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German plastics and rubber machinery industry initiates trend reversal

- From January to October 2020 only 3 percent year-on-year decline in incoming orders
- October 2020 brings strong increase in incoming orders
- Companies have adapted well to the challenges

Frankfurt, 11 December 2020 – At the beginning of the year, the German plastics and rubber machinery industry – like almost all sectors of the economy – was hit hard by the effects of the Corona pandemic. However, the downward trend in sales and incoming orders already flattened out in mid 2020, and incoming orders even rose again from September onwards. Cumulatively, from January to October 2020 they are only 3 percent below the incoming orders in the same period of 2019.

"The September and October months contributed significantly to this", Ulrich Reifenhäuser, Chairman of the Plastics and Rubber Machinery Association within the VDMA, is pleased to report. "In September 2020, we had 13 percent more incoming orders compared to the same month of the previous year, and in October 2020, there were even twice as many orders on the books as a year ago", Reifenhäuser continues.

"This means the German plastics and rubber machinery industry is about to turn the corner", adds Thorsten Kühmann, Managing Director of the VDMA trade association. "It gives us confidence to see that companies have adapted to the challenges better and better over the course of the pandemic. Business is up and running again", Kühmann sums up.

This is also supported by the development in foreign trade. Until May 2020, monthly exports of plastics and rubber machinery from Germany were always significantly lower than in the corresponding month of the previous year. From June onwards, there was a catch-up effect, and in September 2020 exports were for the first time higher again compared to the same month of the previous year.

The positive trend allows both the VDMA and machinery manufacturers to look ahead more optimistically again. In terms of sales, however, the plastics and rubber machinery sector will end up with a minus between 10 to 15 percent this year, as the sales development is still lagging far behind. According to the latest figures, revenue from January to October 2020 is 14 percent lower than in the same period last year. For next year, however, the association is already expecting sales to increase by 5 percent, and its forecast for 2022 is even 10 percent plus.

"This means in 2023 the German plastics and rubber machinery sector will very likely return to its pre-crisis level of 2019", Kühmann says, looking to the future.

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About VDMA Plastics and Rubber Machinery

More than 200 companies are members of the association, covering more than 90 percent of the branch production in Germany. Ten percent of our member companies come from Austria, Switzerland and France. The German member companies represent sales of EUR 7 billion in core machine engineering and EUR 10 billion including peripheral technology. Every fourth plastic machine produced in the world comes from Germany; the export rate is 70 percent. Ulrich Reifenhäuser, Member of the Management Board of the Reifenhäuser Group, is the chairman of the association.