

WOOD AND FURNITURE INDUSTRY TECHNOLOGIES: “MADE IN ITALY” IMPORT AND EXPORT DATA IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2024

Today more than ever, it is essential having data and figures to accurately evaluate the real trend of a market that is experiencing a period of uncertainty.

According to tradition, the Studies Office of Acimall – the Italian woodworking technologies association – has processed a set of information (based on Istat data, the Italian national statistical institute) that clearly illustrate the global trends of Italian technologies for the furniture and woodworking industries in the first three months of this year.

EXPORT

In the period under scrutiny, **export** totaled 379.4 million euros, 6.1 percent less than in the same quarter in 2023. Provided that one quarter is too short a period to identify a significant trend, if we look at the main destination regions (table 01), we can see a 30 percent decrease in sales to **Europe extra EU**, due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The same tragic events have caused a reduction of export to the **Middle East**, down by 55.1 percent.

The substantial stability of **European Union** (the biggest trade partner with a 52.8 percent share on total Italian export) is combined with an expansive trend in Italian technology purchases from **North America** (up by 4 percent), especially due to the policy adopted by the **United States** to reshore productions that had been outsourced to neighbor countries. The markets that still represent attractive destinations, although with significantly smaller values, include **South America** (plus 28 percent), **Oceania** (plus 18 percent) and **Africa** (plus 9.3 percent).

It is worth noticing the 16.4 percent drop of export to **Asia**, certainly due to the increasing penetration of “**made in China**” technology for wood and furniture, which is becoming more and more attractive for China’s neighbor markets.

Focusing on specific countries (table 02), we see a comeback of the **United States** and **France**, the best customers in the quarter, strongly recovering compared to the entire 2023, when the purchases of Italian technology had dropped by 16 percent in the Us and 4.6 percent in France. Excellent results in **Sweden** (plus 137 percent compared to the same quarter in 2023), driven by spare parts and integrations to existing technology. The **United Kingdom** is continuing to record a collapse of Italian machinery import (down by 36.6 percent), following a similar reduction in 2023.

China, despite increasing volume of domestic production, is maintaining a strong interest for Italian technology (plus 12.9 percent in the January-March 2024 period, repeating the plus 10 percent result achieved across twelve months in 2023). **India** keeps losing positions in the ranking of customers (minus 30.5 percent), while remaining in the list of markets that feed good expectations despite the results currently offered to Italian companies.

IMPORT

Looking at the import of foreign technology into our market in the first quarter 2024 (*table 3*), we see further evidence of the stagnation that has characterized Italy, although the figures are really limited: import from **Germany** decreased by 35.6 percent, from **China** by 20.5 percent and from **Switzerland** by 12.3 percent; **Austria** recorded an 8.7 percent growth of sales to Italy.

More generally, import in the January-March 2024 period amounted to **39.4 million euros**, just above 10 percent of export and dropping by 23.9 percent compared to the same period in 2023.

If we look at the figures by region (*table 4*), we can say that the **European Union** remains the most “interesting” origin, with 23.3 million euros in the period under scrutiny despite a 24.6 percent reduction from the same period in 2023, and a 59.2 share on total Italian import.

“The evidence we should probably focus on is the marginal role of Africa for Italian manufacturers”, said Acimall’s director **Dario Corbetta**. *“Despite geographical proximity and the commitment of our government to develop more profitable relations, the penetration of our industry in Africa is still limited, especially if you consider that China, instead, supposedly sold woodworking technology for approximately 100 million euros in 2023.*

***North America** remains a highly relevant partner for our companies, and the same goes for **Europe**, although maybe we should consider the latter an expansion of the domestic market rather than an export destination”.*

For more information:

Luca Rossetti

+39 351 9098189 - press@acimall.com