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Plastics and rubber processing machines: sector in recovery

The full-year forecast developed by MECS-Amoplast statistical studies centre shows double-digit growth in 2021 for the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment, and moulds industry

“According to our estimates,” states Amoplast president Dario Previero, “at the close of 2021 production should be a hair’s breadth from pre-pandemic levels, reaching 4.35 billion euros and an impressive +11.5% with respect to 2020.”

The primary driver of recovery in the sector in Italy is the domestic market, which is forecast to close the year with growth of nearly fifteen points and a value of 1.35 billion euros. On the basis of the most recent economic survey of the first nine months of the current year, the surge in orders from Italian customers mainly regards machinery and complete processing lines.

Exports are also playing a decisive role and are expected to return to a value on the order of 3 billion euros, giving a boost to the balance of trade. Indeed, 8 of the top 10 Italian export destination countries, collectively absorbing nearly 60% of the total, show strong growth in demand, with +17% from Poland and +83% from China.

Orders received in the first three quarters of the year, both from Italian and foreign customers, cover production for the next six months and mainly regard machinery. The replacement parts segment, while in the positive range, appears somewhat less dynamic.

As regards applications, it is not surprising to see the highest and most sustained demand for technology from the packaging and medical sectors, while construction and automotive travel at more moderate speeds.

“Naturally,” adds Previero, “various factors of instability that arose and worsened over the past year - from raw materials costs to difficulty in procuring components, from an increase in energy and transport costs to restrictions on personal mobility - are still unresolved and continue to be sources of concern for companies.”

However, the clear recovery recorded in 2021 - with the first signs of an upswing already observed in the last months of 2020 - gives us good reason to expect performance beyond pre-crisis levels already next year.

“This”, emphasizes Previero, “confirms the robust response capacity of companies in the industry, deriving typically from their flexibility. Faced with the challenges posed by the context and markets, the companies have again succeeded in developing tailor-made solutions in terms of technological content, sustainability, and efficiency.”

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