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## PRESS RELEASE

### **ALL-TIME RECORD EXPORTS** **for Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery manufacturers**

Assocomaplast (the Italian trade association belonging to CONFINDUSTRIA, which groups together over 160 makers of machinery, moulds and equipment for plastics and rubber) has developed its 2015 balance sheet for the sector, also according to ISTAT foreign trade data.

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

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	2014	2015	Δ% 2015/2014
production	4,000	4,150	3.8
exports	2,685	2,900	8.4
imports	640	750	18.0
domestic market	1,955	2,000	2.3
trade balance (active)	2,045	2,150	5.1

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"The most heartening item for Italian companies," underscored Assocomaplast president Alessandro Grassi, "is **exports, which once again have proven to be the driving force for the sector**. Indeed, a significant upsurge in the final months of the year took exports past the threshold of 2.9 billion euros, setting an **all-time record**, going well beyond the 2.75 billion in 2007."

The Association has thus amended upwards last December's full-year forecast, estimating national production on the order of 4.15 billion euros, continuing the growth trend that began in 2010 after the significant downturn during the latest global recession.

Surveys also showed that increases in earnings in 2015 for Assocomaplast members were above average for the sector.

An 18% increase in imports also supports the sensation of recovery in the domestic market expressed by members on a number of occasions last year.

In parallel, the survey conducted in early March among a significant sample of Italian converters highlights improvement over February of last year and the 3-4-month forecasts also show a **strong upward trend** in orders and production.

Getting back to exports, an initial analysis of the macro-regions for sales abroad of Italian machinery highlights expansion in NAFTA, led by **increased sales to US converters** in 2015: +50% in value over 2014, exceeding 260 million euros. And growth on the order of 20 percentage points was also recorded in Mexico and Canada.

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Destination areas of the Italian plastics and rubber machinery, equipment and moulds exports (%)		
	2014	2015
Europe (UE)	60.2 (48.7)	60.2 (49.7)
North America/NAFTA	10.8	13.7
Central/South America	7.3	6.0
Africa	5.1	4.5
Asia/Oceania	16.6	15.6

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Accompanying that excellent performance, a **positive trend** (+11%) is also observed in sales to markets within the European Union – further extending gains made in recent years. However, this contrasts with an overall downturn in sales to Old-World countries outside of the EU, dragged down by persistent contraction in the Russian market, still reeling from the well known economic and political turmoil.

Among other primary markets we mention:

- Brazil, where the plastics and rubber processing industry has not been spared the recession rippling across the country (the local trade association recently published goods production data: -8.7% in 2015 with respect to 2014). As a consequence, sales of Italian processing machinery have dropped off by 12%
- China, also a shrinking outlet market for Italian exporters (but also for the German competitors). Overall, based data from local sources, imports of plastics and rubber processing machinery registered a 27% drop last September both as a result of a general slowdown in the local economy and because of increased domestic production
- Poland, which accounts for 5% of Italian exports in the sector, rising to third place among destination countries, reaffirming the general growth trend over the past years
- India, also bucking the general trend with +16%.

**Germany has stayed true to form as Italy's main trading partner**, increasing its imports of Italian machinery by +14%.

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