



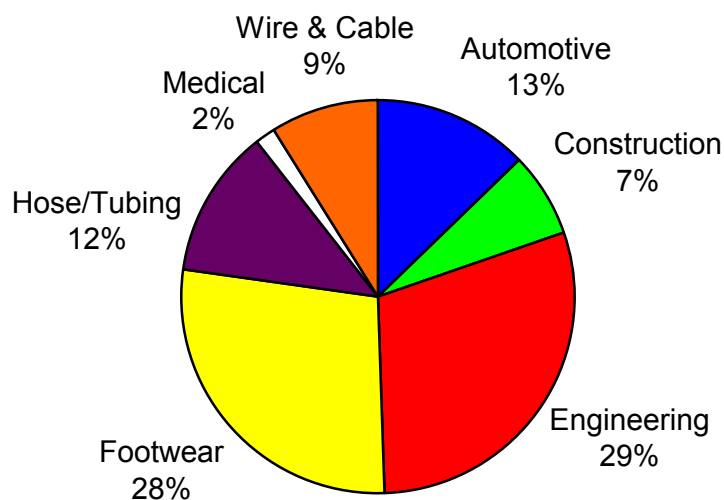
## **GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF THE THERMOPLASTIC POLYURETHANE (TPU) MARKET**

**IAL Consultants is pleased to announce the publication of a new report on the small but growing world market for thermoplastic polyurethanes in a *Global Overview of the Thermoplastic Polyurethane Market*.**

Consumption of thermoplastic polyurethanes (TPUs) is estimated at 357,100 tonnes in 2004, with Asia accounting for just over 50% of demand, Europe a further 27% and the Americas the remainder. Injection applications are the leading TPU type in Europe but extrusion leads consumption in the Americas. In Asia, the market is dominated by both injection and extrusion applications, and adding to the fact that Asia accounts for 50% of world demand, Asian TPU applications for adhesives and coatings are also well ahead of their counterparts in Europe and the Americas.

End-user industries which lead in consumption terms are engineering and footwear (chiefly in Asia), which together account for 57% of the market as seen below:

**World Consumption of TPUs by Application (%)**



*Source: IAL Consultants*

Overall average growth in the production and consumption of TPUs is estimated at 3.8% pa on a global basis, with the Asian market showing above average growth, and the markets of the Americas and Europe below average growth. In terms of applications the production of TPU-based coatings emerges as the most favoured market with average growth of 5% worldwide but 8-9% in Europe. This is in contrast to a slight fall for extrusion TPUs in Europe where output is expected to decline slightly, even though a little growth is expected.

Trends affecting global demand include:-

- Increasing demand in sports footwear because of its good shock absorption properties. Among other aspects of footwear design, the flexible materials lends itself well to motifs and badges etc. for designer sports wear
- Medical applications offer good growth in the future despite there being considerable barriers to entry in the market, such as approval procedures and low volumes of application
- TPU films offer a breathable, water- and wind-proof finish for textile coating and this application will be led by the production of coated textiles in Asia
- The European market is affected by slow growth, legislation and the shift of the footwear and engineering industries to Asia. However, many innovations from those in the sector are emerging through blending and composite technology.
- In the Americas, TPU demand is tilting in favour of Brazil and Mexico as automotive production is transferred south from the USA and Canada.
- Footwear applications in the Americas have been weakened by Nike transferring its production to Asia and by the fact that the Mexican shoemaking industry is very price-driven, finding TPUs too expensive.
- China dominates the Asian TPU scene, especially with footwear applications in the south and east of the country. Alternative markets which are up-and-coming in Asia include TPU resins for plastic tubing and washing machine hose etc

The contents of the *Global Overview of the Thermoplastic Polyurethane Market* are as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Summary
3. Raw Materials
4. Technical Background
5. TPU Production by Region
6. TPU Consumption by Region
7. TPU Producers

The *Global Overview of the Thermoplastic Polyurethane (TPU) Market*, which in its 222 pages contains some 236 tables, is now available for purchase from IAL Consultants, price €3,000

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