



Associazione costruttori
italiani macchine
ed accessori
per la lavorazione del legno

*Italian woodworking
machinery and tools
manufacturers' association*

Acimall
Centro Direzionale Milanofiori
1° Strada - Palazzo F3
I-20090 Assago (Milano)
phone +39 02 89210200
fax +39 02 8259009
www.acimall.com
info@acimall.com

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ITALIAN WOODWORKING MACHINERY: 2014 PRELIMINARY BALANCE

The industry of technology for wood and wood-based materials is still in the middle of a difficult season. This is the message from today's meeting with the Italian trade press organized by Acimall, the Confindustria-member association that gathers the most important companies in Italy. No rebound, no overwhelming trend reversal, although so many are expecting a change. The situation remains difficult in Italy compared to many foreign countries, but there is no region in the world showing great performance. This does not change the fact that export is the main destination for Italian production, which cannot rely on a favorable domestic market...

This picture is clearly outlined by the preliminary balance of 2014 for Italian wood and wood-based materials technology; the figures processed by Acimall's Studies Office indicate that, in the past seven "endless" years, the Italian industry has lost 30 percent of its turnover.

ITALIAN WOODWORKING MACHINERY. 2014 PRELIMINARY BALANCE

Tools included, in million Euros

	2014	Δ% 2014/2013
Production	1,545	+0.5%
Export	1,163	-2.0%
Import	118	-17.5%
Trade balance	1,045	0.0%
Domestic market	382	+9.1%
Apparent consumption	500	+1.4%

Source: Acimall Studies Office, December 2014

Production amounted to 1,545 million Euro, with a slight decrease from the previous year. **Export**, while remaining a key strength of Italian industry, decreased by 2 percent, which is still an encouraging result compared to minus 3.6 in 2013 and minus 8 percent in 2012.

Import – which accounts for less than one-fourth of the Italian market – stopped at 118 million Euro, down by 17.5 percent from 2013.

Though at significant levels, the **trade balance** is standing still, with Acimall's Studies Office predicting the same value as in 2013. An encouraging 9.1 percent growth of sales on the **domestic market** (versus plus 2.9 percent in 2013) resulted from government incentives to investments (the Sabatini Law first) and from the impossibility for companies to freeze expenditure for too long, if they want to keep an efficient fleet of equipment. This trend, opposite to the drop of import, seems to suggest that the market in 2014 preferred made-in-Italy technology.

2015 FORECASTS

*"We prefer to avoid looking into the crystal ball to find indications for the future", said **Dario Corbetta**, Acimall's director, based on his long experience as director of the Studies Office of the association he is now guiding. "History, especially in recent times, has shown that many factors can suddenly change a figure or a trend that was taken for granted. Our analysis starts from a few solid points and from an in-depth knowledge of the industry and international markets, but there are unpredictable social, religious, political and economic factors that can cause a market to open up or close down within a couple of days.*

*However, we can say that, according to the figures we have and the forecasts for the most significant destination markets of made-in-Italy technology, **Italian export in 2015 might increase by a few percent points**".*

"We will not deny – Corbetta added – that some factors suggest that the next twelve months will be a period where many indexes might show an upward trend, but we are not sure this will be a real and definitive trend reversal".

Trends in the different regions will play a key role. According to the figures presented in their Assago offices (Milan), Acimall's analysts believe that the situation will be **stationary** in the European Union, Africa and China. Italian woodworking technology will face a **tougher** situation in South America and Russia, due to the well-known critical political conditions. **More optimistic forecasts** on the Italian market, after many years of stagnation, as well as in North America and Asia in general.

During the press conference, **the "substantiality" of the industry** of woodworking machinery and tools was outlined: 270 companies (180 of which are Acimall members), representing 18 percent of global production, with 9 thousand employees and 1.53 billion Euro turnover, with an 80 percent export share.

An interesting **"Gdp comparison"** animated the first part of the press conference. Out of 1,560 billion Euro of Italian Gdp, the share of made-in-Italy machinery and equipment is 35 billion, while the wood-furniture system amounts to 27.4 billion. Woodworking equipment, as mentioned, is just at 1.6 billion, so one thousandth of Italian Gdp. But if you take a quick look at the trade balance, the picture changes: the Italian trade balance is worth 20.5 billion, with machinery and equipment at 19.3, the wood-furniture system at 8.2 and woodworking technology at an excellent 1.04 billion. So, an industry that cannot certainly call itself a giant, but still offers a substantial contribution to our trade balance surplus on the global marketplace.

For more information:

Luca Rossetti

+39 329 2197752

press@acimall.com

