



Assago, June 24, 2015
MM/sa

PRESS RELEASE

ASSOCOMAPLAST: NEW PRESIDENT AND MORE POSITIVE ECONOMIC SIGNALS

The annual members assembly of **Assocomaplast** – the Italian trade association belonging to CONFINDUSTRIA, which groups together over 160 makers of machinery, moulds and equipment for plastics and rubber – was held on Friday, 19 June at the Science and Technology Museum in Milan.

The assembly elected a new **President** for the two-year term 2015-2017: **Alessandro Grassi**, managing director of Frigosystem srl, who in turn named **Andrea Franceschetti**, international sales director for Gefran spa, as **Vice President** of the association.

The members assembly was followed by the public Assocomaplast assembly held jointly with that of Federazione Gomma Plastica, the association of manufacturers of plastic and rubber products. **Carlo Calenda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development**, was the first to speak, underscoring that the plastics and rubber sector plays a fundamental role in the Italian economy and that policymakers are supporting, with subsidies for the Made-in-Italy plan, companies in the industry and their internationalization. The PLAST 2015 trade fair is one of the 30 Italian international-level tradeshows supported by the Ministry. The event took place in Milan from 5 to 9 May and closed with excellent results in terms of attendance by visitors and foreign delegations.

Another speaker was **Marco Fortis**, economist and Vice President of **Fondazione Edison**, who presented an analysis of the Italian economic scenario with a focus on the plastics and rubber industry. This was followed by a round-table discussion on the topic of internationalization with the participation of **Licia Mattioli**, President of the **CONFINDUSTRIA** Technical Committee for Internationalization and Foreign Investors, along with the presidents of the two trade associations and a number of businesspeople.

In his thoroughgoing speech, Fortis indicated that there are a number of signals that make it reasonable to look to 2015 with (cautious) optimism. Apart from the recent improvement in macroeconomic data – growth of 0.3% in GDP in the first quarter of 2015, weak euro with respect to the dollar and low oil prices – and in light of the comments recorded during PLAST 2015 (organized by the Assocomaplast services company) we may state, albeit with some caution, that there are signs of recovery in the Italian conversion market. They are still faint, but hopes are that they will grow stronger in the second half of the year.

Import-export data from ISTAT for the **first quarter 2015** show an **increase in imports of an impressive 15 percentage points, and of exports on the order of 5**, thanks first of all to increases in supplies from Germany (which has always been the prime export market for Italian manufacturers), Spain (which shows signs of recovery on a number of fronts) and Brazil,



2.

traditional destination country for Italian-made products in the sector, which in previous quarters had unfortunately shown a worrisome slowdown.

As regards exports, in spite of the continuing existence of various critical or potentially destabilizing situations, both political and economic (for example in Russia, Iran, Greece, South America, etc.), the US and Germany economies are strengthening and the Chinese economy is stabilizing. These are factors that may have a **positive influence** on the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery industry.

In his closing speech to the member assembly, outgoing Assocomaplast president Giorgio Colombo provided an overview of the trend for the sector with the above-mentioned 2015 data and underscored once again that 2014 was a year of substantial recovery for the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery industry, with production estimated at 4 billion euros (+2.6% with respect to 2013) and exports growing by 5% (to 2.68 billion euros).

"The result achieved last year for sales abroad, which generally represent over 70% of revenues, and up to 90% for some companies," stated Colombo, "was followed by **positive signals in the domestic market**. Indeed, the most recent economic data provided by the Assocomaplast Research Center show recovery in production levels for Italian converters and improvement in order-books for machinery builders, both in terms of consolidated data and in the 3-4-month forecasts. As regards employment, we are finally witnessing a **reversal of trend**, almost completely overcoming the need for unemployment compensation and – better yet – actually initiating a search for new workers."

And it was with these optimistic words – echoed also by Prime Minister Renzi in his message of well-wishing to the presidents of Assocomaplast and Federazione Gomma Plastica – that Giorgio Colombo gave the floor to the new president Alessandro Grassi.

"I am honoured to assume the role of Assocomaplast President," stated Grassi. "My work shall continue along the lines established by my predecessors, starting with my friend Giorgio Colombo. There are **many complex challenges ahead** but I am sure we will rise to the occasion thanks to the collaboration not only of the Council and the Executive Committee but also of our general membership – it being one of my prime objectives to get them more involved in the life of the association."

for immediate release

a voucher copy of reproduced news will be appreciated

st/comst/6.2015 ass