

Editorial: Fibres and Technical Textiles Face Tough Times but South American Infrastructure Investment May Provide a Boost

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Abstracts

Global fibre consumption plummeted by 6.7% to 67.3 mn tons in 2008 after reaching a record high of 72.2 mn tons in 2007, according to a new report by the Swiss textile machinery company Oerlikon.

This was the sector's worst performance for some time following 16 years of consecutive growth. Indeed, between 1980 and 2007 consumption increased by an average of 3.4% per annum.

There was also a reversal in consumption of man-made fibres alone. In 2007 usage rose by 8.1% to 44.2 mn tons but in 2008 it fell back by 4.5% to 42.2 mn tons.

The rate of decline in 2008 varied by fibre type. Among the main synthetic fibres, consumption of polyester fell by 2%, polyamide by 10%, polypropylene by 11% and acrylic by as much as 20%. The cellulosic fibre market also declined, by 9.1% to 3.3 mn tons.

Admittedly there were increases in consumption of aramid fibres and carbon fibre. But these accounted, collectively, for only 0.2% of the market in volume terms.

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