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PRESS RELEASE

FIRST QUARTER: FULL SPEED AHEAD!

double-digit growth for Italian manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment, and moulds

The Amaplast (the Italian trade association of 160 manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery and moulds, previously known as Assocomplast) Study Centre has analysed foreign trade data published by ISTAT regarding the first quarter of the current year.

Compared to the same period in 2016, **imports have increased by 15.3% and exports by 16.3%**.

The clear upward trend in exports continues that recorded in 2016, and the double-digit performance is a particularly good sign for Italian manufacturers, who sell 70% or more of their products – valued at over 4.2 billion euros in 2016, **returning to pre-recession levels** – to buyers in other countries.

Exports increased significantly for almost all machinery categories – with the exception of tyre presses and foam plants – ranging from +8% for presses to +70% for thermoforming machines.

Taking a look at geography, overall exports show robust growth (near 20%) to **Europe (primary market)** with a value increasing from 380 to 455 million euros. Germany, Spain, and Romania have recorded the most impressive increases (and we should note that Russia is finally showing positive signs of recovery).

Sales to Central and South America shot upwards by 53% to 47 million euros, with **significant growth in exports to Brazil** and notable opening of the Cuban market.

Exports to Africa increased by 21% to reach a value of 33 million euros, with Algeria, Nigeria, and South Africa leading the way.

The upward trend in sales to Asia and North America, on the order of +4%, was somewhat less pronounced. However, these zones absorb a considerable share of Italian exports in the sector: in January-March 2017, Middle and Far Eastern markets (including the marginal region of Oceania) and the NAFTA countries each represented 14% of the total.

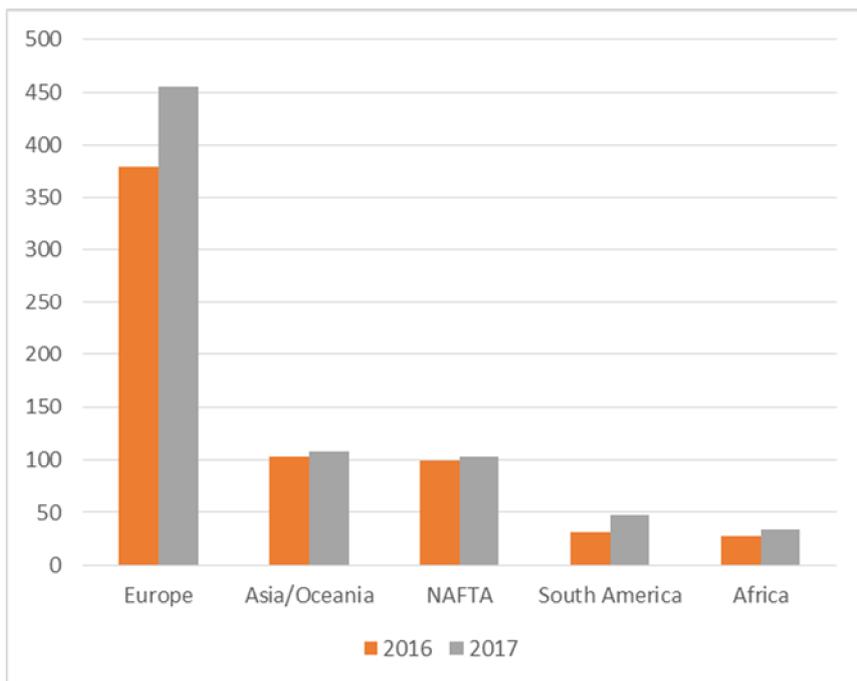
The survey conducted among Amaplast members at the end of May, comparing the current half-year to the same period in 2016, highlights a positive trend both in revenues – with 39% reporting growth and 49% reporting stability – and in orders – with 42% reporting increases and 52% reporting stability.

“We do not expect exports to maintain double-digit growth all the way to the end of the year,” states the president of AMAPLAST, Alessandro Grassi, “but nevertheless, this is certainly a very important signal confirming **ongoing growth in the sector**, supported also by the positive trend in the domestic market as recorded in previous months.”



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Italian exports of plastics and rubber machinery, equipment and moulds by main areas (million euro – January-March)



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ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE COSTRUTTORI DI MACCHINE
E STAMPI PER MATERIE PLASTICHE E GOMMA

ITALIAN PLASTICS AND RUBBER PROCESSING MACHINERY
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