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Good morning and welcome to Florence for the APM Conference.

Over the past months, the Italian Publishers Association (AIE) and the Italian Library Association (AIB) have had several opportunities to meet and share their views, specially with regard to the possible changes of the copyright law, particularly on digital context, the issue of legal deposit, and the development of a common portal dedicated to children's books.

This collaboration has changed the trend in Italy. The common action of our associations aims to support reading and libraries, freedom of access to knowledge, dissemination of digital content and, in general, preservation of our cultural heritage.

This new level of understanding has evolved into a strategic policy on development of reading in Italy: for example, the joint request made to the Italian Government to launch the Centro per il Libro e la Lettura (*Center for Book and Reading*). Publishers Association and Italian Library Association asked also the Government to sustain the progress of technologies in order to provide accessible books to blind people, to increase school libraries, and to introduce a librarian in all public school libraries. Another project is about funding initiatives for reading promotion using the publisher's royalties due for lending rights, according to the European Union ordinance.

Also in the academic field, the relations between libraries and publishers in Italy have been improved to a very high degree. We have started a useful talk on themes like electronic licensing, open access, the role of university presses, secondary rights, and so on. A working group between the Library Committee of the CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors) and the publishers and authors association has been established to support joint initiatives in the field of the culture of copyright, including research and training.

A serious policy on reading needs a strong network of library services that provides a whole national coverage.

As The President of the Italian National Committee IFLA 2009 Milan, I would like to remind you that after 80 years since the taking place in 1929 of the first World Library and Information Congress in Rome, Florence and Venice, the IFLA Congress comes again to Italy this year. The IFLA Congress will be held in Milan from August 23rd to 27th and will welcome librarians from all over the world. I warmly invite you all to take part in it.