



Cairo is the gateway for Italian companies to markets in North Africa and the Middle East

SITE AND NATURAL STONE MACHINERY: "MADE IN ITALY" EXPORTS TO EGYPT GROWING

Veronafiere, together with Confindustria Marmomacchine and Unacea, presents MS Africa & Middle East - the new event dedicated to the building sector and the natural stone industry, scheduled in the capital of Egypt 9-12 December 2013. Egypt offers excellent business opportunities for Italian companies. Maurizio Massari, the Italian Ambassador in Cairo: *"Italy is Egypt's second business partner, with trade totalling of more than 4.5 billion euros"*

Verona, 15 May 2013 - Imports of site and natural stone machinery are growing, alongside studies into major infrastructural projects, such as three new tunnels under the Suez Canal for a contract worth more than 550 million euros: business opportunities in Egypt are expanding for Italian companies in building and natural stone spheres.

And it is against this background that MS Africa & Middle East, *The International Trade Fair for Stone Design, Technology, Earthmoving and Building Machinery* (www.msafrika.net), is getting ready in view of the show's debut scheduled in Cairo 9-12 December 2013. The event, organized by Veronafiere with partners Art Line and Expolink, was presented in Cairo in the presence of Osama Bahsa, Business Director at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and Aly Abdel Kader, representative of the Exhibition Committee of the Export Council for building, refractory and metallurgy industries.

MS Africa & Middle East is the new event inspired by Veronafiere's experience with its renowned brands in the construction field - Marmomacc and Samoter - and seeks to strengthen internationalisation and penetration into neighbouring markets in North Africa and the Middle East.

There is already an impressively consolidated bridge between Italy and Egypt: *"Let us not forget,"* explained Maurizio Massari, the Italian Ambassador in Cairo, *"that Italy is Egypt's second trading partner, with business coming to more than 4.5 billion euros."*

The Cairo Office of **ICE-Italian Agency for International Promotion and Internationalisation of Italian Companies**, suggests that the construction sector in Egypt is one of the most dynamic in the national economy, having recorded steady annual growth of 10% since 2000, for a total value of 4.4 billion euros (0.6% of GDP in 2009-2012).

Domestic demand for new houses and infrastructures has great need for Italian construction machinery, with imports in 2012 totalling 17.5 million euros (+50% on 2011): the positive trend is also confirmed for 2013, with January figures up by 10% compared to the previous year (*Unacea data*).

Egypt, thanks to its geographical position, is also a natural gateway to North Africa and the Middle East: two important regions for exports of Italian construction machinery with sales in 2012 respectively of 173 million euros (+19%) and 213 million euros (+10%).

In this context, an exhibition such as MS Africa & Middle East becomes a fundamental platform supporting Italian companies in Egypt: *"With this new event,"* as GianPaola Pedretti, Veronafiere's International department manager, pointed out, *"we provide companies with Veronafiere's know-how as the organiser of successful international events such as Marmomacc and Samoter, that as of 2014 will also be joined by Asphaltica, the exhibition of road infrastructures. Internationalisation is by now the key to development even in the natural stone building sectors supported by Veronafiere as far afield as North Africa, the Middle East, the United States, Brazil and India."*

This export opportunity for Italy absolutely must not be missed says **Luca Nutarelli, Secretary-General of the National Union of Construction Equipment & Attachments Companies**: *"North Africa and the Middle East are areas with significant expansion potential as regards Italian construction machinery. In 2012, many of these markets imported significant quantities of Italian exports. In a calmer political climate, the population development of these areas, natural resources and the need for infrastructural developments will facilitate growth in demand for construction machinery."*

And not only construction equipment. The Egyptian natural stone industry - among the top ten in the world - also boasts significant turnover with Italy: Italian exports of finished and semi-finished marble and granite products in 2012 came to 2.8 million euros (+59% over 2011), not forgetting 51 thousand tons of unhewn blocks sold in Cairo (+3.5% over 2011).

Italian technology for the stone industry is increasingly in demand in Egypt and, after the downturn over the past three years, there has been a recovery, as evidenced by **Stefano Ghirardi, Vice President of Confindustria Marmomacchine**: *"The road towards regaining 2010 levels is still long but we are convinced that the strong growth in economic ties between the two countries is an indicator that recovery is being consolidated."*

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