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ROME, April 9 (Xinhua) -- The first-ever Italian-Chinese wine dictionary was formally presented Monday on the sidelines of the Vinitaly wine fair in the northern Italian city of Verona.

The "Italian-Chinese Bilingual Dictionary of Wines and Vines," which includes explanations of some 600 commercial grape varieties grown in Italy and standardizes the way specific wine names are written in Chinese, will soon hit bookstores in both countries.

It took four years for scholars from both countries to write the dictionary, which aims to help Chinese consumers better understand Italian wines, and help Italy enter a challenging Chinese wine market dominated by French and Chilean wines.

"Italy has a limited market presence in China and the hope is that making Italian wines easier to understand ... will help grow their presence," said Denis Pantini, head of the agro-industry section at the economic think-tank Nomisma.

A 2018 research done by Nomisma showed that Italian wine sales in China last year were worth 140 million euros (158 million U.S. dollars), which was close to the figures of some individual and private sector winemakers in France and Chile, Pantini said.

Merely seven percent of Chinese consumers in urban areas could recognize an Italian wine, Pantini added.

"Italy is a top producer of wines, both in terms of quality and quantity, but you would never know it by browsing a typical Italian supermarket," Pantini said.

The idea of writing a bilingual wine dictionary came during the 2015 World Expo in Milan, where a gastronomy project featuring relevant definitions for words in Italian, Chinese and English was well-received.

"We keep hearing about how confusing Italian wines can be and we thought we need a project like this for Italian wines," Marta Valentini, executive director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Milan and one of the authors of the dictionary, told Xinhua.

"We respected previous, smaller-scale (projects) and used those translations as a way to reduce confusion," Valentini said.

Speaking of the new dictionary, Ottavio Cagiano de Azevedo, director general of Italy's largest wine industry group Federvini, said "there's the important issue of standardizing names of grapes and wines to create a common language."

"It also helps to call attention to the country's rich variety of wines. For a beginner, all the different names can be confusing. But the variety is our wine industry's strength," Azevedo said.