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PRESS RELEASE

FULL YEAR FORECAST POINTING UP

for the Italian plastics and rubber machinery industry

The analysis of ISTAT foreign trade data for the first three quarters of the current year carried out by **Assocomaplast** (the Italian national trade association, member of CONFINDUSTRIA and numbering more than 160 associated companies) as compared to the same period in 2014 confirms the positive performance in both imports and exports observed in previous months, particularly as regards imports, where sustained growth is seen. Extrapolating this trend, the overall value of purchases from abroad in December should fall somewhere between 700 and 750 million euros.

"The factor bringing most satisfaction to Italian businesses in this sector," emphasizes Alessandro Grassi, President of Assocomaplast, "is the **consolidation in exports**: in the first nine months of this year they have nearly reached the same level as the full year 2014." The association's research office estimates that 2015 may break the all-time record, reached in 2007, of 2.8 billion euros.

This trend would bring a new impetus to Italian production, perhaps pushing it beyond the threshold of 4.1 billion euros.

The geography of exports shows particular progress (over 30 percentage points) in the NAFTA zone, thanks mainly to **increased supplies provided to US converters**. Central and South America, on the other hand, continue their slide, with sales dropping in the principal markets, i.e. Brazil, Argentina and Colombia.

The trend in exports to **Europe is also positive – maintaining its position as the principal market for foreign sales** – but here we observe a divergence between EU countries, where sales have risen by 13%, and non-EU countries, where they have fallen off overall by 4%, still influenced by the strongly negative trend in sales to Russia. "This is an important market," continues Grassi, "to which Italian manufacturers continue to look with great interest and the hope that the values witnessed prior to the imposition of sanctions and the collapse of the ruble will soon be back on the books."

Exports to Germany have shown a clear recovery with respect to previous quarters, confirming this to be by far the main destination market for Italian exports in the sector.

Sales of Italian technology to Asian countries have dropped slightly, but here as well there are distinctions to be made: while **the first three quarters of this year closed positively in the Far East** with respect to January-September 2014 (led by sales to Indonesia and Thailand, while China held steady), the Middle East records a contraction of 16%, which can be traced to the slowdown in Saudi Arabia and the lasting standstill in Iran, here again the result of the

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embargo, which should be loosened in the coming weeks.

Exports to the continent of Africa are generally stagnant as an average between the substantially positive activity in Mediterranean markets (Morocco first and foremost) and strong slumps in the others, including South Africa.

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