San Giovanni al Natisone (Udine), 13 April 2018

A GOOD 2017 IS THE BASIS FOR A FURTHER GROWTH IN 2018

*“It has not been an easy year for Catas, but we have been able to react and implement a series of measures to maintain the high level of all our activities; and the result at the end of the year has been really impressive”.* **Bernardino Ceccarelli**, president of Catas, smiles while observing the data related to the activity carried out in the past year ended a few weeks ago. Twelve months that had not started under the best auspices, in light of the huge fire that at the end of 2016 destroyed the furniture-test laboratory of San Giovanni al Natisone and that led to think it would be a very difficult year: everything indicated that it would be even a suffering year but, the cohesion of the entire "Catas team" and the measures put in place to manage the emergency have allowed to close year 2017 in a very positive way.

*“A dynamism that has surprise us first of all* – continued Ceccarelli – *allowing us to realize how much Catas can count on a network of relationships that have proved to be fundamental in this last twelve months”.* In fact, in year 2017, the most important European testing, certification and research laboratory for wood and furniture did something like **43,785 tests**, an absolute record, compared to 43,205 of the previous year.

A total of 146 different products have been certified for wood-derived panels (formaldehyde emission), coating systems for exterior wood, coating systems for domestic furniture, glue-lam beams for window profiles, playgrounds. All such activities have been possible thanks to the creation, in few months, of a new laboratory of over two thousand square meters for furniture testing.

Moreover, it has been fundamental the role of the **Catas Brianza** laboratories, further enhanced and equipped with new testing equipment.

In order to guarantee an appropriate service to our customers, **five new technicians** have been employed during year 2017, bringing the total of Catas personnel to 51 people.

A positive balance also for **Catas Engineering**, being the division providing test equipment for components, seating, tables, beds and storage units, as well as **turnkey laboratory projects**. An activity that includes, of course, the training of technicians in charge of managing these equipment’s, an activity that in year 2017 was further consolidated with requests received from both Italy and abroad.

During year 2017, Catas has proposed many **training opportunities**, perhaps the activity of the Institute that showed the most dynamic trend and that demonstrates how the wood-furniture sector is facing a new international economic scenario in big transformation. One of the direct consequences is the increasing need of knowledge. In the San Giovanni al Natisone and Lissone offices, 43 training events were organized, on average three per month: seminars, workshops, webinars and courses for individual companies on specific subjects. In particular the latter shows a rapidly growing demand that indicates the need of tailored events with a specific focus on individual companies. In all, over 260 hours of training were provided to around 600 users.

*“All this* – continued Bernardino Ceccarelli – *has allowed us to reach a good turnover that we estimate is even higher than that of 2016. The most important part of the tests (over 95 percent) comes from our reference sector (wood- furniture) within which the tests on surfaces, chemical analyses and tests on the finished product represent the lion's share. It is interesting to note that the partial decrease of the tests on furniture at the San Giovanni site, which was affected by the already mentioned fire at the end of 2016, was offset by the strong growth of the Lissone site. This "team game" by the Brianza headquarters was fundamental in absorbing the needs of the furniture-tests laboratory of San Giovanni and further developing its specific role inside the reference territory.*

*And once again it does not surprise us how great is the number of tests commissioned by* ***foreign companies*** – has added Ceccarelli – *which now exceeds the 40 percent of the total”.*

Some data for the most curious: 80% of Catas’ activities in Italy are concentrated in Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Lombardia Regions; in first place, in order, the provinces of Udine, Treviso, Milan, Pordenone, Vicenza and Mantova. If we look across the border, 76 percent of the tests are carried out for European companies, 16 percent for Asia, 5 percent for America and 3 percent for Africa. The *top ten countries*, as best customers, shows the following ranking Poland, Romania, China, Slovakia, Portugal, Germany, Lithuania, Russia, United Kingdom and Belarus.

Marketing activities have also increased, which have led Catas to enhance its visibility in the reference markets and not only: *“For some years we have decided to invest more on this side, proposing us with greater evidence both in our traditional sectors but looking also for new opportunities”,* was the comment of **Franco Bulian**, Deputy Director of Catas and responsible for marketing and communication activities. *“We have greatly strengthened our training activities and resumed our active participation in trade fairs of primary importance for the wood-furniture supply chain, such as Sicam in Pordenone and Xylexpo in Milan; we have also completely renewed our website to make it a simple, useful and practical tool, enriching our communication processes both to customers and partners, through monthly newsletters, and also to the Italian and international press”.*

Catas’s got then the right stuff, to look with optimism to the current **2018**. *“The year started under the best auspices”*, confirms **Andrea Giavon**, director of the institute. *“We are proceeding well with the construction of the new furniture-test laboratory, which will be ready after the summer of year 2019: it will be the best way to celebrate the fiftieth of Catas, founded in 1969. Meanwhile, we are enriching day after day our offer, guaranteeing concrete services to companies and demonstrating "on the ground" the many skills acquired over the years”.*

About the new laboratory: those who want to "live" follow the construction, have simply to connect to the following link: <https://my.catas.com/lab-webcam> and.... “good view!”