

Assago, September 22, 2021
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PRESS RELEASE

AMAPLAST ASSEMBLY

Amaplast, the Italian national trade association of some 170 manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment, and moulds, and a member of Confindustria, held its **annual member assembly** on Thursday, 16 September 2021 at the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo in Arese (Milan).

During the assembly, the **members confirmed President Dario Previero and the Vice Presidents Gabriele Caccia and Massimo Margaglione** for the two-year term 2021-2023.

In his address to the assembly, Previero illustrated the performance of the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery industry, commenting on the results of the first edition of the National Statistics Survey by the MECS-Amoplast Statistical Study Centre among some 350 manufacturers (employing a total workforce of 13,000) that generated revenues of nearly 3.6 billion euros in 2020, of which 76% from exports.

While the industry closed the year 2020 with a negative balance, the deficit was not as bad as might have been feared after the complicated months of the pandemic. Instead, companies showed **recovery** in the final months of the year, boosted by **growth** in the first half of 2021. This confirms the solidity and dynamism of the industry. The outlook for the upcoming months is marked by optimism bolstered by the **positive signals** arriving from various markets and applications.

President Previero also reiterated the **key themes** faced by companies in the sector: from the expected reforms and support that will finally put the crisis behind us to ecological transition and from problems procuring materials, components, and qualified personnel to digital transformation and new post-pandemic business models.

In closing, the President commented on the complex issues relating to trade fairs and the path of **synergy** through association now fully implemented with ACIMAC (Association of Italian Manufacturers of Machinery and Equipment for Ceramics) and UCIMA (Italian Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Association).

Previero's address was followed by the round table discussion "**Sustainability 4.0**".

INDUSTRY FIGURES

The final balance of the difficult year of the pandemic was less negative than might have been expected, thanks to the accelerating recovery in the last quarter.

The recovery continued into the first half of 2021, with an eleven-point **increase in revenues** compared to the same period in 2020; orders increased by an impressive +46% and exports by +25%, driven by double-digit growth in sales to primary destination markets such as the United



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States, Germany, China, and Poland. Strong recovery is also seen in the domestic market, with greater **propensity for investment** deriving from the incentives in the government's industrial plans.

Highlights were also presented of the first **National Statistics Survey**, carried out by the MECS-Amoplast Statistical Study Centre among some 350 Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery, equipment, and moulds manufacturers employing some 13,000 people and generating revenues of nearly 3.6 billion euros in 2020, of which 76% were from exports.

In terms of geography, most of the companies (approx. 55%) are located in Lombardy, mainly in the Provinces of Milan, Varese, and Brescia, followed by Emilia-Romagna (15%), Veneto (13%), and Piedmont (10%).

An additional focus area with respect to past studies regards the client sectors for machinery manufacturers: packaging holds first place with 43% of the total (31% food, 12% non-food), followed by automotive (19%) and construction (9%), just to note the principal ones.

As for technologies, 18% of revenues derives from the extrusion segment, followed by auxiliaries and injection moulding machines at 12% each, and then plastics moulds and dies at 9%.

YOUTH TRAINING

A key issue also among businesses in the industry represented by Amoplast is the difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel, exacerbated by competition from other sectors which have a stronger draw on the new generations.

In response, last March, Amoplast initiated the social-media campaign "**Candida il tuo talento**" (Apply your talent) to acquaint young people with the Italian plastics and rubber processing machinery industry, its capacity for technological innovation, and the career opportunities it offers, informing them and motivating them to consider courses of study that would prepare them for a job in the sector.

Furthermore, job-seeking high school and university graduates in technical-scientific disciplines (mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, informatics, mechatronics, etc.) are invited to apply via a dedicated platform. So far, the result is a database of approximately 120 CVs at the disposal of Amoplast member companies seeking to hire new professional figures.

To boost the availability of qualified members of the workforce, a **framework agreement** was recently signed by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, ACIMAC, Amoplast, and UCIMA for research, training, PhD programmes, and support for innovative start-ups.

TRADE FAIRS

Following the pandemic-induced upheaval in the world trade fair calendar, the service company Promoplast srl was forced to postpone the 2021 edition of **PLAST**, initially from May to June in the hopes of quick positive developments in the public health situation and then to a later year.



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In light of responses gathered from major exhibitors and openings in the FieraMilano calendar, the decision was made to reschedule the fair to **5-8 September 2023**, a year after K and with a reasonable interval after the major international fairs for the sector.

Six hundred exhibitors who were registered for PLAST 2021 have confirmed their participation in 2023 and have currently reserved 30,000 square metres of exhibition space.

In consideration of the big push for ecological transition embodied in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and other instruments, Promoplast srl has announced a new event called **GREENPLAST** dedicated to environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, recovery-recycling-reuse, and the circular economy.

A showcase for the most advanced solutions in polymers, finished products, machinery, services, and much more. The fair will take place in **Milan, 3-6 May 2022** in conjunction with Ipack-Ima, Print4All, Intralogistica Italia, and, for the first time in Milan, Pharmintech.

GREENPLAST will also host an **international conference** where world renowned speakers discuss the key issues addressed by the fair, with a particular focus on the packaging segment and plastic products.

ROUND TABLE: "SUSTAINABILITY 4.0"

The Amaplast assembly concluded with a round-table discussion titled "**Sustainability 4.0**", with contributions from **Camillo Rovida**, Amaplast consultant; **Marco Versari**, President of Consorzio Biorepack, Public Affairs Manager of Novamont spa, and former Assobioplastiche President; **Walter Ganapini**, Honorary Member of the Scientific Committee of the European Environment Agency, Co-founder of Legambiente, and former President of Greenpeace Italia; and **Oswaldo Bosetti**, Industrial Director of Europa Goglio spa.

As an introduction to the guest speakers, the MECS-Amaplast Statistical Study Centre presented the results of an analysis by GlobalData regarding consumer awareness of **sustainability in packaging**. The results showed that the first criterion applied by consumers in choosing packaging, more important than packaging design, is environmental impact, and they envision future packaging as mono-material or easily separated and recyclable. Forecasts say that two out of three products will be packaged in plastic by 2024.

Camillo Rovida highlighted investments by the plastics industry in the **development of chemical and physical recycling technologies**. These will complement mechanical recycling and are necessary to reach the objectives set forth by the European Commission for a circular economy. Rovida shared the results achieved by the principal actors involved in studying and industrializing the various proposed solutions.

Marco Versari talked about Italy's role as a **world production hub** for biodegradable and compostable plastics, developed mainly to facilitate collection of organic wastes. There are very promising growth prospects, partially in light of the fact that a growing number of countries are enacting legislation regarding the production and use of biodegradable and compostable bags.



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Walter Ganapini made reference to the ambitious objectives set forth by European policymakers to address the environmental and climate emergency. They demand complex, drastic, and prompt solutions. Italy historically boasts a **great capacity for innovation**, but it has not been fully exploited: for example, certain applications of plasmix (heterogenous mix of post-consumer plastics not recovered as individual polymers), such as a component in asphalt or in steel furnaces, are already viable but implementation is slow.

Osvaldo Bosetti outlined the **future of flexible packaging**, with particular reference to mono-material packaging, which is easier to recycle and capable of significantly reducing CO₂ emissions. However, there is still progress to be made on development to optimize productivity and final performance.

President Previero closed the assembly underscoring that Italian manufacturers of plastics and rubber processing machinery are ready to embrace the new challenges as an impulse to develop **increasingly advanced technological solutions**.

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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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