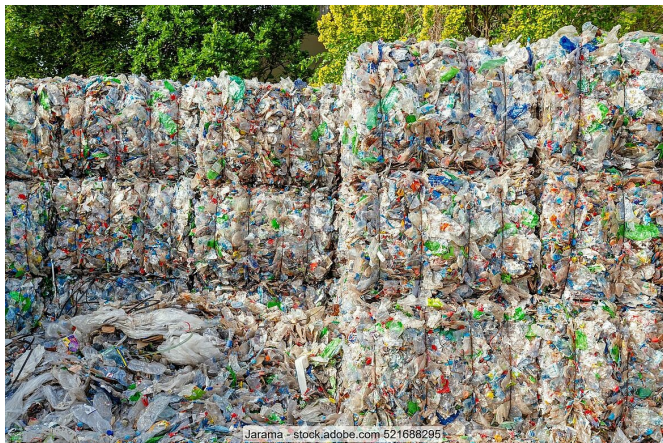




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Italian plastic recyclers shut down plants amid crisis



Italy's plastics recyclers in crisis: plant shutdowns due to dramatic market developments

Italy's plastics recycling industry has entered a deep crisis, with plant operators switching off recycling facilities amid what they describe as a dramatic deterioration in market conditions.

The industry association Assorimap announced on 11 November that its members would halt production immediately. Companies could no longer afford to operate at a loss, said the industry group, which says it represents around 90 per cent of Italy's private-sector plastics recyclers and reprocessors. Turnover has fallen by roughly 30 per cent since 2022, while operating profit has slumped from about €150m in 2021 to around €7m in 2023, according to the association.

The entire supply chain was currently squeezed between energy costs – the highest in Europe – and unsustainable competition from non-EU imports of virgin and recycled plastic at rock-bottom prices, Assorimap said.

The industry had been waiting in vain for political support for months. Meetings with the Ministry of Environment on 8 October and with the Ministry of Enterprises on 23 October had failed to produce concrete action, according to the association. The sector had been waiting in vain for political support for months. "We are confronted with a national emergency that we cannot handle by ourselves," said Walter Regis, president of Assorimap.

The shutdown of recycling plants could have an immediate domino effect, paralysing the



national waste management system, Assorimap warned. Storage yards and sorting centres were reportedly running up against their authorised capacity limits. "If recyclers stop processing material altogether, the sorting system will grind to a halt within weeks," said Mr Regis.

The industry association urged the government to introduce short-term financial relief and to undertake structural reforms. Its proposals include bringing forward binding recycled-content targets to 2027 at the latest, recognising carbon credits for secondary raw materials, expanding Italy's system of "white certificates" – tradable energy-savings credits – and tightening controls and sanctions on plastics imports that the industry argues distort competition.

"Saving the Italian mechanical recycling chain is essential for the country's ecological transition and strategic autonomy, but we need action, and we need it now, because we cannot take on the burden of managing the plastic waste of an entire country," said Mr Regis.

This latest development is seen as a warning signal for the entire European recycling industry. Italy is a significant market for secondary raw materials, and processing bottlenecks could affect cross-border supply chains.