

Four questions for Paolo Mongardi, Chairman of Sacmi Imola

As all of our readers already know, Sacmi is a leading manufacturer of machines and complete plants for the Tiles, Sanitaryware, Advanced Materials, Beverage, Packaging&Chocolate industries, thanks to the application of innovative technologies, strong positioning on world markets, the continuous search for high quality standards and customer service.



With over 4,700 employees and a sales volume of over EUR 1,500 million, Sacmi is a global partner of industrial plant engineering that operates with over 80 production, distribution, and service companies in 28 countries around the world. In particular, Sacmi is the world's leading supplier of machines and systems for the ceramic industry and a technological leader in the packaging-closures field. High productivity, quality, design and technological innovation, sustainability, and digitalization of processes, are the peculiarities that

Sacmi offers to its customers, supporting them in every phase of the supply, from design to after-sales.

In the following conversation, **Paolo Mongardi**, Chairman of Sacmi Imola, outlined the company's vision and the aims of its participation in Tecna 2022. Automation, process digitalisation, factory sustainability and occupational safety are the key characteristics of the innovations that the company will be presenting at Tecna 2022.

What are the technological solutions you have been working on in recent years and will be presenting at the exhibition?

In the tile sector, the main drivers of innovation have been clearly identified for a number of years now. It is important to help customers to achieve the highest degree of productivity for the same levels of investment, and for this purpose we will be showcasing several innovations regarding both the Continua+ family and traditional pressing. At the same time, the increase in productivity must be accompanied by greater versatility and flexibility, not least because of the growing market demand for coordinated elements (floor and wall tiles and furnishings).

Both of these aspects will feature prominently at Tecna 2022 with regard to both individual machines and complete plants. For this reason, **Sacmi** will be showcasing an even wider range of solutions for the production process based on the multidisciplinary skills present within the group and its well-established partnerships with leading international innovation centres.

Another major focus for **Sacmi** is sustainability in terms of reduced waste, lower and optimised levels of consumption, redesigned thermal processes with complete energy recovery, and adaptation of technology to alternative fuels such as hydrogen.



Automation, process digitalisation, factory sustainability and occupational safety are the key characteristics of the sanitaryware innovations that the company will be presenting at Tecna 2022. In particular, we will be presenting **RobotClean**, a revolutionary technology for robotic sanitaryware finishing developed exclusively by **Sacmi** and already adopted by leading Italian producers.

RobotClean finishing guarantees the complete safety of all sanitaryware white finishing operations, which still today tend to be carried out manually, and protects the operator from the risk of exposure to hazardous substances such as crystalline silica dust.

The solution employs special abrasive elements developed to faithfully reproduce the operations carried out manually by the operator, while dedicated software allows the finishing recipes to be programmed off-line, simulating the robot's movements and operations. This also makes the quality of finishing more reliable and repeatable, completing the Industry 4.0 approach to factory management.

In terms of plant engineering, this solution also fits in with the zero waste and profitable sustainability philosophy in which waste is transformed from a cost into an opportunity through circular processes (recovery of scrap, raw materials,

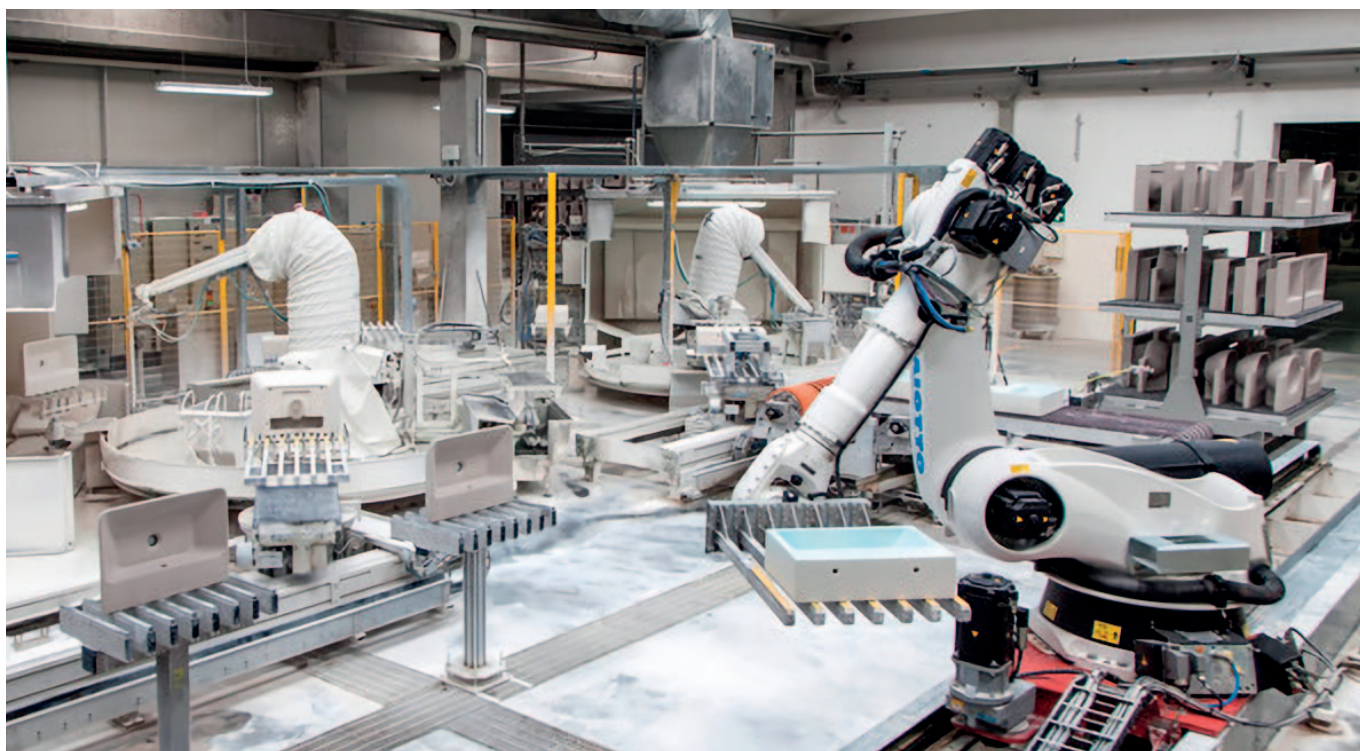
water, and energy). All of these aspects are addressed through specific initiatives such as the "We ARE Bright" event for sanitaryware production recently proposed to our customers.

What are your expectations for the market over the next few months?

2021 was an extraordinary year in which sales in our core businesses of Tiles and Sanitaryware returned to well above pre-Covid levels.

In the Tile segment, we are witnessing strong and steady growth in global demand, although we now also have to contend with issues regarding the availability of raw materials and soaring energy prices, a scenario that is further aggravated by the military escalation in Europe. While these difficulties primarily affect some of our customers, they inevitably also have an impact on producers of plant and machinery.

In the Sanitaryware sector we are also seeing a very dynamic market ready to react rapidly to external forces and stresses. Costs and raw material supply issues, procurement difficulties and rising shipping prices are accentuating a trend towards shorter value chains that had already been observed in the initial stages of the pandemic crisis.



This is causing many of our customers to think again about relocating and planning investments and projects closer to where products are sold.

These trends benefit **Sacmi** products because of their focus on sustainability, automation and a circular production process, an approach that primarily concerns advanced markets but also reflects a clear global trend. Barring contingent factors that may hinder the recovery of the market, we are therefore still expecting demand for technology to speed up in the medium term, particularly as a result of energy transition policies at a global level.

What are your expectations for Tecna 2022?

What we are looking forward to most is the resumption of face-to-face meetings and discussions with our customers. During the last couple of years, we have devoted a lot of effort and resources to maintaining a dialogue with our customers through virtual technologies and have done everything we could to meet their needs.

What is needed now is not only an exchange of views on the most topical issues but also a discussion about the best way forward, about the factory, the circularity of products and the use of technology at the service of sustainability as customers become increasingly attentive to these issues.

We firmly believe in the importance of a physical venue where it is possible to meet in person and get a first-hand

view of innovation, where we can sit down face to face with our partners and discuss the many challenges that lie ahead as part of the process of ecological and digital transformation.

Which countries are you focusing your promotional efforts on ahead of the exhibition?

Sacmi is the world's leading supplier of technology for the ceramic industry. Our customers include large international groups with facilities in dozens of countries, as well as independent manufacturers located in specific areas who are determined to position themselves at the high end of the market. We are interested in both of these types of customers and are at their complete disposal for developing projects or discussing detailed technical issues.

We look forward to welcoming our international customers to the exhibition and presenting our most innovative solutions, to sharing specific projects and needs and discussing the issues that have dominated the market in recent years: automation, digitalisation and technical and aesthetic quality, the reduction of manual processes and consequently the factory's environmental and social footprint, as well as energy and the fuels of the future.

More generally, through our participation in Tecna we intend to reaffirm our mission as a leading technology partner for the industry. ♦