

# Milan Brings the Plastics and Rubber Industry Together

## “Innovation Set to Thrive at Plast”

After an enforced break of four years, Plast will reconvene in Milan at the beginning of September. Sustainability and energy efficiency are the main themes of the international trade fair for the plastics and rubber industry. Mario Maggiani from the organizer Promaplast joined Plastics Insights to discuss the current mood in the plastics and rubber industry in Italy and the specifics of the Italian market.



Designed by Massimiliano Fuksas, the Milan fairgrounds opened in 2005. In September, its halls become the stage for Plast. © Fiera Milano

Six exhibition halls will play host to over 1200 exhibitors showcasing their product portfolios, ranging from materials and manufacturing processes to end products and services for plastics and rubber processing. Three smaller satellite exhibitions will also be held in a special area to widen the scope of the event still further: “3DPlast”, dedicated to additive manufacturing; “Rubber”; and “Plast Mat”, focusing on innovative material solutions. The supporting program will provide a wealth of opportunities to learn about and exchange information on the latest industry developments and current challenges. Mario Maggiani, Managing Director of Promaplast, the trade fair organizer, is looking for-

*„Technological innovations and sustainability will be top of mind at this year’s Plast.“*

Mario Maggiani

ward to the first post Covid-19 edition of the exhibition and underlines his faith in the resilience of the Italian plastics and rubber industry, despite the difficult times.

**Plastics Insights:** Mr. Maggiani, what characterizes the Italian market for plastics and rubber machinery?

**Mario Maggiani:** Exports rule in the Italian market – more than two thirds of production is exported. But one third stays in Italy, and the domestic market is the benchmark when it comes to creating synergies between machine manufacturers and users to roll out new products and refine existing technologies. As such, it’s crucial.

**Plastics Insights:** How do you assess the current market situation in Italy? In Germany we have just had news of a 30 % drop in orders for machine manufacturers.

**Maggiani:** An economic survey carried out among Amaplast members at the beginning of January revealed the following expectations for Q1 in 2023: a 7% increase in orders compared to the same period last year, more or less equally divided between Italy and abroad. Sales are also expected to increase by 6 %, which means the mood remains largely positive, although somewhat less rosy than in previous quarters. The outlook for 2023 and beyond remains uncertain, as the economic and political environment remains volatile. Despite the situation regarding energy costs and the availability of raw materials and components easing gradually, other critical factors remain, such as the recent crisis in financial institutions.

**Plastics Insights:** The Italian plastics industry could start 2023 with a tailwind from the previous year, correct?

**Maggiani:** According to the final figures published by the MECS research center, 2022 was a

top year: Italian plastics and rubber technology ended the year with a turnover of 4.67 billion euros, the second-best result ever. The increase compared to 2021 was +5%.

**Plastics Insights:** What are your expectations for this year’s event? What will be the focus of Plast 2023?

**Maggiani:** Despite the difficult macroeconomic scenario, we expect a positive 2023 for Italian rubber- and plastics machinery manufacturers. At Plast 2023, for example, we aim to match or even improve on previous attendances. Many companies that had registered for Plast 2021 have also confirmed their participation this year. We expect more than 1200 exhibitors in total. 30 foreign buyer delegations and the three satellite exhibitions 3DPlast, Rubber and Plast Mat are also confirmed. As well as technological innovations, sustainability will be top of mind.

**Plastics Insights:** The circular economy was also one of the main focuses of the last K, both in Europe and at the level of the UN Plastics Convention. Are there any Italian particularities in this area?

**Maggiani:** The circular economy is currently crucial on a European level through the PPWR (Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation). And given changing consumer demands, production methods also have to change. But Italy has always spearheaded this economy, which is why we question some of the regulations the EU has proposed. We believe that the legislator should set the targets and the industry should decide how to achieve them.

**Plastics Insights:** What can Plast visitors expect? What will be your personal highlight?

**Maggiani:** The clash between supply and demand, which has always characterized Plast, fascinates me the most. It spawns new ideas and solutions and paves the way for innovation. We invite visitors to exchange ideas with exhibitors, participate in events and proactively get involved, even if they have doubts and concerns. ■

Interview: Susanne Schröder

### Info

#### Plast 2023

Plast, the trade fair for the plastics and rubber industry, will be held from September 5 to 8, 2023 at Fiera Milano in Milan, Rho-Pero. More than 1200 exhibitors and visitors from over 30 countries are expected.

Sustainability is not only a focus for many exhibitors, but the show itself is also set to become more environmentally friendly. The organizer, Promaplast, is using a sustainable event management system that targets logistics, waste and catering to reduce the environmental impact of the event and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

[www.plastonline.org](http://www.plastonline.org)

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### About the Interviewee

**Mario Maggiani** is managing director of Promaplast, the organizer of Plast, and director of Amaplast, the Italian association of manufacturers of machinery and equipment for the plastics and rubber industries.



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and lots of success for the new chapter

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