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## Textile News

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### The Rupp Report: The French Look Ahead To ITMA 2011

Jürg Rupp, Executive Editor



ITMA 2011 is approaching in September, and the merry-go-round of country presentations of exhibits in Barcelona, Spain, just started this Monday in Frankfurt. On the occasion of Techtextil, the French Association of Textile Machinery Manufacturers (UCMTF) along with 10 of its member companies presented new developments and exhibits for the upcoming ITMA. In Barcelona, they will present "High tech, energy savings with machinery for high quality markets."

France is the sixth-biggest textile machinery exporter worldwide. The annual exports of the 35 member manufacturers exceed 1 billion euros (\$1.4 billion). These companies mostly are small to medium-sized enterprises, but they are leaders — or among the world leaders — in niche markets and specific applications.

#### The Crisis Is Over

Prior to the presentations, Bruno Ameline, UCMTF president, gave an overview of the situation of the French textile machinery manufacturers. He mentioned that from a French point of view, the economic crisis is clearly over. There has been a significant turnaround since early 2010. Weaving has recovered since the beginning of 2010 in China, India, Pakistan and Turkey. However, China remains the dominant market. In the long run, the need for textile quality testing is continuing. To achieve better quality, Chinese companies invest in European equipment. Ameline emphasized the fact that it seems that Chinese customers now think more in terms of investment profitability and less in terms of sheer investment costs.

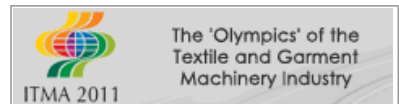
Neither the events in North Africa and the Middle East nor the disaster in Japan will significantly affect the market situation, with the exception of sourcing electronic components from Japan. Most of the French textile machinery manufacturers have order books that are quite full up to the end of 2011, and some even into the early months of 2012. In this context, the UCMTF anticipates a successful ITMA 2011.

#### Nonwovens

Also for nonwovens, the situation seems to be promising. Ameline said: "Nonwovens performed fairly well in 2010. In Turkey, this sector has been particularly active. The recovery accelerated in the second half of 2010 and has continued to progressively and regularly increase. The market is currently particularly strong for needlepunched applications." He added that the demand in China has doubled since 2008. The same Chinese market was very active for filament technologies, both in industrial and apparel applications.

#### Finishing

For the French producers, the United States and Turkey have significantly pulled the business for yarn finishing since early 2010,



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not to mention the Middle East markets and also Europe. The year 2011 shows already a fine activity profile. In summary, the French textile machinery industry has enjoyed an increasingly positive trend since the middle of 2010 and is back to activity levels in the range of pre-crisis levels.

#### **Some Clouds**

Ameline is positive about the future. However, some factors may still affect the fragile economic recovery, such as the high public debt levels in many countries, which may lead governments to implement monetary and tax policies that could limit economic growth.

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