**Portugal climbs the ranking of European footwear manufacturers. And it is increasingly the protagonist at Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags.**

**The international mission of the Riva exhibition, which wants to get to know and monitor more and more the global markets that produce, buy and distribute footwear, continues. The stop in Portugal for Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags Around the World further reinforces the relationship between the event - which is preparing to celebrate edition number 101 from 15 to 18 June 2024 - and the Portuguese industry, which is increasingly a protagonist in quality production and exports.**

In 2024, world footwear consumption is expected to increase by 9.2 per cent compared to the previous year: this is the main conclusion of the World Footwear Survey, which interviewed more than one hundred footwear specialists worldwide.

 "The Portuguese footwear industry exports more than 90% of its production, so the sector's performance will always depend on the evolution of the main international markets," said Paulo Gonçalves. According to the APICCAPS spokesman, “after a very challenging 2023 for companies, we hope to see some recovery already this year”. In this regard, “the recovery of the German and French economies will be good news for Portuguese footwear”. However, “it is important to stress that the expected growth in Europe and the United States remains very modest, which will naturally affect export activity”.

Prospects are still precarious, therefore, which nonetheless see Portugal at the forefront of European footwear production, together with Italy and Spain (the 3 countries together cover 71% of European production).

Based on the final results of 2022, calculated by Eurostat over the last decade, footwear production in Portugal has increased by 14.4% (from 74 to 85 million pairs). In 2022, the Portuguese footwear industry overtook Spain to become the second largest footwear producer in Europe.

It is clear, therefore, that Portugal is a major player in the international footwear market. This is why Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags chose the country as a stop in its Around the

World programme in its Around the World programme aimed at strengthening international relations with key stakeholders in the footwear industry.

In April 2024, thanks to the support of APICCAPS - the Portuguese Association of Footwear, Components, Leather Goods and Their Substitutes - the staff of the Riva del Garda event visited the two main shoe manufacturing districts in Portugal, defined as the 'capitals of the Portuguese shoe': **Felgueiras**, north-east of Porto, where the largest companies dedicated to private label and specialized in particular in the production of men's shoes are concentrated. On a smaller scale and with a more artisanal vocation are the companies in the **Sao João de Madeira** district.

Attention to detail and respect for delivery times is the common trait that characterizes the Portuguese footwear industry. One of the country's most important brands, **Ambitious**, produced by Celita - Industria de Calçado Lda, emphasized this: “For us, making a difference means putting the utmost care into detail and design. It means investing in technological innovation, communication and being impeccable in meeting delivery times." A commitment that the staff of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags found when they visited the 2 factories of the company, which has been on the market for over 30 years and employs around 200 people.

Italy is the main export destination for the Ambitious brand, as well as for Celita's subcontractor business. **A further reason for the company to return to exhibit at the June edition of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags.** Objective: to intercept Italian distribution and at the same time expand horizons at an international level.

Focus on quality and customer loyalty for **Ladrical** - Unipessoal Lda. The company's 2 factories, which produce 1,500 pairs a day for the private label and the brand owned Fenacci, specialize in men's shoes, trainers, moccasins and classic models. Another very interesting stop on the Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags tour in Portugal.

And since the trade fair in Riva del Garda has always hosted a wide range of goods, it was important for the organizers to also make contact with companies focused on the production of outdoor and work & safety footwear. The visit to **Carité Calçados Lda**, which boasts the proprietary brands **Jota Renaldo** and **Ten Toes**, was the perfect opportunity to explore this topic as well, since the company exports 100% of its production of sports and safety footwear. A family-run group that produces 5000 pairs a day thanks to its 600 employees.

Past exhibitors at Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, such as Ladrical, would like to return to the fair to reinforce their presence on the Italian market.

Companies such as **Luis Onofre**, a brand that works with the most important luxury brands, but whose plans include further development of the private label for the medium/high end of the range, have also expressed interest in participating in the Riva del Garda event.

But at Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags one also participates as a buyer or to seek new collaborations. This will be the case with **Planitoi**, owner of the Beppi brand, which outsources the production of its men's/women's trainers and children's footwear, for which it is renowned, to Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese and Portuguese companies. Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags in June 2024 will be the ideal hub to meet and get to know their possible future partners.

The stage in **Portugal** of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags Around the World confirmed the country, already a **major player** in the international footwear scene, as the protagonist **of the next edition** of the Riva del Garda fair, **from 15 to 18 June 2024**, with some **thirty participating companies**.