

**MACHINE TOOL ORDERS: FOURTH QUARTER 2020 STILL ON THE DECREASE (-18.1%)
FOREIGN ORDERS (-14%). DOMESTIC ORDERS (-28%).**

On an annual basis, machine tool orders dropped by 18.6% in 2020 versus 2019.

Even in the last quarter of 2020, the collection of machine tool orders shows a negative sign. In particular, **the UCIMU index of machine tool orders** processed by the Economic Studies Department & Business Culture of the Association highlighted **an 18.1% fall in the fourth quarter 2020** compared with the same period of the previous year. The absolute value of the index was 86.4 (base 100 in 2015).

The overall outcome is affected by the negative performance of the domestic market, as well as by the weakness of foreign demand.

In particular, **the collection of orders on the domestic market registered a 28% downturn compared with the fourth quarter of 2019**. The absolute value of the index was 123.9, thus still very high despite the reduction.

On the foreign front, orders decreased by 14% compared with the period October-December 2019. The absolute value of the index was 78.7.

On an annual basis, the total index marked an 18.6% fall compared with the previous year. The outcome was due to the collapse of the orders collected on the domestic market (-35.1%) and to the reduction of those collected on the foreign market (-13.6%).

“The drop registered in the fourth quarter 2020 – stated **Barbara Colombo**, president of UCIMU-SISTEMI PER PRODURRE – gives an idea of the difficulties that the manufacturing industry, not only the Italian one, has been encountering due to the health emergency”.

“The year that has just closed was undoubtedly complicated, but we are confident that, already in the first months of 2021, the situation will improve. The Government incentive measures for the replacement of obsolete machinery and for Transition 4.0, the availability of vaccines, along with the presence of two very important exhibitions in Italy, such as LAMIERA and EMO MILANO 2021, both of them held at fieramilano Rho, raise hopes for the trend of this new year”.

“On the domestic front, the measures established in the Transition Plan 4.0 included in the Budget Law 2021 are an excellent incentive for the recovery of investment in new, digital and non-digital technologies in Italy. Now what is essential is an appropriate communication to inform the enterprises about the criteria, technicalities and opportunities of the measures included in the provision, so that they can take advantage of these measures in the best way, without neglecting the key aspect of education and training 4.0”.

“Indeed, besides tax credits for purchasing new production systems and an increase in the tax rates applied to investments in Research & Development, the Government authorities have provided for an education and training credit, however considering in the calculation of the tax relief not only the cost for the education and training hours of the staff involved, but also the cost for the trainer, the most onerous aspect of this activity incurred by an enterprise”.

“I think that this choice, more and more times urged by UCIMU, will strongly incentivise the enterprises to start staff update and training plans, which are necessary, at least as much as technological upgrade, for maintaining the competitiveness of our enterprises”.

“On the other hand, the availability of vaccines will contribute to the recovery of activities also abroad, facilitating people mobility, which is decisive for the business of our companies that have always been engaged in foreign markets. For this reason – went on the president of UCIMU, **Barbara Colombo** – it is important that the vaccination campaign goes on quickly, involving the whole population as soon as possible: only in this way, we will be able to return to normality”.

“The movement impossibility of goods and people, as well as the almost total absence of trade fairs, have severely tested our work in 2020. Exhibitions are a crucial tool for our marketing activity and not only for this. In our sector, meeting people and having a direct exchange of views at the exhibition with our customers and even a comparison

with our competitors are essential aspects. Actually, trade fairs are not only activators of trade activities, but also important opportunities for the development and dissemination of innovation and the progress of the sector technologies. We have been compelled to almost do without for a whole year, trying to supplement with web meetings, remote connections and demonstration videos. Nevertheless, now our enterprises need to participate again in trade shows and organise business meetings in person”.

“While waiting for the Government authorities to give green light in March to resume the exhibition activity in Italy, the Association is working non-stop on the organisation of **LAMIERA**, held at fieramilano Rho and centred on the segment of sheet metal working and forming machines, scheduled to take place from 26 to 29 May, and of **EMO MILANO 2021**, the world exhibition of machine tools and robots, hosted again in Italy from 4 to 9 October, six years after the success of the 2015 edition.”

“LAMIERA and EMO MILANO 2021 will actually be the first international trade shows, for the metal sheet segment and for the whole sector respectively, after about one year and a half of unavoidable stop. Therefore – concluded President **Barbara Colombo** – the expectations of operators are very high and the collection of the applications to exhibit goes on swiftly, as a testimony to the firm intention of the manufacturing world to return to normality”.

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