

## State Of The Industry Report: Italian Plastic Machinery 2016 - Production Exceeded 4.2 Billion Euros In 2016 <sup>[1]</sup>



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The annual Member Assembly of Assocomplast – Italian trade association of 160 manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery and moulds within CONFINDUSTRIA – took place on Wednesday, the 7th of June 2017 at Villa Cagnola in Gazzada Schianno (province of Varese). The Assembly included elections of the President and three Vice Presidents for two-year terms 2017-2019. Alessandro Grassi was confirmed for a second term as President while Andrea Franceschetti (Gefran), Massimo Margaglione (Gefit), and Corrado Zanga (Uniloy Milacron) were elected as Vice Presidents. The Assembly met in extraordinary session to approve the new articles of association following the deliberation to change the name of the association to AMAPLAST.

This was followed by the public session, featuring speeches by Federico Visconti, Chancellor of the Carlo Cattaneo University (LIUC), and Marco Fortis, Vice President of Fondazione Edison. Professor Visconti gave a talk about the family-business workshop, illustrating the four fundamental pillars for effective management of a family run business and for ensuring the creation of an environment that promotes the entrepreneurial growth of the coming generations from a perspective of business development strategy. Marco Fortis followed with an analysis of the Italian and international economic situation with a focus on the plastics and rubber industry. He illustrated the estimates and forecasts for 2017 and 2018 for GDP and inflation in Italy, the Eurozone and globally. While the indicators for Italy continue to be less impressive than in other areas, recovery in our country is more positive than initially estimated: in the real economy, the trend in added value from manufacturing in the two years 2015-2016 was higher in Italy (+3.5%) than in Germany (+3.0%) or France (+2.6%).

As regards the plastics-rubber-machinery-moulds system, in 2016 the trade surplus reached a value of 3.2 billion euros (7.4 billion if we exclude the deficit generated by raw materials) thanks to 22.9 billion euros in exports. Plastics and rubber products and processing machinery both made very positive contributions here. In 2015, the Italian plastics-rubber-machinery-moulds industry was on the world

podium for balance of trade with 51 products, up from 45 in 2014. Looking at the segment of plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment and moulds, the most recent foreign trade data published by ISTAT and elaborated by the Assocomaplast Study Centre for the first two months of the current year show an excellent trend for both imports and exports, with the former up by 16.1% over the same period in 2016 and the latter recording +10.3%.

This double-digit growth justifies the atmosphere of moderate optimism exhibited by Italian manufacturers in the last few months and testifies to an enduring positive trend in the domestic market – which appears to have regained vigour after a long period of stagnation – and to further gains in exports, which have always been the driving force behind the sector, generally accounting for more than 70% of production.

As President Grassi reminded members in his speech, Assocomaplast Study Centre estimates that this production exceeded the value of 4.2 billion euros in 2016, climbing back to pre-recession figures. This is partly to be attributed to a positive trend in sales abroad, which increased by 1.7% over 2015 to set a new all-time record at just under 3 billion euros.

The most recent economic survey conducted by Assocomaplast among its members in late May, regarding the first half of 2017 with respect to the same period in 2016, reveals what tends to be a positive mood regarding the trend both in revenues (improving for 39% of the interviewees and stable for 49%) and in orders (growing for 42% and stable for 52%).

“While remaining prudently cautious,” stated Grassi, “Italian manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery express moderate optimism again in 2017, expecting further increases in production and exports, forecast at around two percentage points.” Their outlook is buoyed by measures to support investment in capital equipment – super-amortization, hyper-amortization, the new Sabatini law, tax deduction for R&D – implemented as part of the National Industrial Plan 4.0. Grassi added in this regard that “for the first time in decades, we have seen real industrial policy planning. Industry 4.0 certainly represents a great opportunity for our companies and for our customers.”

This favourable economic climate is most probably a factor in the positive trend in applications for PLAST 2018 – International Exhibition for the Plastics and Rubber Industries (Milan 29 May – 1 June 2018) – with over 800 participants already registered as of last 30 April, representing a 6% increase in assigned areas as compared to the same deadline in 2015, and a 10% increase in new exhibitors.

As underscored by President Grassi, “these heartening statistics reaffirm the validity of The Innovation Alliance project initiated by the organizer of PLAST 2018 (Promaplast srl, the association’s service company) together with IPACK-IMA, MEAT-TECH, PRINT4ALL and

INTRALOGISTICA ITALIA, leading to an exhibition occupying all the halls of the FieraMilano fairgrounds.”

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