

PRESS RELEASE**INTESA SANPAOLO AT SALONE DEL MOBILE.MILANO WITH THE TALK
"THE FURNITURE SECTOR, ITALIAN EXCELLENCE:
STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES FOR
THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN'**

- **More than 45,000 business customers supported with internationalisation and export processes through around €4 billion in financing.**
- **Around 40 supply chain contracts activated for the home furniture sector, involving 450 suppliers and around 3,200 employees, with a turnover of more than €2 billion, through the Supply Chain Development Programme**

Milan, 18 April 2024 – Intesa Sanpaolo, institutional partner to Salone del Mobile.Milano for the eighth consecutive year and Italy's leading bank in financial support for the Italian design and home system sector, hosted the talk **"Italian excellence – Strategic investments and competitive advantages for the international development of the supply chain"** at the **Drafting Futures Arena, Pavilion 14**. The meeting was attended by illustrious entrepreneurs, designers and start-ups, for debate on technological and digital innovation, geographical and generational repositioning as levers for growth in the medium-to-long term, and included closing remarks by **Maria Porro**, President of Salone del Mobile.Milano.

After a presentation on the economic scenario of the furniture sector by **Stefania Trenti**, Head of Industry Research at Intesa Sanpaolo, a discussion was held with architects and designers **Ludovica Serafini** and **Roberto Palomba**. Their contemporary, innovative vision, combined with deep knowledge of the historical and cultural roots of the design world, spurred debate on the topics of innovation and tradition and sustainable best practices, with the participation of **Anna Roscio**, Executive Director Sales & Marketing SMEs Intesa Sanpaolo:

- **Giorgio Castagno**, CEO & co-founder of **WAVE** (<https://www.wavesws.it/>), a start-up based in Borgosesia (NO), included in Intesa Sanpaolo's Up2Stars development programme, offers an IoT system for water management capable of reducing water consumption by up to 30% and energy consumption by 20%;
- **Augusto Ciarrocchi**, Chairman of **Ceramica Flaminia** (<https://www.ceramicaflaminia.it/>), a company based in Civita Castellana (VT) that for 70 years has produced ceramic bathroom fixtures and furnishings, a shining example of Italian excellence attentive to sound, eco-sustainable and circular resource practices;
- **Stefania Lazzaroni**, General Director of the **ALTAGAMMA Foundation**, committed to the growth and competitiveness of Italian cultural and creative businesses.

Innovation and tradition, sustainable practices and zero impact

Participants in the session agreed that the green and energy transformation, with the resulting reduction of environmental impact, must become increasingly strategic elements in the design and furniture supply chain, driving the spread of eco-sustainability, technology and digitalisation and assuming an increasingly decisive role in the success of companies and their impact on the local economy. Through the **Supply Chain Development Programme**, Intesa Sanpaolo has already activated about 40 supply chain contracts for the home system, corresponding to 450 suppliers with around 3,200 employees and a turnover of over €2 billion, to foster the creation of new supply chain processes and increase the quality of existing processes, while **facilitating access to credit** for smaller companies, to support them in their efforts to revitalise their businesses and in the processes of digitalisation and the green transition.

Anna Roscio, Executive Director Sales & Marketing SMEs Intesa Sanpaolo: *"A key driver of the development of the furniture and furnishings sector is its supply chain system, which is unique on the international scene and has given rise to a distinctive positioning for the entire sector among Italy's flagship industries. This quality and uniqueness must now be supported by investment strategies that are attentive to innovation and sustainability, opening the doors to foreign markets. In the three-year period 2020-2023, Intesa Sanpaolo*

played a significant role in supporting import/export flows, sustaining over 45,000 business customers in their internationalisation and export processes with around €4 billion in loans.”

Innovation, sustainable development and the search for new markets are the three key drivers for businesses with their eye on the future and form the basis of Intesa Sanpaolo's new programme. This programme makes available **€120 billion through 2026 to support businesses in their planning** and encourage new investments in Italian competitiveness, accelerating robust performance of the country's economy, while also ensuring that sustainable, long-term strategies are activated immediately. This series of measures is part of the Group's actions in support of the achievement of the objectives set out in the NRRP, to which a total of more than €410 billion has been allocated, as announced by **CEO Carlo Messina**.

Summary of the study “The Scenario for the furniture sector: strategies and competitive advantages for the international development of the supply chain”

The **Italian furniture industry**, with around 15,000 companies and over 128,000 employees (3.3% of total manufacturing), is one of the leading sectors of Italian excellence and among the main drivers of Italy's post-Covid recovery, which in 2022 saw the sector overtake Germany as **Europe's leading manufacturer** by turnover. In 2023 Italian furniture remained at the **top of the rankings in Europe**, with a turnover of €25.8 billion, **down only slightly** (-3%) from the record 2022. Both a cautious orientation of purchases on the domestic market and the natural drop in demand on international markets weighed on the result.

In a global scenario of accelerating trade in the second half of 2024, after a first part of the year that remained weak, **the export orientation of the Italian furniture industry is set to grow further**, to just under 50% by 2026, for an export value of up to €13 billion. On the domestic front, the **outlook is for an improvement in household consumption from the lows of 2023**, thanks to the gradual easing of inflationary tensions and the recovery of disposable income.

The **Italian furniture sector** faces a variety of **new challenges**: the findings of Intesa Sanpaolo's periodic survey of managers indicate that the uncertainty and complexity inherent in the scenario are leading furniture companies to further increase **the efficiency of their processes** (through organisational innovations and investments), including in logistics and warehouses, as well as to make further efforts on the **energy** front (with investments in energy **self-generation**). **Diversification of target markets** – already higher than for the main competitors – is also crucial, and is clearly more acutely felt than in other sectors, particularly within business districts.

Strategies in the **“green”** arena, in addition to the push towards renewable sources, will focus on **increased circularity**, through separate waste collection, the use of secondary raw materials and the reduction of packaging. Important support for efforts in this direction may come from the push of large and medium-sized leading companies to support the **transition of their supply chains**.