Macael Awards 2026 honour an industry without borders and call for measures to secure its future

- **The gala honours ten projects and initiatives in architecture, design, sustainability and social commitment that demonstrate the technical and creative capabilities of the natural stone and innovative surfaces industry**
- **AEMA President Jesús Posadas calls on the next central government to restore social dialogue, ease the pressure on businesses, bring support for mining into line with other primary sectors and make the necessary investments in railway safety**

Macael, November 14, 2026. – The natural stone and innovative surfaces industry gathered once again this Friday in Macael, Almería, to celebrate the 39th edition of the Macael Awards. Ten award recipients, with projects developed around the world and distinctions ranging from architecture and design to sustainability and social commitment, took centre stage at a gala that highlighted the technical, production and creative capabilities of companies in the Marble Region, as well as the value of the professional relationships that make each project possible.

Organised by the Andalusian Marble Industry Association (AEMA), the awards reached their 39th edition at a particularly significant moment for the sector: on the eve of a year, 2027, that will mark both the business association's 50th anniversary and the 40th edition of the awards. These two milestones invite reflection on the journey of an industry that has evolved from traditional craftsmanship in the quarries to participation in complex architectural projects through advanced technology, innovation and bespoke construction solutions.

In his address, AEMA President Jesús Posadas congratulated the award recipients and thanked them for their confidence in the region's companies. "Your projects are proof that the ability to bring great ideas to life knows no borders," he said, adding that "it is this trust that challenges us to improve every day and enables our region's expertise to continue to feature in the world's most iconic projects."

This year's awards showcased different applications and scales of natural stone and innovative surfaces. Two of the recognised projects came from Florida, USA: Patel Project, which received the International North America Award for the comprehensive natural stone work on a private residential complex, and The Library Project, recipient of the Excellence Award, a library whose technical complexity required a design originally conceived in timber joinery to be transformed into a modular structure made entirely from Belim limestone.

Large-scale architecture also featured prominently. The International Latin America Award went to Novus Fundidora in Monterrey, Mexico, a mixed-use residential development that incorporates 17,000 m² of Dekton in its ventilated façade. The International Middle East Award recognised Moment in Bat Yam, Israel, an urban regeneration project comprising four 36-storey towers that integrates 83,000 m² of this material across different applications. Joining them was Azhadi Winery in Kelowna, Canada, which received the Design Award for an architectural proposal in which materials and geometry create a shared visual identity between interior and exterior spaces.

Sustainability was represented by Aponiente, chef Ángel León's three-Michelin-starred restaurant in El Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz. Recognised for its integration of gastronomy, architecture and environmental restoration, the project has helped regenerate more than 20 hectares of degraded salt marshes in the Bay of Cádiz, incorporating construction solutions and materials such as Dekton.

Almería City Council received the Institution Award for the transformation of Paseo de Almería through the "Ciudad de Plazas" project, which incorporates more than 23,000 m² of natural stone from the Marble Region. The National Award recognised the renovation of the historic Paseo General Muñoz-Cobo in Arjona, Jaén, for its heritage restoration and use of marble in the renewal of this public space.

The Macael Mining Park received the Communication Award for introducing visitors to more than two thousand years of history associated with the extraction and processing of Blanco Macael marble. The Social Commitment Award recognised the Spanish Legion's "Don Juan de Austria" 3rd Tercio and its "La Desértica" Sports Club for their longstanding ties with the region and the use of Macael natural stone for the trophies of this sporting event since its first edition.

The sector's international dimension was also evident in the attendance of participants in the International Stone Meeting, organised by Andalucía TRADE, which brought together specifiers and distributors from the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium and El Salvador. In the days leading up to the gala, these professionals had the opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the activities and capabilities of Macael's companies through an initiative designed to foster new business relationships.

They were joined at the ceremony by 45 architecture students from the universities of Seville, Granada and Málaga, taking part in the "Programme to Promote the Natural Stone and Innovative Surfaces Industry", funded by the Regional Ministry of Universities, Industry, Energy and Innovation of the Andalusian Government. The initiative introduces future architects to the materials, processes and technical possibilities of this industry, fostering direct contact between academia and business.

The sector's demands ahead of the general election

The celebration also provided a platform for voicing the business community's main concerns, against a backdrop of geopolitical uncertainty and the approaching general election on November 29. Posadas warned that the activities of Macael's companies are directly affected by trade tensions, market developments and supply chain risks, even in the case of businesses that do not export directly.

Against this backdrop, he argued for the need for larger companies capable of diversifying their markets and incorporating international operations into their growth strategies. "At AEMA, we advocate effective, stable and results-oriented public-private cooperation. Businesses need legal certainty, appropriate financing, technical support, well-targeted international promotion and a public administration that believes in us and, above all, listens to us," he stressed.

The President also addressed the future central government, calling for the restoration of social dialogue and negotiations with business and trade union representatives. "A country's major reforms cannot be imposed through political steamrolling or driven by press headlines; they must be the result of consensus, negotiation and active listening to those of us who truly understand the productive economy," he maintained.

Among the priorities he raised, Posadas stressed that reviews of the statutory minimum wage and potential changes to working hours should be agreed between the parties, taking account of productivity and the particular circumstances of small and medium-sized enterprises. He also called for a national cross-party pact to tackle absenteeism, measures to reduce the cost of social security contributions without affecting employees' take-home pay, and a review of contributions for self-employed company owners and directors.

Another demand focused on administrative simplification. The President criticised the costs arising from duplicated procedures, delays and regulatory complexity, and called for a more agile and efficient public administration. "Administrative simplification is not a favour we are asking for; it is a structural reform that can no longer be postponed," he said.

Specifically, AEMA called for mining to receive treatment comparable to that of other primary sectors in terms of grants and incentives. Posadas defended the strategic value of this extractive activity and highlighted the many industrial and healthcare applications of calcium carbonate from Macael's quarries. He therefore urged public authorities to recognise its economic and social contribution through support policies commensurate with its importance.

The President once again called for continued progress on the motorway between Fines and Baza, a connection considered essential for business activity and regional connectivity. He also expressed concern about railway safety, offered his condolences to the victims and families affected by the recent accidents, and demanded the investment needed to ensure the network's maintenance and safety. "Citizens' safety must be the absolute, non-negotiable and genuine priority, backed by budgets and construction work, not empty promises," he said.

The gala also enjoyed the support of sponsoring companies, financial institutions and public bodies, whom Posadas thanked for their commitment both to the awards and to the industry's day-to-day activities.

Towards the end of his address, Posadas looked ahead to next year, when the Andalusian Marble Industry Association will celebrate half a century of existence. This anniversary serves as a reminder of the value of business unity in addressing shared challenges, defending the sector's interests and supporting its transformation over five decades.

"We are on the threshold of a historic milestone. Next year, in 2027, we will celebrate our association's 50th anniversary. Half a century of unity, achievements, crises overcome and, above all, unwavering pride in who we are," he said.

With this outlook towards 2027, the Macael Awards concluded their 39th edition by recognising the work of those who help transform the region's resources into architecture, design, heritage and new opportunities for the area. This journey, built on collaboration and expertise, will continue to unfold in the year of AEMA's 50th anniversary and the 40th edition of its awards.

The sponsors of the 2026 gala are: Diputación de Almería, Torrecid, Cosentino, Acción Exterior (Consejería de Presidencia), Cajamar, Smalglass-Ítaca, Tenax, Omar, Banco Santander, Colorobbia, Unicaja, Sacmi, BBVA, Smalticeram, Altapm, CaixaBank, Italdiamant, Banca March, Comandulli, Bankinter, Vincent, Abanca, Euroarce, Puerto de Almería, Saint-Gobain, Kutxabank, Breton, Suimasa, TBM, Centro de Referencia Nacional Piedra, Focus Piedra, UAL, Olucarpa, Prosegur, Jamones Tío Emilio.