

**COUNTRY FOCUS: ITALY**

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# “Italian Manufacturers are Offering Solutions in the Field of AR and AI.”

**T**he Association of Italian Textile Machinery Manufacturers (ACIMIT) is a private non-profit making body and its main purpose consists in promoting the Italian textile machinery sector and in supporting its activity, mainly abroad, through the most updated and innovative promotional means, constantly improved over the almost 80 years of its life. In order to promote the Italian textile machinery knowledge throughout the world, ACIMIT gives any kind of information on the activity of the producers and organises a wide range of promotional activities (such as exhibitions, technical seminars, missions in Italy and abroad, etc.) most of the time in collaboration with Italian Trade Agency. **Marco Salvade, President, ACIMIT**, in this discussion with **Divya Shetty**, elucidates why Italy’s textile industry stands out and how his association is working to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.



**Italy is renowned for its advanced technology and engineering. What would you say are the key strengths of the Italian textile machinery industry that set it apart from other countries?**

The common features of the Italian textile machinery industry are tradition and innovation. The skills of our workers come from the textile and mechanical tradition that belongs to Italy. Moreover process and product innovation is the driver that has allowed Italian manufacturers to remain world leaders in recent decades. R&D activity has always been the flagship of the Italian textile machinery industry. From these features derive the keys to the success of Italian industry, namely creativity, reliability, an excellent quality/price ratio and versatility.

**Could you share some of the latest innovations ACIMIT has witnessed in textile machinery?**

It is impossible to highlight all the innovations that Italian companies have introduced to the market in last years. But undoubtedly the most recent innovations concern sustainability and digitisation of the textile production process.

**Sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the textile industry. How does ACIMIT address environmental concerns through its machinery and processes?**

As I mentioned before Italian manufacturers are pushing on R&D activities, focusing on reduction of

water, energy and raw materials consumption. The reduced use of resources, for a lower environmental impact, is just one of the topics through which the Italian manufacturers decline its commitment for a more sustainable textile production. A commitment that ACIMIT has made its own by developing the Green Label project. About 50 member companies joined the project. A survey on the Green Labels produced by our manufacturers from 2016 to date, confirms that the quantified avoided emissions using green labelled machines are 1.2 mio tonne CO2 eq.

**The relationship between Italy and India in the textile sector has been growing. Can you elaborate on how ACIMIT is engaging with the Indian market and any collaborative projects or partnerships you are involved in?**

In 2023, India was the third destination for our companies. The Italian textile machinery exports reached a value of 154 million euro. The standing of India among the main foreign markets of Italian manufacturers confirms the close trade links between our sector and the Indian textile industry. On its side, ACIMIT, in cooperation with Italian Trade Agency, has set up over the years an intensive program for increasing contacts between operators from the two Countries (i.e. incoming mission

of Indian textile operators in Italy, the establishment of an Italian Training Centre at DKTE's Textile & Engineering Institute in Ichalkaranji, technological workshops realised in India).

**What are the major challenges currently facing the textile machinery industry, and how is ACIMIT overcoming these challenges?**

Among the challenges our industry will face in 2024 the global uncertainty is a relevant one. Current economic conditions include high energy prices, low consumer confidence and inflation still at higher levels than in the past decade. The geopolitical tensions currently existing in the world scenario are not helping to improve these conditions.

ACIMIT supports its member companies in identifying new potential markets and new opportunities of business. In addition, our association remains the point of reference for its member companies in showing innovation trends that spring from the increasingly complicated regulations, especially about sustainability and recycling issues.

**Could you discuss any upcoming trends or technological advancements in textile machinery that you believe will shape the future of the industry?**

Sustainability and digitalisation characterise the upcoming trends in the technologies applied to textile industry. In particular we are observing a growing development of the digitisation of production processes. For example Italian manufactures are offering solutions in the field of augmented reality and artificial intelligence in order to support textile customers in optimising production using real-time data and in enabling both predictive and preventive maintenance of the machinery in use at the customer's facility. In addition, I would also like to mention recent developments in technologies for recycling textiles, following the strong commitment of authorities and textile companies to reduce the amount of textile waste.

**As the association representing Italy, what are your expectations from Indian companies to further strengthen the ties between the two countries?**

I believe that the quality of Italian technological supply has enabled our Country to strengthen its position among the main suppliers of Indian textile companies in the last decades. Furthermore the increasing attention paid by Indian textile companies on sustainable issues will be another opportunity to enhance trade links between the two Countries in the next future.