

## World production and consumption of ceramic tiles

The fifth edition of the publication **"World production and consumption of ceramic tiles"** produced by the Acimac Research Department has been released in November.

**Consisting of 260 pages of charts, tables and commentary, it provides detailed analysis of the ten-year trends up to 2016 in industry, markets, per capita consumption and export flows in large geographic regions and in the 76 largest tile producer, consumer, exporter and importer countries.**

Here we present a preview of the key figures.

\* \* \*

**1)** After an essentially stationary 2015, 2016 saw a recovery in global production and consumption of ceramic tiles with growth of 5.7% and 5% respectively. Import/export flows were less dynamic with an upturn of 1.7%, a slight improvement on the +1.5% of 2015.

**2)** **World tile production** passed the 13 billion sq.m mark to reach 13,056 million sq.m, 5.7% up on 2015. **Asia** resumed growth, up from 8,631 to 9,331 million sq.m (+8.1% on 2015), equivalent to 71.5% of global production. This result was driven by the growth in China, India, Vietnam and Iran. The Euro-

pean continent produced a total of 1,877 million sq.m (14.4% of world production), including 7.1% growth from 1,218 to 1,304 million sq.m in the **European Union (EU-28)** and a more limited 1.1% growth to 573 million sq.m in **non-EU Europe**. In the American continent total production fell from 1,523 to 1,444 million sq.m (11% of world production) due to the sharp contraction in **Central and South America** where output volumes dropped by 107 million sq.m to 1,086 million sq.m (-9%). By contrast, growth in output continued at an even more rapid pace in **North America**, reaching 358 million sq.m (+8.5%) thanks to an upturn in both Mexico and the USA. **Africa's** output dropped to 399 million sq.m (-3.4%).

**3)** **World tile consumption** increased in 2016 from 12,177 to 12,783 million sq.m (+5%). In **Asia** demand reached 8,818 million sq.m (+8%), equivalent to 69% of global consumption. Consumption in the **European Union** also rose by 5.9% (following 5% growth in 2015), from 910 to 964 million sq.m thanks to growth in demand in most countries. Demand in **non-EU European** markets fell slightly (-0.9%) to 527 million sq.m due to the downturn in Russia, partly offset

### WORLD MANUFACTURING AREAS

AREAS	2016 (Sq.mt Mill.)	% on world production	% var. 16/15
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (28)</b>	1,304	10.0	+7.1
<b>OTHER EUROPE</b> (Turkey included)	573	4.4	+1.1
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b> (Mexico included)	358	2.7	+8.5
<b>CENTRAL-SOUTH AMERICA</b>	1,086	8.3	-9.0
<b>ASIA</b>	9,331	71.5	+8.1
<b>AFRICA</b>	399	3.1	-3.4
<b>OCEANIA</b>	5	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,056</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>+5.7</b>

by the recovery in Turkey. In **Central and South America**, consumption dropped by around a hundred million sq.m to 1,180 million sq.m (-7.7%), a downturn that was entirely attributable to the slump in Brazil. The very positive trend in demand in **North America**

continued, rising from 507 to 547 million sq.m (+7.9%), driven by virtually identical increases in Mexico and the USA in both percentage and absolute value terms. By contrast, demand continued to fall in **Africa**, dropping by 5.5% to 691 million sq.m due to the

### WORLD EXPORTING AREAS

AREAS	2016 (Sq.mt Mill.)	% on world exports	% var. 16/15
<b>EUROPEAN UNION (28)</b>	903	32.3	+5.5
<b>OTHER EUROPE</b> (Turkey included)	147	5.3	+5.8
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b> (Mexico included)	60	2.1	-7.7
<b>CENTRAL-SOUTH AMERICA</b>	141	5.0	+11.9
<b>ASIA</b>	1,513	54.2	-0.8
<b>AFRICA</b>	30	1.1	-14.3
<b>OCEANIA</b>	0	0.0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,794</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>+1.7</b>

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WORLD CONSUMPTION AREAS			
AREAS	2016 (Sq.mt Mill.)	% on world consumption	% var. 16/15
EUROPEAN UNION (28)	964	7.5	+5.9
OTHER EUROPE (Turkey included)	527	4.1	-0.9
NORTH AMERICA (Mexico included)	547	4.3	+7.9
CENTRAL-SOUTH AMERICA	1,180	9.2	-7.7
ASIA	8,818	69.0	+8.0
AFRICA	691	5.4	-5.5
OCEANIA	56	0.4	+7.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,783</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>+5.0</b>

contractions in Nigeria, Libya and Egypt.

4) In 2016 world exports increased by just 48 million sq.m to 2,794 million sq.m (+1.7%), maintaining a fairly limited growth trend for the third year running com-

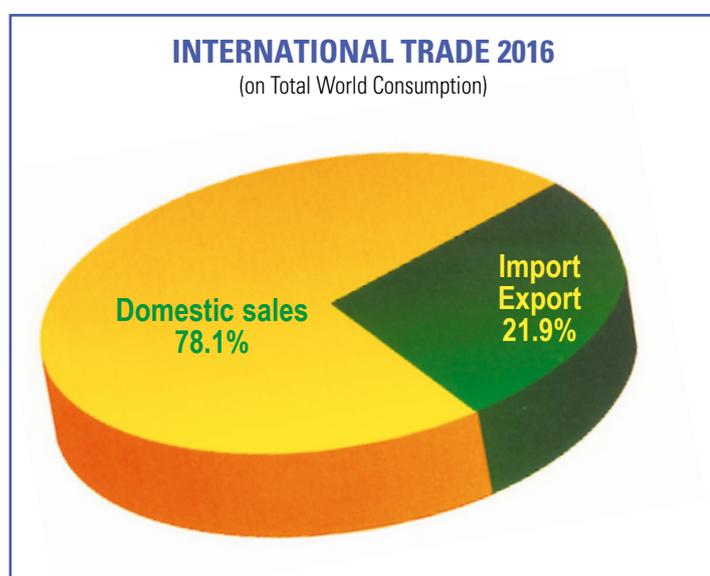
pared to the previous period. Moreover, the increase was almost entirely attributable to exports from the **European Union**, which rose from 856 to 903 million sq.m (+5.5%), one third of total world exports. Ex-

ports from **Central and South American** countries likewise rose (from 126 to 141 million sq.m, +11.9%), as did exports from **non-EU Europe** (from 139 to 147 million sq.m, 5.5%), which made up for the previous year's losses. By contrast, **Asia** saw a slight fall in exports to 1,513 million sq.m (-0.8%), equivalent to 54.2% of world exports, while the contraction in exports from **Africa and North America** continued (Africa from 35 to 30 million sq.m, -14.3%; North America from 65 to 60 million sq.m, -7.7%).

5) Looking at the **export propensity** of the various continents or macro-regions, the European Union remained the area with the highest export share at 69.2% of production. All the other areas lagged well behind: non-EU Europe exported 25.7% of its output volumes, North America 16.8%, South America 13%, Asia 16.2% and Africa just 7.5%. The trend in import/export flows over the years is perfectly consistent with our long-held view that tiles tend to be produced close to the place of consumption. Although world exports stand at 21.4% of production and 21.9% of global consumption, well over half (59%) of this volume consists of exports shipped within the same geographical region as that of pro-

duction (for example, 79% of South America's exports remain in South America, 77% of North America's exports remain within the NAFTA region, and 64% of Asian exports are shipped to other Asian countries). The EU is a partial exception in that almost 50% of its exports are sold in non-EU countries. This analysis is confirmed by the fact that the shares of world production and consumption tend to be similar in each continent. In other words, Asia accounted for 71.5% of production and 69% of world consumption, Europe (EU + non-EU) 14.4% and 11.6% respectively, the Americas 11% and 13.5%, and Africa 3.1% and 5.4%.

6) In 2016 **China**, the world's largest producer, consumer and exporter of ceramic tiles, resumed the production growth that had been interrupted the previous year. Although the Chinese industry and market remain difficult to quantify due to the very large discrepancies between the available figures, our estimates suggest that Chinese production totalled about 6,495 million sq.m in 2016 (+8.8% on 2015), equivalent to 49.7% of world production. This compares with a production capacity calculated by official Chinese sources at more than 11 billion



**TOP MANUFACTURING COUNTRIES**

COUNTRY	2012 (Sq.m Mill.)	2013 (Sq.m Mill.)	2014 (Sq.m Mill.)	2015 (Sq.m Mill.)	2016 (Sq.m Mill.)	% on 2016 world production	% var. 16/15
1. CHINA	5,200	5,700	6,000	5,970	6,495	49.7%	8.8%
2. INDIA	691	750	825	850	955	7.3%	12.4%
3. BRAZIL	866	871	903	899	792	6.1%	-11.9%
4. SPAIN	404	420	425	440	492	3.8%	11.8%
5. VIETNAM	290	300	360	440	485	3.7%	10.2%
6. ITALY	367	363	382	395	416	3.2%	5.3%
7. INDONESIA	360	390	420	370	360	2.8%	-2.7%
8. IRAN	500	500	410	300	340	2.6%	13.3%
9. TURKEY	280	340	315	320	330	2.5%	3.1%
10. MEXICO	231	230	230	245	267	2.0%	9.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,189</b>	<b>9,864</b>	<b>10,270</b>	<b>10,229</b>	<b>10,932</b>	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL WORLD</b>	<b>11,226</b>	<b>11,961</b>	<b>12,377</b>	<b>12,357</b>	<b>13,056</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Source: MECS, MECS, Acimac Research dept. "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles", 5th edition 2017

sq.m, spread over some 1400 companies and 3500 production lines. Domestic consumption is estimated at 5,475 million sq.m, 42.8% of world consumption. Exports fell for the third year running from 1,089 to 1,025 million sq.m (-5.9%, the biggest fall in the past three years), equivalent to 36.7% of world exports. Sales declined in all continents with the exception of Oceania (+7% to 35 million sq.m). Sales in Asia, which account for 58.3% of total Chinese exports, fell by 1.3% to 583 million sq.m; in Africa by -14% (198 million sq.m, 19.8% of the total); -11.7% in North America (78 million sq.m) and

-11% in South America (80 million sq.m), both with an 8% share of Chinese exports; -20% in the EU (16 million sq.m, 1.6% of global exports); and -9% in non-EU Europe (10 million sq.m) which accounts for just 1% of Chinese exports. As for individual markets, the biggest falls were in Nigeria (down from 52 to 15 million sq.m, -71%), India (from 32 to 12 million sq.m, -62%), Mexico (from 25 to 9 million sq.m, -62%) and Saudi Arabia, the largest export market in 2015 with 64 million sq.m but down to 5th in 2016 with 49 million sq.m (-23%). The Philippines has become the largest market for Chinese tiles (67 mil-

lion sq.m, +27%), followed by South Korea (66 million sq.m, +21%), Indonesia (57 million sq.m, +29%) and the USA (56 million sq.m, +11%). The value of Chinese exports totalled 4,979 million euros, corresponding to an average selling price of 4.9 €/sq.m.

7) In 2016, **India** overtook Brazil to become the world's second largest tile producer and consumer. Production increased from 850 to 955 million sq.m (+12%), while domestic consumption saw a more modest increase (785 million sq.m, +2.9%). The ceramic cluster in Morbi (Gujarat) has continued its rapid growth and is estimated

to comprise more than 500 production lines, many of which are devoted to products for export. Foreign sales saw a major upturn in 2016, rising from 134 to 186 million sq.m (+38.8%) and strengthening India's fourth place amongst the world's top exporter countries. In value terms exports reached 598 million euros, equivalent to an average selling price of 3.2 €/sq.m, one of the lowest figures of all exporter countries. Saudi Arabia remained the top export market with a 32.5% share (up from 49 to 60 million sq.m, +23%) and appears to have replaced Chinese imports with product from India.



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### TOP CONSUMPTION COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	2012 (Sq.m Mill.)	2013 (Sq.m Mill.)	2014 (Sq.m Mill.)	2015 (Sq.m Mill.)	2016 (Sq.m Mill.)	% on 2016 world consumption	% var. 16/15
1. CHINA	4,250	4,556	4,894	4,885	5,475	42.8%	12.1%
2. INDIA	681	718	756	763	785	6.1%	2.9%
3. BRAZIL	803	837	853	816	706	5.5%	-13.5%
4. VIETNAM	254	251	310	400	412	3.2%	3.0%
5. INDONESIA	340	360	407	357	369	2.9%	3.4%
6. USA	204	230	231	254	274	2.1%	7.9%
7. SAUDI ARABIA	230	235	244	263	248	1.9%	-5.7%
8. TURKEY	184	226	215	234	241	1.9%	3.0%
9. MEXICO	187	187	197	218	235	1.8%	7.8%
10. THAILAND	160	180	175	192	189	1.5%	-1.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,293</b>	<b>7,780</b>	<b>8,282</b>	<b>8,382</b>	<b>8,934</b>	<b>69.9%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>TOTAL WORLD</b>	<b>10,964</b>	<b>11,582</b>	<b>12,081</b>	<b>12,177</b>	<b>12,783</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

Source: MECS, Acimac Research dept. "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles", 5th edition 2017

Next come Iraq (11.5 million sq.m, +29.5%), UAE (11.4 million sq.m, +13.6%), Oman and Kuwait (both with around 10 million sq.m, more than double the 2015 figure). While Mexico (7 million sq.m) established itself for the first time as a major destination for Indian exports, this contrasted with a sharp fall in sales in Brazil (3.1 million sq.m, -62%). Overall, the Asian continent absorbs 74.5% of Indian exports (138 million sq.m, +38%), Africa 13% (24 million sq.m, +33%), Europe (EU + non-EU) 4.8% (8.9 million sq.m, +102%), North America (NAFTA) 4.3% (almost entirely Mexico) and South

America 3% (5.5 million sq.m, -47%).  
**8)** The only country amongst the world's major producers and consumers to see a significant downturn in 2016 was **Brazil**, where domestic demand fell by 13.5% from 816 to 706 million sq.m following the 4% contraction in 2015. This pushed down production from 899 to 792 million sq.m (-11.9%). By contrast, the recovery in exports continued for the fourth year running to reach 94 million sq.m (+22%) and a value of US \$309 million (+5%). These exports are almost entirely shipped to Latin American markets and the USA, the sec-

ond largest foreign market for Brazilian tiles. Anfacer chairman Heitor Almeida explains that the economic recession triggered by the domestic political crisis has paralysed the Brazilian building industry and real estate market, which contracted by 40% in 2016. Increasing exports to North and South America is therefore the only real option open to Brazilian tile manufacturers while awaiting the first signs of what is sure to be a slow recovery, in all likelihood from 2018 onwards.  
**9)** With a further 4.5% growth in exports to 395 million sq.m in 2016, **Spain** strengthened its position

as the world's second largest exporter. It also continued its recovery in terms of production with output volumes reaching 492 million sq.m (+11.8%), confirming the country's position at 4th in the rankings of world producers. This was in no small part due to the further recovery in domestic sales, which according to Ascer exceeded 125 million sq.m and increased in value by 16% to 746 million euros. France overtook Saudi Arabia as the top export market (37.8 million sq.m, +14.8%), followed by Saudi Arabia (down by 19% to 27.6 million sq.m), Algeria (23.5 million sq.m, -9%), the USA (where exports grew

TOP EXPORTING COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	2013 (Sq.m Mill.)	2014 (Sq.m Mill.)	2015 (Sq.m Mill.)	2016 (Sq.m Mill.)	% on 2016 national production	% on 2016 world exports	% var 16/15	value 2016 (million €)	average export price (€/sq.m)
1. CHINA	1,148	1,110	1,089	1,025	15.8%	36.7%	-5.9%	4,979	4.9
2. SPAIN	318	339	378	395	80.3%	14.1%	4.5%	2,570	6.5
3. ITALY	303	314	316	332	79.8%	11.9%	4.8%	4,588	13.8
4. INDIA	55	102	134	186	19.5%	6.7%	38.8%	598	3.2
5. IRAN	114	109	112	126	37.1%	4.5%	12.5%	328	2.6
6. BRAZIL	63	69	77	94	11.9%	3.4%	22.1%	293	3.1
7. TURKEY	88	85	77	81	24.5%	2.9%	4.8%	463	5.7
8. MEXICO	64	62	61	56	21.0%	2.0%	-8.2%	289	5.2
9. UAE	58	55	54	48	66.7%	1.7%	-11.1%	278	5.8
10. POLAND	48	42	42	46	32.4%	1.6%	9.5%	246	5.3
TOTAL	2,259	2,287	2,340	2,389	23.2%	85.5%	2.1%		
TOTAL WORLD	2,670	2,705	2,746	2,794	21.4%	100.0%	1.7%		

Source: MECS, Acimac Research dept. "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles", 5th edition 2017

by 49.6% from 13.8 to 20.7 million sq.m) and the UK (20.2 million sq.m, +6.5%). The top foreign markets in terms of value were France (257 million euros), USA (188 million euros, +30%), the UK (166 million euros) and Saudi Arabia (146 million euros). In 2016 the breakdown of Spanish export destinations by volume saw Europe at 39.7% (45.8% in value), the Middle East and Asia at 27.9% (24% in value), Africa at 19.6% (14.2% in value) and the Americas at 12.3% (15% in value). Export revenues rose to 2,570 million euros (+4.8%), while average selling price remained

stable at 6.5 €/sq.m. The Spanish industry's total turnover amounted to 3,316 million euros (+7.1%). **10)** In 2016 Italy saw a further recovery in production (+5.3%), up from 394.8 to 416 million sq.m, while total sales reached 414.5 million sq.m (+4.5%). Domestic sales recovered after an 8-year downturn, rising to 83 million sq.m (+3.2%) and a value of 829 million euros (+3.7%). Adding in imports (21 million sq.m), domestic consumption reached 103 million sq.m. As the world's third largest exporter, Italy again increased its exports both in volume (from

316.6 to 331.7 million sq.m, +4.8%) and even more significantly in value (from 4,318 to 4,588 million euros, +6.3%), thanks to an average price that has risen to 13.8 €/sq.m. The sector's total turnover exceeded 5.4 billion euros (+5.9%), of which 85% was generated by exports. Exports to Western Europe, the biggest market for Italian tile accounting for 50% of total Italian exports, rose to 167 million sq.m (+5%). Sales also picked up in Central And Eastern Europe to reach 31 million sq.m (+2% following the -17% of 2015), despite the severe difficulties in the Russian market

(2.5 million sq.m, -10%). Exports to the Balkans likewise performed well (17 million sq.m, +5.3%). Overall, the European continent absorbed 215 million sq.m of Italian tiles, 65% of all exports by volume. Results were also good in the NAFTA region with sales of 49 million sq.m (+8.5%), equivalent to 14.8% of total exports. Albeit with limited volumes, sales also rose in the Far East (19 million sq.m, + 4.8%), in the Gulf region (12 million sq.m, +3.2%) and in North Africa and the Middle East (11 million sq.m, +2%). By contrast, Latin America saw a sharp fall for the third con-



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TOP IMPORTING COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	2012 (Sq.m Mill.)	2013 (Sq.m Mill.)	2014 (Sq.m Mill.)	2015 (Sq.m Mill.)	2016 (Sq.m Mill.)	% on 2016 national consumption	% on 2016 world imports	% var. 16/15
1. USA	147	165	164	179	194	70.8%	6.9%	8.4%
2. SAUDI ARABIA	155	170	156	188	167	67.3%	6.0%	-11.2%
3. GERMANY	89	89	95	100	115	91.3%	4.1%	15.0%
4. IRAQ	105	121	102	106	112	98.2%	4.0%	5.7%
5. FRANCE	107	96	99	99	104	87.4%	3.7%	5.1%
6. SOUTH KOREA	61	65	76	72	75	60.0%	2.7%	4.2%
7. PHILIPPINES	38	46	53	60	75	65.2%	2.7%	25.0%
8. UAE	52	53	54	64	59	71.1%	2.1%	-7.8%
9. INDONESIA	37	36	46	45	57	15.4%	2.0%	26.7%
10. ISRAEL	43	48	44	52	57	91.9%	2.0%	9.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>62.1%</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>TOTAL WORLD</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>2,670</b>	<b>2,705</b>	<b>2,746</b>	<b>2,794</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

Source: MECS, Acimac Research dept. "World production and consumption of ceramic tiles", 5th edition 2017

secutive year (4 million sq.m, -21%). The positions of the top 10 largest Italian export markets remained unchanged, all of which saw growth with respect to 2015. Germany remained the largest market with 54.4 million sq.m (+5.8%), followed by France (43.9 million sq.m, +1.6%), the USA (38.7 million sq.m, +7.8%), Austria, Belgium, the UK, Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands and Romania.

11) The three largest exporter countries, **China, Spain and Italy**, accounted for 62.7% of world exports last year, while the top ten countries made up

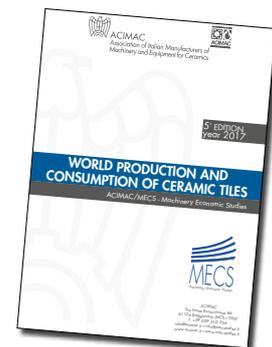
85.5%. Amongst the largest exporter countries, Italy and Spain maintained the highest share of exports as a percentage of production (both 80%), compared to the 66.7% of the UAE, the 37% of Iran, the 32% of Poland, the 15.8% of China and shares of between 12% and 24% of India, Brazil, Turkey and Mexico. But the real sign of Italy's leadership position is its average selling price of 13.8 €/sq.m compared to the 6.5 €/sq.m of Spain and between 2.6 €/sq.m and 5.8 €/sq.m of the other countries.

12) Vietnam and Indonesia remain the largest produc-

er and consumer countries in the Far East. In 2016 **Vietnam** saw its output increase to 485 million sq.m (+10%), while installed capacity was estimated at more than 600 million sq.m. Domestic demand rose to 412 million sq.m (+3%), confirming the country's position as the world's fourth largest consumer. By contrast, **Indonesia** continued to see a contraction in production (from 370 to 360 million sq.m, -2.7%) despite a small recovery in domestic demand (from 357 to 369 million sq.m, +3.4%), equivalent to a per capita consumption of 1.4 sq.m.

This contrasted with an increase in imports (from 45 to 57 million sq.m, +26.7%) originating entirely from China.

13) The largest producer in the Middle East (8th in the world rankings), **Iran** produced a total of 340 million sq.m in 2016 (+13%). This marked a recovery following a two-year contraction that saw production plummet from 500 million sq.m in 2013 to 300 million sq.m in 2015, compared to an installed capacity of around 680 million sq.m. The increase in production was not driven by a recovery in domestic consumption, which instead fell for



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the fifth year running from 190 to 169 million sq.m (-11%) due to housing sector stagnation. By contrast, exports continued to grow, increasing from 112 to 126 million sq.m (+12.5%), equivalent to 37% of production. This included 94 million sq.m exported to Iraq and the rest to neighbouring markets.

**14)** In 2016 **Turkey** maintained the positive growth trend that was observed in 2015. Domestic consumption rose from 234 to 241 million sq.m (+3%) and was entirely covered by Turkish production, which grew by 3% to 330 million sq.m (imports totalled just 5 million sq.m). Exports picked up after a three-year decline, increasing from 77.2 to 80.9 million sq.m (+4.8%) and corresponding to a value of 463 million euros (+2.7%). Turkish exports were mainly spread out over three macro-regions: 50% to the European Union (40.6 million sq.m, +10.7%), 22% to the Middle East and Asia (18 million sq.m, -10.5%) and 20% to the NAFTA region (16 million sq.m, +12%). Following 24% growth with respect to 2015, Germany became the largest market for Turkish tiles (11 mil-

lion sq.m), pushing Israel into second place (10 million sq.m, +6.5%). Next came the USA (9.2 million sq.m, +17.3% after the +24% of 2015), the UK (8 million sq.m) and Canada (6.8 million sq.m, +5%). Other countries in the ranking of top ten markets included France, Romania, Finland, Greece and Belgium, all of which saw positive growth.

**15)** In 2016 **Mexico** also continued the upward trend of previous years. Domestic demand reached 235 million sq.m (+7.8% on 2015 and +26% on 2013). The country's tile industry responded to the higher domestic consumption with a fresh increase in output, from 245 to 267 million sq.m (+9%), while imports slumped by 34% from 35 to 23 million sq.m. Mexico is also the world's 8th largest tile exporter with exports of 56 million sq.m, mostly sold in the USA.

**16)** In 2016 the top 10 importer countries imported a total of 1,015 million sq.m of tiles, 5.2% up on 2015 (compared to +1.7% at a world level). This was equivalent to 36.3% of total world import/export flows. With the sole exception of Indonesia which imported just

15% of its consumption, all the other top-10 countries saw imports account for more than 60% of domestic demand, with peaks of 98% in Iraq and between 87% and 92% in France, Germany and Israel.

**17)** In 2016 the **USA** became the world's biggest importer country with imports up from 179 to 194 million sq.m (+8.4%) in response to the 8% growth in local demand from 254 to 274 million sq.m. Imports stood at 70.8% of domestic consumption, despite the fact that local production, partly attributable to Italian-owned groups (Del Conca USA, Florida Tile, Florim USA, Landmark and Stonepeak), grew for the seventh year running to reach 88 million sq.m (+6%), a figure that will increase further in 2017-2018 driven by the numerous investments under way. No less than 82% of US imports originated from the 4 largest supplier countries: China (56.4 million sq.m, +11%), Mexico (43.1 million sq.m, -8.7%), Italy (38.7 million sq.m, +7.8%) and Spain (20.7 million sq.m, +49.6%). Italy remained the market leader in terms of sales (on a CIF basis) at US \$751 million (+8%), a 35.8% share of

total import value (US \$2.1 billion).

**18)** **Saudi Arabia**, the world's second largest importer, responded to the fall in domestic demand in 2016 (248 million sq.m, -5.7%) by reducing imports by more than 20 million sq.m from 188 to 167 million sq.m (-11.2%). India became the largest exporter to Saudi Arabia and the only one to see growth (+23% from 49 to 60 million sq.m). Imports from all other countries fell sharply: -23% from China (49 million sq.m) -19% from Spain (27.6 million sq.m), -33% from the UAE (15.5 million sq.m) and -26% from Oman (6 million sq.m). The country's biggest manufacturer is Saudi Ceramics which produced 50 million sq.m out of the country's estimated total production of 90 million sq.m.

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**ACIMAC**  
**Research Department**  
**mr. Luca Baraldi**  
**studi@acimac.it**  
**T. +39 059 510336**  
**www.mec-studies.com**

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