ATTENDANCE RATE ALIGNED WITH 2023 EDITIONS

**The 100th edition confirms the influence and impact of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags: an increasingly united community dedicated to strengthening the international footwear and bag business.**

**The entire footwear industry met at Riva del Garda to celebrate the exhibition’s 50-year history. 16 trade associations representing all major producing countries came together to discuss the industry’s most pressing issues.**

In 1974, when the founders of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags first came up with the idea to create an event dedicated to international buyers, movies and books would end with the phrase “The End”. This is no longer the case and nor does the 100th edition of the Riva del Garda exhibition finish up today with the word “end”. To the contrary, the **celebrations** marking the 50-year success of one of the world's most important footwear, bag and accessory trade exhibitions, will **continue** during the next event, scheduled **from 15 to 18 June 2024**.

While the 100 candles took centre stage at the January edition, offering a **preview of the upcoming autumn/winter 2024-25 collections**, another set of numbers serve to confirm the strength of this event.

For example, the **approximately 1300 exhibitors, including companies and brands from 39 countries** (+15% compared to the January 2023 edition).

Or the **9,000 buyers** who attended (80% European and 20% non-European), exceeding all expectations for a market facing such challenging circumstances.

Significantly, there was a notable surge in participation from Italy, the UK and Poland.

Visitor numbers from Germany and France were down somewhat, indicative of the relative decline in these countries’ respective economies.

The visitor make-up was quite interesting too: 30.4% were from the retail sector, 19.3% from distribution and 5.2% from e-commerce, followed by 15.5% manufacturers.

Among buyers, 58.9% played a decision-making role as either a company owner or head buyer.

The January 2024 edition will long be remembered not only for its impressive statistics but also its **Celebration Night** festivities. "A memorable and extraordinary moment," commented Paolo Villa, President of ASSOPROV, "that recreated the atmosphere and spirit of the early days, when people would meet on the shores of Lake Garda to do business and forge relationships.”

"We focused on getting to know more about exhibitors' production and the market dynamics our visitors face. We have cultivated important relationships with institutions and trade associations to facilitate the exchange of valuable information and collaborate on projects that offer tangible benefits to the industry,” stated **Alessandra Albarelli**, General Manager of Riva del Garda Fierecongressi. A path already being paved, given the **presence at the fair of key international stakeholders** and representatives from the most influential associations and most prominent global events: "It was crucial for us to convey our vision of the industry’s future to them," she concluded.

She then added: “This 100th edition serves as confirmation that the innovations implemented in recent years, including new digital, business and marketing services, are genuinely enhancing the value of the event format**.”**

**GianPaola Pedretti,** Exhibition Manager, summarised the many successful and popular events held throughout the exhibition: “Through the **Market Focuses** on the Far East, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and the USA, along with the one dedicated to handbags and accessories, we continued to gauge the industry's pulse. The four sessions in the new **Highlights Area**, on the other hand, in collaboration with Arsutoria, provided us with insights into the prevailing styles favoured by consumers of handbags and accessories. We cast a glance into the future, looking beyond fashion alone, with **Innovation Village Retail**, and also with the **Startup Competition** that awarded the Spanish **iF Returns Solution**, a logistics optimisation and control platform for returns management.”

Lots of collections, plenty of handshakes, many discussions, infinite memories and countless emotions. The 100th edition of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags serves as a springboard from which the international footwear and accessories community can gather momentum and capitalise on future opportunities, beginning in June 2024.

*Riva del Garda, 16 January 2024*