

6 JUNE 2018: THIRD "GLOBAL EXHIBITIONS DAY"

AEFI takes part in the international event with "THE POWER OF ITALIAN TRADE FAIRS"

***Driver for the development of the national economy with turnover of
60 billion euros and launching hub for creativity and talent***

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Rome, 6 June 2018 - All over the world, the spotlight is on the trade fair sector today thanks to the international date with **Global Exhibitions Day**, founded in 2016 by UFI - The Global Association for the Exhibition Industry and immediately supported by AEFI.

Global Exhibitions Day represents a unique occasion for **showcasing the trade fair sector**, showing the world the potential of Italian exhibitions, stressing their **positive impact on employment, businesses, innovation and local investment** and highlighting how trade fairs also represent a **place for meeting and dialogue** and **launching hub** for **creativity and talent**.

The global theme chosen for the third edition of Global Exhibitions Day is "*The Power of Exhibitions*", which **AEFI - Italian Exhibition and Trade Fair Association** has expressed in an extensive programme of activities, today seeing its culmination in the great "***The Power of Italian Exhibitions***" event in the splendid setting of the **Sala del Tempio di Adriano, Chamber of Commerce in Rome**.

"Starting with the general concept – The Power of Exhibitions – and acting on the guidelines defined by UFI through a working group, in which AEFI plays an active part, and this year summarised in the keywords advocacy and talent, we opted for a format which, on the one hand, would allow for discussion between the various stakeholders and, on the other, highlight the role played by Italian exhibitions as showcases for the world-renowned Made in Italy brand, and as launching hubs for new talents," comments Ettore Riello, President of AEFI.

The sector at a **global level** is a genuine driver for development, also corroborated by the figures: according to the UFI's data, **98 billion euros are spent by exhibitors and visitors** and **680,000 people employed, rising to 1.8 million considering allied industries such as transport, accommodation and food service**.

Studies carried out in our country – confirmed by the recent analysis of international trade carried out by UFI at a global level – show that €1 invested in trade fairs generates €2 in terms of direct allied industries and €8 of indirect allied industries.

In his opening contribution, **AEFI President Ettore Riello** also recalled the fact that every year, all over the world, the **31,000 trade fairs** involve **260 million visitors** and **4,400,000 exhibiting companies**. A scenario in which **Italy is at the forefront, second place in Europe and fourth at an international level**: with approximately 1,000 events scheduled for 2018, 209 of which are international, the sector occupies an important place in the Italian economy. As far as our country is concerned, **Ettore Riello** stressed the fact that Italian trade fairs are an extraordinary asset: **"they generate 60 billion euros' worth of business, generating 50% of exports of the Italian companies that attend them."** Moreover, for **75.3% of Italian SMEs**, trade fairs are a fundamental tool for development.

"It would be reductive to talk about the role of exhibitions in the world solely from the perspective of their economic aspect," continued **Ettore Riello, AEFI Chairman**. *The value of their activity extends well beyond this and contributes to the spread of our values, of our excellence, of the Italian creativity that's the envy of the whole world."* Global Exhibitions Day also represents an occasion to take stock of a solid sector that also offers many career opportunities, a constantly evolving sector that **"despite certain difficult situations knows how to develop and innovate, adapting itself to changes in the market and among consumers, seizing on the**

opportunities offered by the digital world to extend the potential of the event beyond the exhibition itself,” continued Riello.

Again according to UFI, more than 70% of exhibition districts and organisers are developing new activities precisely to meet the needs of a market that's changing continuously, also and above all from a geopolitical perspective. *“The escalation of protectionism threatens to crush our economy, which at this moment is growing thanks to foreign sales, with manoeuvres that could affect exports by 3 points. You need only consider Iran, with whom we were among the first to sign a memorandum of understanding: billions of Italian exports are at risk in this situation,”* affirmed Riello.

This is why AEFI is increasingly active in initiatives aiming towards the internationalisation of trade fairs and of the companies that take part in them, with a dedicated Committee for seizing the new opportunities on the global market and adapting with flexibility to a deeply changeable context. But also with major institutional partners like the Italian Trade Agency, SACE and SIMEST, in the conviction that trade fairs represent a great opportunity for growth, above all in such a complex juncture for the progress of our Italian industry, which still has a long way to go to see all of its potential realised.

“The relationship of the ITA with the Italian trade fair system is and continues to be a priority in promotion to support the internationalisation of Italian SMEs. In 2017, the ITA supported 50 trade fairs, the most representative of Italian manufacturing in their respective sectors, involving 5,700 foreign operators and organising 52,000 b2b meetings. This year the goal will be to exceed 6,000 foreign operators,” affirms **Michele Scannavini, President of the Italian Trade Agency**, *“with an increase in the number of business meetings. We also intend to consolidate collaboration with AEFI and the individual exhibitions to improve their visibility abroad.”*

“Trade fairs boost our business and our economy,” continues **Riello** recalling how AEFI supports them and works in the interest of the entire national trade fair system. *We have always maintained the necessity of **COORDINATING THE SYSTEM** in order to be strong and competitive. From this perspective, AEFI collaborates with associations and organisations both at a national and international level with the aim of building alliances to generate synergies. We are involved in many dialogues, not least of which with CFI, which we hope will take a concrete form in the near future.”*

Today's celebratory event saw various opportunities for going into further depth. After the welcome from **Lorenzo Tagliavanti**, President of the Rome Chamber of Commerce, came the contributions of the Authorities, whose presence is a sign of particular attention to the sector: **Vincenzo De Luca**, Director General for promotion of the Italian Economic System, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; **Fabrizio Lucentini**, Director General for internationalisation policy and trade promotion, Ministry for Economic Development; **Giuseppe Tripoli**, General Secretary of Unioncamere; **Beniamino Quintieri**, SACE Chairman; **Massimo Goldoni**, President at CFI. They unanimously highlighted the value of trade fair activity with respect to the growth of exports in recent years. This result was also possible thanks to the major contribution of the *Special Italian Manufacturing Promotional Plan* to the sector, a plan that we hope will pass from the “special” to the “ordinary”, that is, structural. The session continued with the *“Italian trade fairs as launching hubs for creativity and talent”*, an account from **Giulio Sapelli, Professor of Economic History at the University of Milan**, who started from an overview of the current macroeconomic scenario to illustrate the importance of the role of trade fairs in a constantly evolving geopolitical context.

The *“Trade Fairs: the place to meet Italian creativity”* round table instead saw discussion from the representatives of Italian Trade Fairs: **Franco Boni**, ISFCERT Chairman and Vice Chairman of AEFI, stressed how creativity also results from transparency and quality, guaranteed by certified exhibition industry statistics; **Gianpiero Calzolari**, Chairman of BolognaFiere, focused on trade fairs as driver for the main Italian industries; **Lorenzo Cagnoni**, Chairman of Italian Exhibition Group and Vice Chairman of AEFI, highlighted the need for the institutions to pay attention to the IMU property tax and correct regulations, two critical areas; **Fabrizio Curci**, CEO of Fiera Milano, dwelt on the close ties between trade fair and city, understood

as a stage for events capable of promoting creativity on an international level; **Claudio Valente**, Vice President of Veronafiere, talked about the importance of trade fairs in promoting not only the economy but also the history and culture of an area; **Pietro Piccinetti**, the Sole Director of Fiera Roma, emphasised the concept of trade fairs as the true driver in the development of exports, so that it is important that they are also supported by the system of infrastructure. **Salvatore Rebecchini**, SIMEST Chairman, also took part in the debate, on the role of Simest in supporting the trade fair system.

Global Exhibitions Day will continue in the afternoon dedicated to “**Creativity and talent**”, a dialogue with foreign operators – from Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, India, Russia, the UK and Vietnam – thanks to the support of the Italian Trade Agency. Afterwards, a debate among certain testimonials on the importance of trade fairs as opportunities to showcase Italian creativity.

The day will conclude with the “**Youth, projects and future**” round table discussion between important representatives from the world of higher education.

[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 more than 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/Aefi/site/en/index

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