

NEW RECORDS FOR ITALIAN MANUFACTURERS OF PLASTICS AND RUBBER PROCESSING MACHINERY

Amaplast (Italian trade association, member of CONFINDUSTRIA, bringing together about 170 manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment and moulds), through its Statistical Studies Center, has completed its year-end balance sheet for 2017, incorporating foreign trade data from ISTAT (Italian Institute of Statistics).

Italian market of machinery, equipment and moulds for plastics and rubber (million euros)

	2016	2017	Δ 2017/2016
production	4,230	4,670	10%
exports	2,960	3,310	12%
imports	850	970	14%
domestic market	2,120	2,330	10%
trade balance	+2,110	+2,340	11%

Double digit increase over 2016 in all macroeconomic indicators means new all-time records for the sector. Lacking objective statistical surveys, Amaplast analyses show production sustained by excellent performance in exports, the destination for 70% of the Italian-made products in the sector, as well as by the domestic market, which is showing clear signs of recovery, probably explained by the measures implemented by the National Industry 4.0 Plan to support investment in capital equipment. The expansion of the domestic market is also signalled by quite positive performance in imports.



“The order portfolio horizon for Italian manufacturers,” underscores the satisfied Amaplast president, Alessandro Grassi, “has been considerably extended: many companies are able to plan production at least to the end of the year, and there are quite a few that are actually having difficulty keeping up with customer requests.”

Regarding macro-areas, the geography of exportation has witnessed overall growth in European destinations, mainly within the EU, where the top two export markets, Germany and France, have grown by more than 20 percentage points since 2016. However, impressive numbers are also seen much further down in the rankings, specifically in tenth place, where Romania records a whopping +69% with a surge in purchases during the last quarter that once again dislodged Russia

from the top ten (by just one spot) after it had clawed its way back last September. Nevertheless, the Russian recovery still continues apace (+67%) with the value of Italian machinery exports nearly reaching 100 million euros.

The trend in sales to Asia has not been particularly brilliant due to a slowdown in exports to the Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia and Iran), and only modest growth (less than +5%) in sales to the Far East, where the two major markets have slipped somewhat: China (-2.5%) and India (-6%).

As regards the two major North American markets:

- Sales to the United States record final growth of 20%, following peaks as high as +30% during the year;
- Supplies to Mexico, on the other hand, have fallen by approximately 17%, which at least took some of the edge off the more than 20 point losses in previous months. No one expected the 2016 boom to last forever.

The Trump administration’s threat to impose import duties on various product categories is not expected to affect plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment and moulds. U.S. production in this sector cannot meet demand from local manufacturers and the duties would only be counterproductive.

In South America, the recovery in the flow of supplies to Brazil continues unabated, approaching +40% with respect to 2016 for overall value once again over 50 million euros.

Destination areas of the Italian plastics and rubber machinery, equipment and moulds exports (%)		
	2016	2017
Europe (UE)	58.7 (49.5)	60.7 (51.7)
Asia/Oceania	16.7	15.1
North America/NAFTA	14.4	13.7
Central/South America	5.5	5.6
Africa	4.7	4.9

Top ten destination countries of the Italian plastics and rubber machinery, equipment and moulds exports (000 euro)

countries	2016	% out of the total	countries	2017	% out of the total	Δ % 17/16
Germany	402,200	13,6	Germany	481,441	14.5	19.7
United States	229,339	7,7	United States	276,034	8.3	20.4
France	131,356	4,4	France	159,624	4.8	21.5
Poland	164,962	5,6	Poland	158,893	4.8	-3.7
Spain	137,017	4,6	Spain	148,125	4.5	8.1
Mexico	171,223	5,8	Mexico	142,688	4.3	-16.7
China	137,631	4,6	China	134,191	4.1	-2.5
Czech Rep.	100,637	3,4	Czech Rep.	126,717	3.8	25.9
United Kingdom	118,058	4,0	United Kingdom	119,370	3.6	1.1
Romania	56,676	1,9	Romania	95,544	2.9	68.6
total "top 10"	1.649,099	55,6	total "top 10"	1,842,627	55.6	11.7
other countries	1.312,459	44,4	other countries	1,466,964	44.4	11.8
world	2,961,558	100,0	world	3,309,591	100.0	11.8

As regards goods categories, worth noting is the particularly positive trend in sales abroad of all the main types of machinery for primary processing and for moulds, which traditionally represent just under one third of Italian exports for the sector.

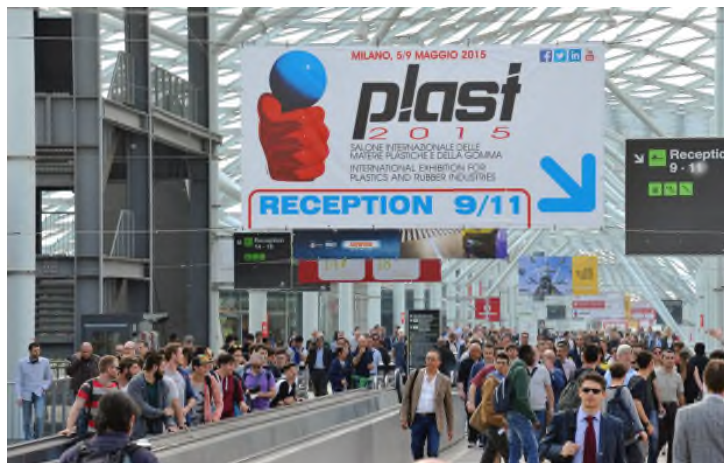
The entire range of plastics and rubber processing lines, machinery, and auxiliary equipment will be exhibited by hundreds of Italian and foreign companies—naturally along with raw materials, semi-finished products, finished products, and other articles—at PLAST 2018, taking place in Milan from 29 May to 1 June.

And it is precisely the figures regarding foreign participation—at the moment registering a growth exceeding 20% over the previous PLAST—that confirm the renewed interest in the Italian plastics and rubber processing industry, and also operators' interest in the Italian three yearly show, which thus reaffirms its international stature.

"Participants at PLAST 2018," continues Grassi, "are particularly confident that they will be able to do significant amounts of business and expand their order books directly at the fair," adding that "several thousand operators have already pre-registered for their visit and our office is working to organize delegations of buyers from some thirty countries."

www.amaplast.org

PLAST 2018: A FULL-SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGICAL SHOWCASE



PLAST 2018, the International Exhibition for the Plastics and Rubber Industries, will take place at the FieraMilano facilities in Rho-Pero from Tuesday, 29 May to Friday, 1 June 2018.

PLAST 2018 will be the preeminent European event this year for the plastics and rubber industry, embracing the whole chain from raw materials to semi-finished and finished products, from machinery and equipment to support services. And, quite rightly, once again this year the fair enjoys the sponsorship of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development.

The international scope of this triennial tradeshow, now in its eighteenth edition, is confirmed by the impressive numbers of foreign exhibitors and visitors.

With 2 months to go before opening day, a total of 1,100 exhibitors have registered for PLAST 2018. Of these, 870 are direct exhibitors (one third of them foreign, representing more than forty countries and growth of 21% in number and 24% in space allocation) and 230 are represented. A total of 52,000 square metres of exhibition space has been assigned.

PLAST reflects the preeminent global position of the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment and moulds industry, which forms the core of the exhibition. Over 70% of national production - which hit a new all-time record value of 4.5 billion euros in 2017 according to figures from the trade association AMAPLAST, produced by 900 manufacturers employing some 14,000 people - is exported.

Italian technology (as well as that produced in Germany, Italy's main global competitor in the sector - indeed Germany tops the list in terms of both foreign exhibitors and foreign visitors at PLAST) is purchased by converters all over the world who require high-tech capabilities to produce large volumes of quality products with optimal precision.



PLAST 2018 thus offers economic operators a full-spectrum technological showcase addressing all the various production processes (from extrusion to blow-moulding, from thermoforming to injection moulding) and applications (packaging, automotive, medical, construction, etc.).

Given the excellent performance of Italian exports in the industry and recovery in the domestic market, participants have every right to expect rewarding business opportunities at PLAST 2018, with their order books swelling significantly directly at the fair.

Again this year, PLAST will feature satellite fairs dedicated to three sub-sectors of excellence: RUBBER (in its third edition), 3D PLAST (focusing on additive manufacturing and related technologies, now in its second edition) and PLAST-MAT (first edition, dedicated to innovative plastics).

A jam-packed schedule of technical seminars and company meetings is in the works, providing a full-spectrum view of the latest in materials, processes, machinery and services. These conferences, combined with the breadth of the exhibits, will draw in not only professionals working in the field but also young people seeking a place in the job market. As happens at every PLAST, school groups, most of them from technical high schools, will be among the crowds in the exhibition halls, getting a first-hand experience of the materials and technologies in the plastics and rubber industry.

But that's not all. In keeping with tradition, the Art & Plastics area of PLAST 2018 will feature a splash of colour, with artists exhibiting works they have created using plastic, providing a further demonstration of the versatility of this material.

Thousands of operators have already registered online to visit PLAST 2018. Large numbers have also preregistered to visit the four fairs within The Innovation Alliance (IPACK-IMA, MEAT-TECH, PRINT4ALL, INTRALOGISTICA ITALIA), also expressing interest in visiting PLAST 2018.

The large number of expected visitors (at least 120,000 in total for the five events) will be joined by official delegations from some forty countries from all corners of the world, coordinated by ICE-Agenzia and composed of carefully selected qualified operators with interests spanning all sectors represented within The Innovation Alliance.

The website will be constantly updated with news and useful information for exhibitors, visitors, and the media.

www.plastonline.org

COFIT SETS UP A NEW LABORATORY AND STEPS UP INNOVATION



Research and development has always been central to the industrial strategy pursued by Cofit, which has therefore recently strengthened its facilities with a new laboratory for developing and testing its products, so as to be able to provide precise technological answers to the needs of an increasingly complex and constantly evolving market.

"We have set up an internal facility that will allow us to carry out all testing of materials and machinery completely in-house, in order to be able to step up our pursuit of the technological innovation and product development that have always been two key strategic pillars for Cofit. But we are also focusing on meeting the needs of an increasingly international clientele, which

often asks us if we can carry out tests on their materials", commented Alessandro Fabbri, President of Cofit.

Simplifying operations and cutting equipment costs

As a specialist in the field of filtration, Cofit has, over time, developed numerous technologically important patents, which allow it to provide a complete service to the most important manufacturers and users of equipment for the processing of both post-consumer and post-industrial plastic materials. What is more, its technologies allow energy savings and reduce the environmental impact of the production system. The patented system for the replacement of filter screens in the AP series, for example, has led to the production and marketing of a complete range of continuous screenchangers that do not interrupt the production cycle. The self-cleaning device that allows screens to be cleaned without being removed was developed on the basis of a previous innovative patent covering the valves for directing the flow inside the screenchanger.

A new screenchanger at Plast 2018

"Our new product, which is the first one we tested in our laboratory, after it had been used for a number of months in an important recycling plant, is called GorillaBelt-T, and it is set to become our company's flagship product. It will soon be unveiled, at Plast 2018, among Cofit's other technological solutions. Its strong point is its fully automatic continuous operation", Fabbri said, providing a foretaste of what his company will be exhibiting at the international fair in Milan, running from 29 May to 1 June.

GorillaBelt-T, the latest evolution of the GorillaBelt model, is a highly innovative screenchanger that allows filtration of thermoplastic melt, both post-consumer and other types, whatever its degree of contamination and whatever impurities it contains — for example melt derived from films used in the building industry or in agriculture. In order to guarantee process continuity, the system is based on a structure with two channels and two screen belts. Thus, in the presence of highly contaminated materials, a number of filtration cycles can be carried out, each of which may even last less than a minute.

The programmable configurations mean that no staff are required. The extremely simple structure, combined with highly innovative solutions, even for elements like the support carriage, make for easy and minimal maintenance.

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TWO VECTOR AND TWO CANBIO MACHINES IN ROMANIA TO PRODUCE AUTOMOTIVE COMPONENTS



Negri Bossi recently received an order for two Vector V650 and two Canbio ST 500 plants, from Romanian company Subansamble Auto, a member of the GIC group that operates in the processing of thermoplastic and polyurethane resins for the automotive industry. Subansamble Auto is already a user of Negri Bossi machines with clamping forces of up to 1,500 tons, ranging from the Bi Power to the Multimat, the latter featuring an automatic rotary table.

“The Negri Bossi team has shown a high level of professionalism in its dealings with us, from the initial request for quotation right through to the installation and startup of our machines. Negri Bossi injection moulding machines, which are

highly reliable, have been crucial to our success, ensuring excellent material processing. Furthermore, the new control unit, has been improved and upgraded, as has the overall level of efficiency”, said Alin Zamfir, project manager at Subansamble Auto.

The Vector hydraulic series with 5-point double toggle clamp is available in 650, 800, 1,100 and 1,300-ton versions. These machines are built in two parts, in order to ensure the modularity of the mould and injection unit set, while the lowered bed guarantees greater accessibility. The injection unit is characterised by a hydraulic reciprocating screw with an injection capacity ranging from 1,875 to 11,000 g (PS).

The Canbio ST with five-point toggle clamp, also a hydraulic series, is available in models with clamping forces of 180, 250, 330, 400 and 500 tons. The twin servo pumps allow simultaneous movements, for example ejector or core operation during the clamping movement; this reduces cycle times without affecting the moulding performance and thus increases the machine’s overall energy efficiency.

The GIC group has a global turnover of 115 million euros and 2,500 employees worldwide.

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