



ACIMALL

Associazione costruttori
italiani macchine
ed accessori
per la lavorazione del legno

*Italian woodworking
machinery and tools
manufacturers' association*

Acimall

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

press office

28 February 2019

**A POSITIVE YEAR 2018 THAT ENCOURAGES TO LOOSE THE KNOTS OF THE FUTURE
Another positive year for the wood technology industry, although the trend survey
for the last quarter arises some questions that should be taken into consideration...**

2018 PRELIMINARY BALANCE

Again this year we can say that "*...the barometer for woodworking and furniture industry machinery and plants keeps pointing to nice weather*". We used the same expression at the end of 2017, which closed with 11.6 percent growth over 2016, and we are repeating it this year to tell you about an excellent **9.5 percent** growth recorded by production in the past twelve months compared to 2017. All economic variables analyzed by the Studies office of Acimall, the Confindustria association that represents industry companies, indicate that **2018 was another positive year**.

Production reached 2.487 billion euro (resulting into the 9.5 growth mentioned above, from 2.27 billion in 2017) and also **export** increased (1.694 billion euro, up by 6.5 percent).

Another sign that the Italian industry using technology for wood and wood-based materials is going through a good season comes from **import**, at 239 million euro, 27.9 percent more than 187 million in 2017.

The **trade balance** is also positive (1.455 billion euro, plus 3.8 percent).

More in general, we can say that the woodworking machinery industry closed another year of consolidation, certainly supported by government incentives to investments in production technology and Industry 4.0.

FOURTH QUARTER 2018

Optimism seemed to fade out partially in the final quarter 2018, with figures indicating a slight **slowdown in orders** of Italian equipment and technology. The **Italian market** was still lively, scoring an excellent 17.9 percent growth over Q4 2017, but this performance was offset by **foreign orders** decreasing by 13.6 percent, which means that the grand total for the October-December 2018 period is **minus 3.2 percent**. So, while Italy still shows a plus sign, the increasing uncertainty on the international scenario (Brexit and US-China trade relations above all) seems to be suggesting more caution to international investors.

This adds to the fact that **revenues** in the fourth quarter 2018 were largely positive compared to the same period of 2017, with an excellent plus 19.2 percent; this figure has a significant impact on 2018 overall results, as mentioned before.

Looking at the other data of the survey by the Confindustria-member association, we can see that the **orders book**, i.e. months of secured production, is 3.7 months (versus 4 in the previous quarter) and price variation across 2018 was 1.1 percent, the same value as in 2017.

Another interesting piece of information comes from the **quality survey**, i.e. the opinion poll about **production trends**: 38 percent of the interviewees expect a positive trend, 56 percent see substantial stability ahead, and 6 percent believe that business will shrink.

FORECAST SURVEY

And what about the **future**? As already mentioned, there are plenty of hints that feed worries for short-term developments. Uncertainty dominates the domestic market after the reduction of fiscal incentives for Industry 4.0 initiatives introduced in the 2019 Budget Law, combined with the reduction of tax credit on R&D investments and the elimination of the super-amortization mechanism. Export markets are subject to the outcomes of Brexit and China-US trade wars.

So, summing up, 6 percent of the sample believe in the further expansion of the **domestic market**, while 63 percent expect substantial stability and 31 percent shrinking business (the balance is negative at minus 25). On the **export side**, 19 percent are optimistic, 18 percent pessimistic and 63 percent forecast stability (final balance plus 1).

For more information:

Luca Rossetti

+39 329 2197752 - press@acimall.com

