



The event will make its debut in Cairo 9-12 December 2013

VERONAFIERE CHOOSES EGYPT FOR MS AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST - THE NEW MARBLE, TECHNOLOGIES, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY EXHIBITION

Marmomacc and Samoter join forces for an unprecedented event in Cairo. The two Veronafiere exhibitions take excellence in the building, materials, know-how, technology and machinery field to North Africa's emerging markets. The initiative ensures an additional competitive advantage for companies relying on Veronafiera. Veronafiere continues its process of internationalisation in the constructions sector that began with the Marmomacc World Tour in the United States, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Verona, 28 September 2012. Veronafiere looks to the Mediterranean and takes the world of natural stone and construction equipment to Egypt. Cairo will be home 9-12 December 2013 to the new event promoted by Veronafiere with Egyptian partner Art Line with the aim of strengthening its internationalisation and penetrating markets linked with building in North Africa and the Middle East.

The initiative is based on the experience of Veronafiere's best-known brands in the construction industry - Marmomacc (<http://www.marmomacc.it>) and Samoter (<http://www.samoter.it>) - whose initials are also used in the name of the event: MS AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST, *The International Trade Fair for Stone Design, Technology, Earthmoving and Building Machinery*. The event was outlined today at Veronafiere on the occasion of the 47th edition of Marmomacc (26-29 September 2012). The meeting was attended by the CEO & Director General of Veronafiere, Giovanni Mantovani, Ambassador Amr Abbass, Egypt's Consul General in Milan, the President of Art Line, Ahmed Allam, and an Egyptian delegation of operators and trade associations in the construction and natural stone sectors.

The economies of Egypt and other North African countries are considered strategic for the development of international activities for Samoter and especially Marmomacc, since the 2012 exhibition will be attended by about 60 companies from Egypt.

Despite suffering from an unstable political situation on a par with almost all countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt enjoys a very favourable geographical position encouraging a natural role as a regional hub, thanks not the least to commercial agreements (Comesa, Gafta) signed with most countries in the continent.

The local stone industry is developing, as proven by figures released by the Marmomacc Observatory based on Istat data: Italian exports of marble, granite and natural stones in the Mediterranean area (Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Libya) grew in the first half of 2012 by 7.2% from 29.5 to 27.5 million euros. Specifically, processed, cut and finished materials exported to Egypt increased by 71.7% from 845,205 to 1,450,815 euros. On the other hand, marble processing equipment and technologies in the first six months saw Italian exports to Africa improve from 37 to 62.5 million euros (+68.6%).

The Italian earth moving machinery market is also consolidating its positions, with global exports up in the first half from 424.1 to 519.2 million euros (+20%).

In particular, exports to Africa of machinery for processing aggregates almost doubled (+96.7%) from 13.3 to 26.3 million euros; concrete production equipment also performed well (+18.4%), up from 35.6 to 42.2 million euros, as well as road building systems (+25.7%) from 17.8 to 22.4 million euros.

Egypt consequently offers a great many business opportunities for companies relying on Marmomacc and Samoter in terms of growing demand linked to major infrastructural development projects and the lack of local production, especially as regards construction machinery.

*"Thanks to this operation," said the **CEO & Director General of VeronaFiere, Giovanni Mantovani,** "Veronafiere is taking the expertise of two leading exhibitions in their respective industries to a key country among emerging markets in the Mediterranean area. This continues Veronafiere's internationalisation process involving 10% of our investments; the Marmomacc brand is already active with its World Tour embracing the United States, Saudi Arabia and Qatar."*

***Ambassador Amr Abbas, Egypt's Consul General in Milan, said:** "This agreement with Veronafiere marks an important step in the progress of cooperation between the two countries. Egypt has intensified its efforts to develop a new economy and is focusing on the role of the private sector for internal growth, not to mention that more than 800 Italian companies already operating in the country, with overall trade standing at over 4 billion euros."*

The Veronafiere project, developed with the local area collaboration of Art Line, an Egyptian organizer of trade fairs, aims to combine in a single event the entire natural stone value chain, from quarrying and processing to machinery, quarry and construction vehicles and finished products. The exhibition will be staged at the Cairo International Convention and Exhibition Centre (CICC) until construction is completed of the new Cairo Expo City - a project won by the group of architects headed by Zaha Hadid together with Buro Happold.

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