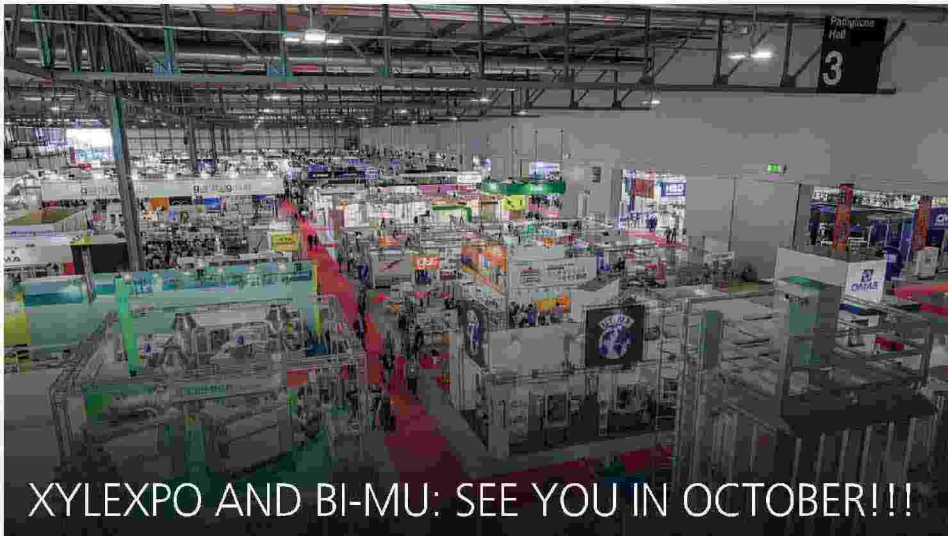


FAIRS



XYLEXPO AND BI-MU: SEE YOU IN OCTOBER!!!

The news was officially announced a few months ago: the woodworking machinery exhibition is moving to **October**. Looking for a new project, and possibly even a new identity, the exhibition has canceled the historical date in May – and the **traditional yearly rotation** with Ligna in Hannover, scheduled in May in odd-numbered years – and moved away from the interference with "Holz Handwerk", scheduled next March.

A bold decision and a partnership we have decided to illustrate in more detail, as the weeks are passing by, and October is not so far. So, it's time to understand what lies ahead, the plans of the management of **Acimall**, the Italian association of woodworking machinery manufacturers, owner of the event

through **Cepra**, and **Ucimu-Sistemi** per produrre.

Before we go into details, let us add that this decision, based on the news at the time we are sending this issue to press, seems to be a happy one, as the exhibitions scheduled in the first months of this year seem to face a hard time.

In this situation, we have met the directors of the two exhibitions and the corresponding associations: at one end of the table – to comply with social distancing prescriptions – **Dario Corbetta**, director of Xylexpo and Acimall, and the other **Alfredo Mariotti**, director of Bi-Mu and **Ucimu-Sistemi** per produrre.

Why have you undertaken this joint initiative?

"We had been discussing with Acimall's friends about a new concept, an initiative to show that Confindustria member associations can work together, share projects and purposes in a tangible way", **Alfredo Mariotti** said. "Recent events have driven us to collaborate to take the first step into that direction and, for reasons I will illustrate later on, imagine a **"material processing October"**, if you allow this definition.

Bi-Mu is a historical event, which over the years has been constantly growing and innovating, and today it is even more essential to offer new opportunities to exhibitors and a different experience to visitors. Moving Xylexpo to October, we can give a strong signal, presenting two undisputed leading exhibitions in their respective industries that, while preserving their peculiar features and remaining distinct, are organized as a single event, a unique model offering tangible benefits to exhibitors and visitors".

"In recent years, since the painful decision to cancel Xylexpo 2020, we have pondered on what Xylexpo can and should become", **Dario Corbetta** said. "First of all, we considered the needs of visitors, as any exhibition cannot be designed without considering their needs. Several industry operators showed some "preference" for an exhibition in the second half of the year, not only to have more favorable sanitary conditions, but also because you have the opportunity to find stronger propensity to invest, as the companies are approaching their end-of-year balance. These remarks add up with the possibility to be stronger together with Bi-Mu and to find deliverance from an exhibition calendar that has never helped us. Quite a few believe that, moving away from the Milan Furniture Show in April, we can target an audience that would not come back to Milan few weeks after the end of the Design Week".

So, in October, two worlds are meeting at FieraMilano-Rho: what do they have in common?
"First of all, the big topics of modern business – **Alfredo Mariotti** said – starting from **digital tran-**

sformation, sustainability and **"Industry 4.0"**, that will receive adequate attention in dedicated innovation areas and in-depth initiatives".

"As an industry association, we also have a role in information and education, so that the member companies can fully understand the value and the relevance of these topics", **Dario Corbetta** added. "There will also be visitors looking for solutions in both exhibitions, for all the materials that lie in the middle between wood and metal; this might be the first step of one big mechanics or mechatronics week, possibly involving the machines for the transformation of any material...".

What were the first reactions?

"We can say that the news has been positively received by exhibitors and visitors", **Alfredo Mariotti** replied. "After all, this new "October in Milan" brings multiple benefits both to us, the organizers, and to exhibitors and visitors. It's a unique, joint project that will add value to both events, to the benefit of all stakeholders.

We will create a strategic concurrency that will enable all exhibitors to meet a much wider audience, interested in and focused on the technologies presented by both events. So, more visibility and the opportunity to extend promotion to new customers and new industry segments and sectors.

There will also be benefits for visitors: the October event will offer one access to both exhibitions, so the operators can find more technology and contents with one visit, unique services and in-depths, across both industries".

"We have adopted a clear approach, working to avoid any overlapping to the benefit of exhibitors and visitors", **Dario Corbetta** said. "This approach has been largely appreciated, as we have shown that our priority is to offer the best to our partners. I want to repeat that, while the two exhibitions will remain separate, we are committed to leveraging all possible synergies, starting from communication and promotion on a global scale.

The relationship between Acimall and Ucimu has always been very close: we have discussed manufacturing topics for decades and worked together with excellent results.

We share the same vision, because we are not "pure" trade fair organizers, but first of all associations of companies that work for the success of our industry".

Your decision has been driven by a world in rapid change...

"Yes, definitely: the industry, the entire economy, is in **continuous evolution**, and this means keeping your strongest commitment to offer services and events in line with change. If you consider the **pandemic storm** that has swept the world, the collaboration between exhibitions is a strategic need, a de-

cision to strengthen and differentiate your offer, finally made after many years of projects and ideas".

"I agree with Mr. Corbetta", **Alfredo Mariotti** said. "Over many years, our exhibitions and our associations have seen deep changes, with fast-changing scenarios.

But we know one thing: exhibitions cannot be replaced, they are meeting places for people, although we will also make the best of the digital tools we have improved in recent months. Both Bi-Mu and Xylexpo will have their **"digital twin"**, a digital section that expands and complements the visit in person, from the streaming of all events, to new apps offering functions and services, from the interactive catalogs, to the possibility for exhibitors to promote their solutions effectively on a dedicated platform, with video chats and webinars that will cross all geographic boundaries.

These new tools will offer a different experience and extend the exhibition beyond its end, waiting for the next edition".

"We are living an era of great transformation", **Dario Corbetta** said. "The international exhibition landscape will inevitably find a **new balance**, rewarding the events that will strive to meet the interests of exhibitors and visitors.

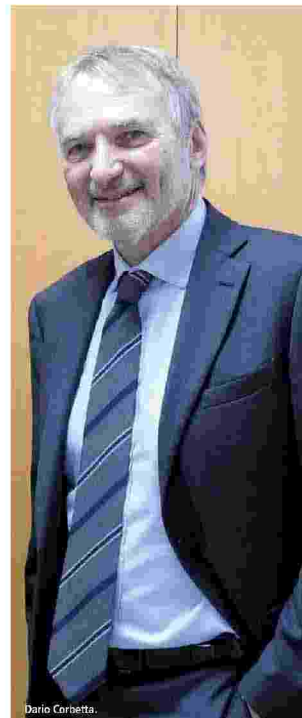
We will play our part, and we will always work to identify **services** that are useful for everyone, before, during and after the event. In-depths and the promotion of **industry-specific knowledge** are a priority for Acimall and Ucimu, as we are not companies that have profit as our primary goal, but rather the contribution to promote new topics at all levels, so that they are not accessible only to large businesses. In this respect, our "arenas" will be valuable venues where speakers and experts can present the latest technology developments, disseminating specific knowledge, an industry culture that we want to integrate in our exhibitions, that's a priority for us".

by Luca Rossetti ■

bi.mu.it
xylexpo.com



Alfredo Mariotti.



Dario Corbetta.

