EXPO RIVA SCHUH & GARDABAGS OPENING CEREMONY

**The 100th edition has opened.**

**Business is happening and celebrations**

**with the exhibition’s international community have begun**

The cutting of the ribbon for the 100th edition of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags was an exciting occasion for everyone at the opening ceremony. The 50-year evolution of this event has been a significant intertwining of personal, corporate and business stories.

An important milestone that the event's organisers wished to celebrate by remembering those who are currently suffering from continuous, senseless and inhuman violence.

“Violence is not strength, it is weakness,” stated Benedetto Croce. These were the opening words, along with a pair of red shoes symbolising the struggle against gender-based violence, spoken by **Roberto Pellegrini**, Chairman of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags: “No successful business is worth mentioning without bearing in mind the many – too many – femicides that dramatically and far too frequently become a part of our daily lives. Shameful acts that must always be condemned. We want to do our part so that these red shoes do not remain an unheard cry.”

Following this moving and unusual start, the opening took a more traditional direction. The focus was shifted to the 100th edition, an important milestone above all because of its enduring success: “**The fact that Italy hosts the most important international trade event for the mid-range footwear market** is crucial for Europe. This is a title we have become accustomed to over time but today, at our hundredth edition, it is important to remember how vital this is for the entire industry,” further emphasised Pellegrini, before adding: “I am confident that Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags will celebrate many more birthdays yet and for this, I thank all those who have made and will continue to make this such an enduring event.”

The scope of the success of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags can be highlighted by citing a few figures: **around 1300 exhibitors, represented companies and brands from 39 countries**, including the world’s largest producing countries. The Gardabags area dedicated to bags, luggage and accessories is animated by about 50 companies (from Bangladesh, China, Germany, India, Portugal, Spain and Turkey).   
An exhibition area covering **50,000 square metres, 11 full exhibition halls and 5 hotels** welcome visitors who are historically 30% from Italy and 70% from abroad (of which 80% from the European continent).

An impressive **21 events in 5 dedicated areas** with talks, business appointments and 100th-edition celebrations.

Impressive numbers, as reminded to us by an emotional **Alessandra Albarelli**, General Manager, who took the floor, greeting her friends who had travelled from all over the world to reach the event. A way of remembering the exhibition's long-enjoyed international appeal, setting it apart from all other events in the industry. “**We now have 15 delegates representing us in 62 countries**. And there are 115 buyers from 29 countries who are visiting our exhibition here in Riva del Garda for the first time, thanks to our long-standing and valuable partnership with ICE (ITA-Italian Trade Agency).”

In delivering greetings from President Matteo Zoppas, **Matteo Masini**, Head of Consumer Goods at ICE (ITA-Italian Trade Agency), reaffirmed the productive relationship between the agency and Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags: “Since 2016, our partnership has expanded from incoming-based initiatives to the structuring of projects aimed at promoting innovation and business development. Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags has proven to be an exhibition unique to its kind, capable of truly remarkable international growth. On our part, ICE aims to facilitate **more than 200 visits by new international buyers in the 2 editions of 2024**. Searching for new markets and forging new relationships is crucial today considering how much the world has changed in the last 5 years.”

Director Albarelli then pointed out some of the events taking place during the 4-day exhibition at Riva del Garda: the **Innovation Village Retail**, which, for the first time, will also host foreign Startups; numerous **Market Focuses** allowing exhibitors and buyers to meet, better get to know each other and forge new partnerships; the brand-new **Highlights Area** where latest consumer trends will be presented, focusing on the bags and accessories sector.

Even local institutions wanted to take part in Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags. **Roberto Failoni**, Councillor for Crafts, Trade, Tourism, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing for the Autonomous Province of Trento, and **Cristina Santi**, Mayor of Riva del Garda. Both highlighted the importance of the exhibition for the entire Alta Garda territory and all of Trentino (EUR 29 million generated for the local economy) and renewed their support for the expansion projects the organisers plan to implement in the coming years.

**Enrico Cietta**, Chairman of the Scientific Committee of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, concluded the opening ceremony by providing an overview of **international footwear market trends**: “While production is catching up, albeit at a slower pace than expected, exports have surged and have already set new records.”

Worth noting, according to the data relayed by Cietta, is the consumption trend that sees China in the lead as always, followed by – for the first time – the United States, knocking India off its usual place on the second step of the podium.

And it is especially important to note that **production is transforming into a multipolar reality**. China maintains the lead in production and exports but has lost market shares, which are instead being absorbed by new players. Like India, Pakistan and the Philippines, which have increased their share of production in the world total but contribute little to international trade. Or Turkey, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia, whose participation in world production has increased precisely because of their contribution to international trade: most of their production is in fact exported. Lastly, Brazil and Indonesia should be mentioned, which, despite losing shares in world production, have either maintained (Brazil) or even increased (Indonesia) their national share of world exports.

Prior to the historic ribbon-cutting ceremony, awards were presented to the **Category Associations and Lead Agencies**, the organisers behind the collective participation of exhibiting companies, which have consistently supported the success of the event, reinforcing the importance and prestige of Expo Riva Schuh and, more recently, Gardabags.

Abicalçados - Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Calçados (Brasile)

APICCAPS – Associação Portuguesa dos Industriais de Calçado, Componentes, Artigos de Pele e seus Sucedâneos (Portugal)

Assocalzaturifici (Italy)

Assoprov (Italy)

BFA - British Footwear Association (United Kingdom)

CHINA FOREIGN TRADE GUANGZHOU EXHIBITION CO., LTD. (China)

CHINA LEATHER PUBLISHER CO. LTD. (China)

CLE - Council of Leather Exports (India)

CONSORZIO FASHION EXPORT MADE IN ITALY (Italy)

EİB - Aegean Exporters' Associations (Turkey)

Fédération Française de la Chaussure (France)

FICE - Federación de Industrias del Calzado Español (Spain)

G&F CO., LTD. (China)

GUANGZHOU NEWTOP EXHIBITION BUSINESS CO., LTD. (China)

HKTDC - HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (Hong Kong)

PFMA - Pakistan Footwear Manufacturing Association (Pakistan)

TAIWAN FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION (Taiwan)

XIAMEN L &C INT'L EXHIBITION CO., LTD. (China)

**About Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags**Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, which welcomes visitors from all over the world and exhibitors from more than 40 countries, is organised by Riva del Garda Fierecongressi SpA and is the most important international trade fair dedicated to volume footwear, leather goods and accessories.  
The next edition is scheduled from 15 to 18 June 2024 at the Riva del Garda Exhibition