

## BUSINESS AREA 5



### Plastics & Rubber

At a European level, Spain is amongst the four main consumers of this product together with Germany, France and Italy. In terms of production, our country manufactures some 80% of the standard plastics it consumes. As for exports, Spanish sales in international do not cease to grow, and the country now exports 47% of its production of standard plastics, especially PET. The Spanish plastics sector, a basic industry for our economy, is on the rise. Last year this sector's growth rate was nearly 5%.

In the Region of Murcia, this sector has a long tradition, in part because of the significant demand for plastic materials and products from other regional industries. The strength of the farming and agrofood industries led to the development of a solid plastics sector which supplies materials for farming, packing and packaging, for fresh and processed food products, as well as equipment for fertigation systems, tanks and machinery. Other regional sectors demanding Murcia's increasing plastics production are furniture (polyurethane foam and specific materials), footwear (rubber processing and other materials) and construction (PVC for carpentry and profiling).

In addition, a sector applying advanced engineering, technology, innovation and the use of complex materials to manufacture primary and processed plastic materials, has been developed in the Region of Murcia. This sector, which in a relatively short time has established itself as a major international player, includes manufacturers of vessels, helmets and hard hats, as well as technologically-advanced parts and components for automobiles, boats, trucks and trains.

The plastics sector in the Region of Murcia is comprised of 170 companies contributing some €800 million to the regional economy and employing around 2,800 people. Aware of the significance of this sector, the Murcian education authorities launched training services for technicians in thermoplastic polymer processing. Murcia is the fourth region that more rubber and plastic products exported last year, with a sector turnover increase of 45% in four years. Murcian exported plastics for a value of €700 million last year, with the main markets being Germany (17%), Italy (9%), China (8%) and Poland (7%). Aware of the need to ensure sustainability, Murcia has positioned itself as the main Spanish region in the manufacture of reusable plastic bags.



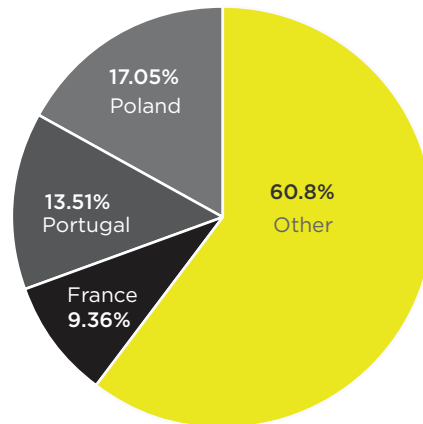
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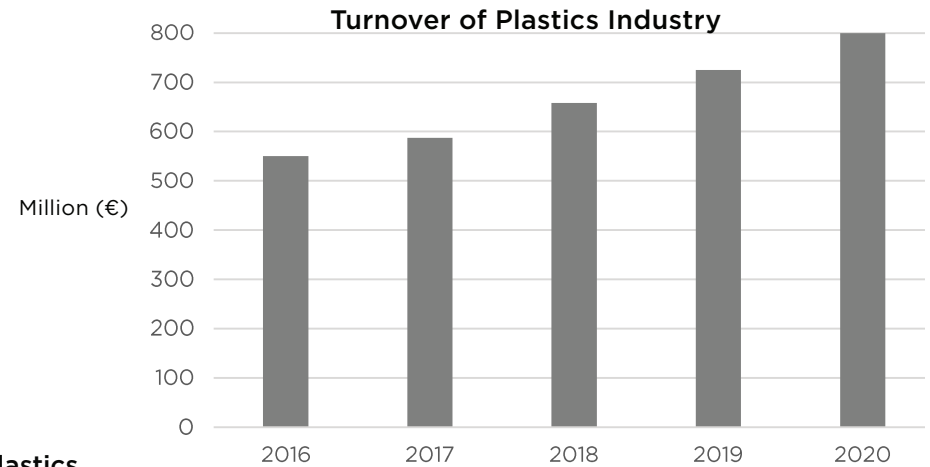
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Murcia was home to the largest investment ever made in Spain; the GE last-generation plastics factory, now owned by Sabic.

#### Main Destination of Murcia Manufactured Plastics



Source: Murcia's Regional Dept. of Business, Employment & Universities



Source: Europa Press



Source: ANARPLA

### INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

As for the large companies in this regional sector, namely **Sabic, Solplast, Plasbel and Coopbox**, they have their own units for research, technological development and innovation, and operate in a context of ever-changing conditions and knowledge transfer.

These companies took part in the development of programs aimed at reducing plastic material weight and primary material consumption, using less energy in manufacturing processes and packaged product transport, recovering a larger percentage of plastic material waste and increasing plastics recycling and reuse. All this has contributed to environmental impact minimization.

**Murcia is the leading Spanish region in the recycling of plastics thanks to the use of high-tech equipment!**