

## Order Intake for Italian Manufacturers Declined in First Three Months of 2022

**The Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers (ACIMIT) is a private national body that knits about 80% of the Italian textile machinery players. Its key mandate is to promote this segment of the industry within and beyond its shores in tandem with the Italian Trade Agency and Italian Ministry of Economic Development. ACIMIT President Alessandro Zucchi talks to [textfash.com](https://www.textfash.com) about how the machinery segment is surviving the current volatile times.**

### **What has been the growth of the Italian textile machinery market in the last two years?**

After a decline in Italy's textile machinery production in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021, the Italian textile machinery industry made a strong recovery, exceeding pre-pandemic production and export levels. The value of Italian production in the industry reached €2.4 billion, while the value of exports was €2 billion.

### **What are the strengths of the Italian textile machinery market and what are the weaknesses? What steps is ACIMIT taking to overcome the shortcomings?**

The main characteristics that distinguish Italian textile machinery sector are

- the skilled workforce that ensures high quality of products;
- the dimensions of Italian companies that allow a quick response to the need of each customer;
- the flexibility and versatility ensuring a customised production for satisfying the needs of each customer and
- the high technological level of the supply due to the constant attention paid by Italian companies to the R&D activities and to innovative solutions.

Of course, the small size of Italian companies can also be a point of weakness. In certain markets our brands are still not well known precisely because of the poor promotion activities that small companies cannot carry out on their own. ACIMIT supports the internationalisation of its member companies through activities aimed at promoting the entire sector such as coordinating Italian exhibitors at trade fairs, organising training courses for foreign textile operators, etc.

### **From which countries has the demand been the most and for which type of machinery?**

In 2021 China, Turkey, Pakistan and the United States were the main markets for Italian textile machinery manufacturers. Asian countries are the ones to which the largest percentage of Italian exports is directed (42% of the total Italian exports). This is followed by European countries. The supply of Italian manufacturers covers all the classic sectors into which we can divide textile machines. Each type of machine is well represented in Italian exports. In 2021, finishing machines accounted for 30% of Italian exports, followed by spinning and knitting machines.

### **Technology has grown by leaps and bounds over the last two years. How have ACIMIT members stayed abreast and what have been the key innovations that you would like to talk about?**

The Italian textile machinery industry has also seen a strong innovation momentum to deal with the pandemic and its impact on manufacturing. Italian manufacturers have focused on digitising their production processes and those of their customers. Machines that are more interconnected with each other and with customer companies' information systems can make textile companies even more competitive. Special attention has also been paid to facilitating maintenance, both predictive and preventive one, of installed machinery to reduce production stops and make the production process more efficient.

### **Sustainability, circularity—the buzz words that must become ways of life in the immediate future. How does the machinery from Italy help serve these goals? What steps does ACIMIT take to ensure that members innovate to promote these goals?**

Italian textile machinery manufacturers play a major role in promoting new trends linked to green technologies in their manufacturing sector. Italian companies in the various textile manufacturing segments (from spinning to knitting, from weaving to finishing) now provide technology solutions capable of reducing the emission or use of hazardous substances in production processes and ensuring greater water saving along with improved energy efficiency in production processes. Within this context, ACIMIT has launched the 'Sustainable Technologies' project, coordinated by the RINA certification body, in an effort to develop and promote key sustainability issues for the textile industry. The gold standard of the 'Sustainable Technologies' project is the Green Label: a voluntary declaration by Italian textile machinery manufacturers designed to highlight the energy and/or environmental performance of a given machine, calculated in reference to a production cycle defined by the manufacturer for labelled machinery.

**Could you elaborate on the ‘Sustainable Technologies’ project?**

In their commitment to a more sustainable textile supply chain, ACIMIT and its member companies have developed the ‘Sustainable Technologies’ project at the centre of which is the ‘Green Label’ initiative that aims to identify the energy and environmental performance of each machine and make them easily recognisable and comprehensible. Through a survey on the green labels produced from 2011 to 2015, it has been estimated that there was a lower reduction of emissions of 220,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, equivalent over the previous year, equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by about 39,000 cars driving (on average) 35,000 kilometres per year. Moreover, we realised that the textile companies that use Green labelled Italian machines can reduce the consumption of water by 27% and energy by 30%. Thus in this new trend where sustainability of products and attention to environment are the key topics, the Italian textile machinery manufacturers are at the forefront. Italian companies are already successfully offering solutions to reduce consumption of water, energy and raw materials, and at the same time increasing energy efficiency and reducing costs. In other words, supporting their customers to be more competitive in the world scenario.

**It is a volatile situation globally. The pandemic was just about retreating and suddenly the Russia-Ukraine crisis flared up, followed by oil prices, historic highs in the price of cotton. How has it impacted the machinery market in Italy?**

After the growth recorded in 2021, the entire global textile machinery industry is facing a period marked by great uncertainty due to all the factors listed above. Rising energy costs, shortage of raw materials and electronic components, as well as the strong rise in shipping costs are hurting the entire industry. The quarterly survey by our Association shows that the order intake for Italian manufacturers declined in the first three months of 2022. However, I am confident that the flexibility and creativity that distinguishes Italian companies will be key to overcoming even this difficult period as it has happened in the past.

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Alessandro Zucchi, President ACIMIT

*By Richa Bansal*