**Italy’s leading centre for advanced materials**

The University of Manchester is on the rise again, according to CISMA (the French association of manufacturers of construction equipment and material handling technology), which said that 375,000 new homes were expected to have been built this year, 24 million tonnes of road equipment had been laid and that order intake had increased by about 3% this year, it added. The sector will increase by about 5% this year, it predicted, while the increase would be similar next year. Against this backdrop, the need to buy new machines was encouraging, and the order intake had increased, said CISMA to explain the increase in sales on the French market.

It said that in terms of public-works, the news was encouraging, and that order intake had increased. In the Greater Paris area, road improvements and the laying of pipes were boosting the figures, it added. The sector will increase by about 3% this year, it predicted, while the increase would be similar next year. Against this backdrop, which is supported by an investment-friendly tax system and lower interest rates, equipment manufacturers were performing well, CISMA said.

Earthmoving machinery manufacturers recorded a strong increase in sales since the beginning of the year, rising more than 20%, said CISMA, which added that sales of road equipment had also posted a good performance, increasing by 32% over the first six months of the year. Manufacturers of concrete materials were reported to have recorded a “spectacular increase” in their sales on the French market. The low investments of the past few years were said by CISMA to explain the need to buy new machines.

**ITALIAN SHOW WILL RETURN**

The first edition of GIC – Italian Concrete Days, closed on Saturday November 12, claiming more than 120 exhibitors and around 3,000 visitors. The organisers said that the fact that the exhibition, held in Piacenza, was dedicated to the concrete industry, along with the specialised nature of the visitors, had been appreciated. There was also a gala dinner attended by more than 120 people, during which the ICTA – Italian Concrete Technology Awards – were presented. The next GIC – Italian Concrete Days, will be held, again in Piacenza, from 8 to 10 November, 2018.

**SPECIALIST GEOTECHNICAL DIVISION**

UK foundation contractor Aecom Ground Engineering is aiming to enhance the delivery of its products and technical services, after announcing the launch of a new specialist geotechnical division. The company said it believed the new division would also help provide a greater level of focused support to its customers. The new geotechnical division will be operated out of the company’s new dedicated office in Doncaster, UK, which the company said formed part of its expansion programme and on-going strategy to enter new market sectors, grow its existing business and to develop fresh opportunities.

**BLUE ANGEL FOR CATERPILLAR**

Caterpillar wheeled excavators and wheeled material handlers have been awarded Blue Angel certification – an environmental award supported by the German Federal Environmental Agency and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building & Nuclear Safety. The award recognises products that protect both people and the environment by reducing noise and emissions. The Cat M318F, M320F and M322F wheeled excavators and the MH3022 and MH3024 wheeled material handlers have been awarded the certification. Cat said its 906M, 907M, 908M, 926M, 930M and 938M wheeled loaders had already been awarded Blue Angel certification.

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