

PRESS RELEASE

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## **Italy and Malta, a bridge made of books: the *Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo* evening in Valletta on 6 November**

*At the Italian Cultural Institute, Bonferraro Editore closes the 2025-2026 edition with the authors of Exit Queen – Scacco alla Regina, honours the young participants of Italiano Vivo – Malta and opens the new edition with Sia scritta la tua volontà by Karl Schembri*

On Friday 6 November, at 6.30 pm, the hall of the *Italian Cultural Institute in Valletta*, in St George's Square, will host the evening of *Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo* (Bridges of Culture in the Mediterranean). Through this project Bonferraro Editore, an independent Italian publishing house based in Sicily, has been building a lasting bridge between Italy and Malta since 2025. The evening closes the 2025-2026 edition with the presentation of *Exit Queen – Scacco alla Regina* by Marco Ubezio and Francesco Spartà. It also honours the young participants of *Italiano Vivo – Malta* and opens the new 2026-2027 edition with *Sia scritta la tua volontà* by Karl Schembri.

The project grew from a simple idea: to strengthen the ties between the two countries through literature, as a means of dialogue, knowledge and cooperation between peoples. *Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo* is not a single event. It is a programme that runs throughout the year and brings together institutions, publishers, authors, universities, schools and cultural associations from both shores, giving rise to publishing exchanges, shared projects and lasting partnerships. It rests on a long-standing relationship: Bonferraro Editore has had its own stand at the *Malta Book Festival* for more than fifteen years and has published Maltese authors in Italian, among them Frans Sammut, Francis Ebejer, Immanuel Mifsud and Aleks Farrugia. 2026 also marks the publishing house's fortieth year of activity.

*Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo* takes place under the patronage of the *Ministry of Culture of Malta*, the *Embassy of Italy in Malta*, the *Italian Cultural Institute in Valletta*, the *Mediterranean Institute of the University of Malta*, the *Italian-Maltese Chamber of Commerce*, the *National Book Council of Malta*, the *Malta Book Festival*, *La Gazzetta di Malta* and the *Antica Galleria Bonferraro*.

The edition now coming to a close was built around two books. *La colpa del camerata* by the Maltese writer Aleks Farrugia and *Exit Queen – Scacco alla Regina* by Marco Ubezio and Francesco Spartà took the project on tour to Palermo, Catania, Naples, Rome, Florence, San Giorgio del Sannio and the Turin International Book Fair. In Valletta the circle closes with the presentation of *Exit Queen*, in the presence of both authors.

"*Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo* was created to give continuity to a bond that has existed between Italy and Malta for centuries," says publisher Salvo Bonferraro. "Every year a Maltese author travels across Italy and an Italian author comes to Malta, and around their books institutions, schools and readers from both countries meet. This is how we understand

publishing, and celebrating the publishing house's fortieth anniversary in this way makes us particularly proud."

The same evening marks the start of the new edition. As will happen every year, the Maltese book of the coming edition has its very first release within *Ponti di Cultura nel Mediterraneo*. This year it is *Sia scritta la tua volontà* by Karl Schembri, the Italian edition of *Eħlisna mid-Deni* (Merlin Publishers, 2025), the book that won Malta's 2026 National Book Prize in the novel category, translated from Maltese by Adrian Stivala. An elderly prelate is held captive by the son of one of his victims, and the novel asks what remains when justice never comes. Schembri is a writer and journalist. In the early 2000s he was among the first to expose cases of child abuse within the clergy in Malta. "For years I did not know how to tell this story. The novel gave me back my voice, and writing it was an act of justice in the face of abuse, silence and the humiliation of the clergy's victims. It is also the story of a silence that knows no borders, and that is why I care that the book reaches Italy," the author says. The book will be presented by Matthew Vella. From Malta the novel will begin its journey to Italy, where it will be paired with an Italian title in the coming months.

The same evening will also honour the young participants of *Italiano Vivo – Malta*. With this new programme the project has this year brought the Italian language into Maltese secondary schools and universities and to young people of the Italian community living on the island. The chosen theme is "Una mossa coraggiosa" (A brave move). Entries, written entirely in Italian, may be sent until 20 October to [italianovivo@bonferraroeditore.it](mailto:italianovivo@bonferraroeditore.it). "We want 6 November to be a meeting place for the public of both countries, for institutions, schools and readers," adds Alberto Bonferraro, the publishing house's marketing manager. "Seeing young Maltese people write in Italian alongside the authors we present is the clearest sign that the bridge works." The evening will end with a reception offered by Marrobbio restaurant.

#### At the Malta Book Festival

From 4 to 8 November Bonferraro Editore will also be at the *Malta Book Festival*. At the publishing house's stand, on Saturday 7 November at 5 pm, actor Francesco Daniele Miceli will give the theatrical reading in Sicilian "Sutta la Cruci", drawn from the books *Pasqua in Sicilia* and *L'anima di una città*. On Sunday 8 November at 11 am Miceli will lead "Nel mondo delle fiabe", a theatrical reading in Italian for children based on the book *Se le fiabe sbagliassero tutto*, with stories, music and puppets for the youngest.

#### Bonferraro Editore

Bonferraro Editore is an independent Italian publishing house based in Sicily. For forty years it has published fiction and non-fiction and promoted cultural projects and publishing exchanges, with particular attention to dialogue between Sicily, the Mediterranean and Malta.

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