expectations are positive for all indicators considered: number of exhibitions, exhibitors and visitors and rented space.

46.42% of the districts that took part in the survey foresee an increase in the number of exhibitions, and 53.56% predict an increase in exhibitors and space taken.

Expectations concerning the number of visitors are also encouraging: an increase for 44% and stable for 37%. The balance of +26% reinforces this positive sentiment.

**The data from the Economic Observatory will also be presented to the members of AEFI, as part of the Association's general meeting that will be held tomorrow in Bologna.**

**METHODOLOGICAL NOTE:** The analysis is qualitative, in that it shows the trends in the sector according to the responses from the AEFI members who took part in the survey.

**The positive and negative balances are not percentages of absolute values, but differences between the percentages of those who responded indicating improved and worsened situations.**

**AEFI - Associazione Esposizioni e Fiere Italiane**, a private non-profit Association, was established in 1983 with the goal of generating synergies between the most important Italian exhibition districts. AEFI would like to be seen as a privileged partner for operators and institutions alike, and its role is to support members through the development of activities and programmes in the sphere of training, marketing, promotion and research, as well as to provide services for trade fairs through the activities of its Committees: Exhibition Hub Technical Committee, Legal-Administrative Committee, Internationalisation Committee and Trade Fairs Network Committee.

On the internationalization front, AEFI supports members thanks to agreements with strategic markets. To date, partnerships have been agreed with Iran, Taiwan, Lebanon, India, Thailand and South Africa, with AmCham, the American Chamber of Commerce in Italy, and with CENTREX, the International Exhibition Statistics Union. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with SACE and SIMEST.

AEFI has promoted the foundation of ISFCert, the Certification Institute for Exhibition Industry Statistics which, through rigorous methodologies, enables Italian organisers to present and recognise standardised data, in the name of transparency and reliability. 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. Nearly all international and national trade fairs which take place each year in Italy are held in AEFI-member exhibition districts.

[www.aefi.it](http://www.aefi.it)

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