

Knitting Industry

Italian textile machinery eyes recovery Innovation and sustainability underpin industry recovery plans.

Italy's textile machinery industry is looking beyond a difficult 2025 as manufacturers intensify investment in innovation, sustainability and international expansion ahead of ITMA 2027.

Speaking at the ACIMIT General Assembly in Milan, ACIMIT president Marco Salvadè said the sector continues to face geopolitical uncertainty, weaker industrial investment and increasing protectionist measures. Despite these challenges, Italian textile machinery has maintained its position as a global technology leader.

According to final 2025 figures based on ISTAT data, domestic production fell by 9% year-on-year to approximately €1.94 billion. Exports also declined by 8% to €1.675 billion, while domestic sales decreased by 14% to €266 million. Although imports increased by 14%, supporting overall domestic consumption, investment levels in the Italian market remain subdued.

Asia remained the largest export destination for Italian textile machinery, accounting for 40% of overseas sales worth €667 million. The European Union represented 24% of exports, followed by non-EU European countries with 11%. Finishing and dyeing machinery generated the largest share of export revenue at 33%, followed by accessories at 20% and spinning machinery at 15%.

India emerged as the industry's strongest growth market during 2025, becoming the largest single destination for Italian textile machinery exports. Sales to the country increased by 28% compared with 2024, reaching €176 million, reflecting continued investment in India's textile manufacturing sector and demand for advanced Italian technology.

Salvadè said the results should be viewed in the context of an exceptionally fragmented global economy, adding that Italian manufacturers continue to compete through technological excellence and highly customised, value-added solutions. He also called for consistent industrial policies and long-term incentives supporting innovation and digitalisation.

Sustainability remains central to the industry's competitive strategy, with ACIMIT member companies continuing to invest heavily in research and development. New machinery is increasingly focused on improving energy efficiency, automation and reducing resource consumption, helping textile manufacturers lower both environmental impact and production costs.

The association also stressed the importance of attracting new engineering and technical talent through stronger links with education and research institutions, describing skills development as essential to maintaining innovation.

Looking ahead, ACIMIT is focusing much of its international promotional activity on preparations for ITMA 2027, which will take place in Hanover, Germany, from 16-22 September 2027. Working alongside the Italian Trade Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the association has launched an extensive programme of international initiatives to support Italian manufacturers in global markets.

The General Assembly was followed by a public forum entitled *Competing in a Changing World*, featuring contributions from leading figures in economics, manufacturing and European industry. Discussions highlighted the importance of flexibility, innovation and quality in strengthening the international competitiveness of Italian manufacturing.

Founded in 1945, ACIMIT represents around 200 Italian textile machinery manufacturers, accounting for approximately 85% of the sector's turnover. The association's members generate annual revenues of around €2.1 billion, with about 86% of production exported to more than 130 countries.

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