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04. SPEECH DARIO CORBETTA

 *Acimall Director*

 “Xylexpo and the global trends

of technologies for the furniture

and woodworking industries”

Let me start with an overview of **visitors**, definitely one of the most critical elements for any exhibition. Well, visitor figures have increased in the past three editions (by 7.1 percent in 2014 and by 14.2 percent in 2016), and we expect to achieve double-digit growth also this year. As President Primultini said, it is clear that the efforts to reposition Xylexpo, combined with an improving economic scenario, have generated a virtuous circle with a clear outline: a quality exhibition focused on secondary operations, capable of involving "big customers” from the global retail and distribution business.

Figures indicate that we are **the reference exhibition in Europe in even-numbered years**: 71 percent of foreign visitors come from the Old Continent, 20 percent from Asia and Oceania, 6 percent from the Americas.

An interesting element related to the **“type” of visitor** is that Xylexpo is most attractive for “panel-based” furniture manufacturers (22.3 percent versus 18.7 percent using solid wood), followed closely by **machinery and tools trade** (196 percent). This means that the project I have just mentioned has been implemented: the “trade” business is attending Xylexpo, because our exhibition is a key event for technology sales, especially for those companies, including most Italian manufacturers, who do not address users directly.

Xylexpo attracts a numerous, interested and qualified audience, coming to Milan as a result of our continuous effort to promote Xylexpo’s contents and potential, in collaboration with Ice and Fiera Milano, which I take the opportunity to thank for long and intensive joint commitment.

Briefly stated, this is an exhibition that meets expectations, as indicated by the **independent survey** carried out at the latest edition, revealing that 86 percent of exhibitors is satisfied or very satisfied with the number of visitors and the quality of the event.

An event that, let me say it again, is celebrating its **50th anniversary** and is an excellent showcase for industry players willing to operate in the **Italian market** and to **compare all the options** offered by the technology portfolios of the world's leading vendors.

As a matter of fact, Xyexpo is **an exhibition of technological relevance**. A content-rich, high-quality exhibition focused on industrial manufacturing and smart machines designed to be interactive and to create highly automated production routes. Xylexpo is **the home of the “smart factory”**, with over **300 technology vendors**, most of them from Germany and Italy, which are the two “cradles” of leading-edge solutions for the wood and wood-based materials industry; definitely **the only global event in even-numbered years** with such a reputation.

And as I mentioned before, this opinion is shared by the trade business: just think that, next May, the Lombardy capital will be visited by **agents, representatives, importers and resellers from more than 60 countries**.

MACROECONOMIC SCENARIO

There is no doubt that, like any other exhibition or business activity around the world, the **global economic situation** has an impact. We are literally crawling out of the black hole where we had fallen: in recent years, global production is increasing again by approximately 3 percent annually, compared to a substantially stable trend of European economy (plus 1.8 percent in 2018). In the past few years, Italian gross domestic product has been growing too, although a slight reversal is expected in 2018 (plus 1.2 percent versus 1.5 percent in the year just closed).

Another element to be factored in for macroeconomic analysis is **Italy’s strong vocation to export** in all industrial and economic segments, evidence of the technical and technological resources and expertise of Italian companies. So, fertile ground in a positive season, benefiting from the measures by the Italian government to support investments in leading-edge technology. Facilitations have been extended until the end of 2018, which means Xylexpo will take place right in the middle of a **very favorable season for investments**, a situation that all exhibitors in Milan will certainly leverage.

WOODWORKING TECHNOLOGY

Looking specifically at the wood technology industry, I would like to stress that the **core businesses of Italian industry** are the secondary processing of panels and finishing technology. Our skills in transforming resources we do not own is the best expression of the ingenuity of Italian entrepreneurs, together with taste and surface quality: it’s not mere chance that we are the country of beauty, quality, style and design, envied by the entire world for our leadership in these domains. The woodworking technology industry in Italy is comprised of **250 companies,** 150 of them Acimall members; **9 thousand employees** generating revenues back above **2 billion euro**, as we will see later on, with a **75 percent export share**.

This is the economic organization that takes part in the global woodworking technology business, playing a leading role together with Germany, with 31 percent and 43 percent shares on European production respectively.

This situation, at least for Italy, is corroborated by the results achieved in **2017**: preliminary balance figures indicate that the Italian woodworking machinery industry reached a production value of **2.29 billion euro**, up by 11.6 percent from the previous year. Excellent results for export, growing by 7.1 percent to achieve a total value of **1.6 billion euro**. Talking about export, it is worth stressing that Italy’s top customers are the United States Stati Uniti (165.5 million euro), followed by Germany (105.8 million), Poland (102.4 million) and France (92.5 million).

Also import increased by 10 percent (**199 million euro**) with a strongly positive trend in the domestic market (695 million euro, plus 13 percent versus 2016), with expectations of further growth in the short and medium term for the reasons we mentioned before: in 2016, Italian users invested 743 million euro, in 2017 the total value went up to 894 million, and in 2018 we expect to get very close to one billion. According to our forecasts, we should reach 983 million, a new record level since 2001, when domestic business amounted to 900 million.

We believe this information is important for all those operating in Italy, which is characterized by significant import volumes, mainly covered by **Germany** (166 million euro) followed by **China** (68.7 million), **Austria** (13.1 million) and **Switzerland** (10.7 million). It is worth reminding that Italy has more than 40 thousand companies in the **wood-furniture value chain**, over 360 thousand employees and 30 billion euro turnover. Italy is a demanding customer, looking for effective and innovative technology, willing to have in-depth information before making a purchase decision, by attending events where – as we said before – you can compare all product offers... events like Xylexpo!

*Milan, January 23, 2018*

*the spoken word applies*