Knitting Industry

Industry Talk

Italian textile machinery orders rise 7%

Export demand supports Italian textile machinery orders despite continued weakness in domestic investment.

Orders for Italian textile machinery increased by 7% in the third quarter of 2026 compared with the same period last year, driven by stronger demand from international markets, according to the latest figures from ACIMIT, the Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers.

The association's quarterly orders index showed an 8% increase in orders from overseas markets, while domestic demand declined by 4%, highlighting the continuing divergence between export performance and investment activity in Italy.

Despite the year-on-year improvement, overall order intake fell by 4% compared with the second quarter of 2026, reflecting the uncertainty that continues to influence investment decisions across the global textile industry.

The textile machinery orders index for the July–September period stood at 44.6 points, based on a reference value of 100 in 2021.

Italian textile machinery manufacturers reported an average order backlog equivalent to 3.5 months of production, while capacity utilisation reached 72.4%.

ACIMIT said sector-specific data indicated that orders were generally stable or declining during the quarter across both domestic and international markets. Expectations for the final three months of 2026 also remain subdued, with most manufacturers anticipating either stable or lower order intake.

Marco Salvadè, President of ACIMIT, said international demand continued to provide encouragement despite the challenging operating environment.

"Despite the widespread caution among manufacturers, fuelled by international uncertainty and rising energy costs, foreign markets continue to provide positive signals. This is particularly encouraging, as exports account for around 80% of the order intake of Italian textile machinery manufacturers," he said.

However, Salvadè acknowledged that the Italian market continued to struggle, with manufacturers looking for renewed investment activity among domestic textile producers.

"The domestic market, however, remains subdued. The industry is looking for stronger investment momentum from Italian companies, supported by the incentives available under the Transition 5.0 scheme, which offers improved planning opportunities for industrial investments."

The Transition 5.0 initiative is intended to encourage investment in more energy-efficient and digitally advanced manufacturing technologies, providing potential opportunities for Italian textile machinery suppliers as companies modernise their production facilities.

The latest figures underline the importance of international markets to Italy's textile machinery industry, which remains heavily dependent on exports. Although overseas orders have shown resilience, subdued domestic demand, rising energy costs and wider economic uncertainty continue to weigh on manufacturers' expectations.

Founded in 1945, ACIMIT represents Italy's textile machinery manufacturing industry, comprising approximately 300 companies with a combined annual production value of around €1.9 billion. Approximately 86% of production is exported to 130 countries worldwide.

The sector supplies technologies covering spinning, weaving, knitting, finishing and other textile manufacturing processes, with Italian manufacturers recognised internationally for their engineering expertise, technological innovation and increasingly sustainable production solutions.

With the final quarter of 2026 under way, the industry's immediate prospects will depend on whether positive signals from export markets translate into a sustained recovery in orders, alongside renewed investment confidence among Italian textile manufacturers.

ACIMIT