**Expo Riva Schuh and the Renewed Gardabags: Understanding the Market and Identifying New Business Opportunities**

**From 14 to 17 June 2025 in Riva del Garda, the market’s recovery will be put to the test. All the regular appointments return, with a focus on consumer trends, retail innovation and the analysis of international markets. A renewed Gardabags will debut, doubling its exhibition space and offering three fairs in one, thanks to its innovative format.**

**Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags** will, as tradition dictates, be the first trade fairs **to open the** **Spring/Summer 2026 fashion season**. Most importantly, they will launch the second half of 2025, which many expect to show the first signs of recovery after a period of uncertainty driven by geopolitical instability.

We asked **Alessandra Albarelli, General Manager of Riva del Garda Fierecongressi**, to assess the current state of the market before telling us about the 103rd edition of the fair: “Discussions with professionals in the footwear, bags and accessories industry reveal a situation that remains uncertain – though some encouraging signs are beginning to emerge. We trust them to be the first of many. Taking part in Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags will be important precisely to **gauge the direction the market is taking**.

A market increasingly characterised by economic paradoxes: on one hand, overproduction and therefore price reductions; on the other, a globalisation that is becoming more regional, with hints of protectionism and a resulting rise in inflation. This situation leads to the fragmentation of production chains and complicates the identification of sourcing channels.

In this context, trade fairs with a strong international appeal, such as **Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags**, prove essential not only to discuss possible future scenarios but also to evaluate the new collections presented by exhibitors. As always, our timing at the start of the season makes us the perfect **testing ground to guide purchasing decisions in the right direction, perhaps even finding new solutions for procurement**.”

**What can we expect from the June edition of Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags?**

“The most important innovation is the extensive **renewal of Gardabags**, which will grow in terms of size, variety of offerings, visibility and the appeal of its set-up.”

**So, will it be a Gardabags to the power of three?**

“I don’t know if I’d call it ‘to the power of three’, but maths is certainly a factor in this edition, since the **exhibition space is doubling** and the **areas of interaction between exhibitors and buyers are tripling**.

Gardabags will occupy **pavilions A2 and B2** and will, in every respect, establish itself as a standalone event, while remaining closely connected and aligned with Expo Riva Schuh.

We will unveil an **innovative format** designed to facilitate encounters between exhibitors and visitors. The exhibition space dedicated to Gardabags will be divided into three areas. The first: **Gardabags Sourcing**, dedicated to producers or traders in the mass market/discount segment. The second: **Gardabags Sourcing4Bridge**, for companies seeking customised designs to be interpreted and developed, or private label production. The third: **Gardabags Brands**, the area focused on companies showcasing branded products and collections.

For each area, operators will be selected based on how well they represent a specific value chain, ensuring a strong and balanced mix of offerings.

Each stand will also feature an **Identity Board** to help buyers quickly assess the main characteristics of potential suppliers.

Finally, I would mention the custom-designed **set-ups** that will create a fashionable and highly engaging atmosphere.”

**Are you satisfied with the exhibitor response for the renewed Gardabags?**

“Very much so. There’s real enthusiasm around the project. The goal is to reach **around 100 exhibitors and represented brands** for this first June 2025 edition. There will be several major brands – including **Pelletteria Charlotte, Marina Galanti, Marchetti, Henney Bear, Innuè, Keddo, Nannini, Marta Marzotto, Xti and Vuch**. For the other areas, there will be strong international participation from **various European countries, Turkey, India, China and Bangladesh**.

The **luggage selection** is certainly worth highlighting. An important delegation from one of China’s major **travel goods** manufacturing hubs – Pinghu (Zhejiang) – will be exhibiting at the fair. This district has a strong export focus and boasts a highly specialised supply chain that combines production capacity with quality and innovation.”

**What other opportunities will Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags offer?**

“We’ll once again feature what have become key fixtures of the event: the **Innovation Village Retail**, which will host a new group of startups presenting their innovative ideas for the retail sector; the **Highlights Area**, where visitors can explore upcoming consumer trends in footwear, bags and sneakers for both men and women – valuable insights for making more informed purchasing decisions during the fair; and the **Market Focus** sessions, which will offer targeted guidance on developments in international markets.

We also want to emphasise the importance of welcoming an **increasingly international and diverse group of buyers**. Internationalism is in our DNA, and it permeates every aspect of the event – from the variety of exhibitors to the **startups** featured in the Innovation Retail Village. This coming June, we’ll be hosting **nine startups from seven different countries**, who will present their innovations to an equally international panel of judges.

It’s a rich offering, made easy to navigate thanks to **Digital Connection, the event's official app**, where users will find the exhibitor and product catalogue, an interactive map, tools to manage their appointments, the full event schedule, and details on various services like transfers and shuttles.”

**The Riva event is also known for its evening entertainment. Will you surprise us again this year?**

“In addition to the 16 events taking place at the fair, we’ll once again offer the Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags community an unforgettable evening this June 2025. **Expo Riva Nights** will be dedicated to celebrating the Italian region of Puglia, with a spectacular live performance of “**La Notte della Taranta**”. The event will also shine a spotlight on the significant presence of **Apulian producers**. An impressive **23 companies** in total, **representing** one of Italy’s most important manufacturing districts.

As always, it will be a night to enjoy, a chance to celebrate and create new **networking opportunities** in a more relaxed setting. We believe in supporting the industry’s growth by encouraging these kinds of encounters as well.”

**Lastly, it’s only natural to wonder what numbers the June edition of Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags will bring.**

“To start with, the **exhibitors** will be distributed throughout the main exhibition centre and the four hotels forming our ‘widespread fair’ model: Du Lac et du Parc Grand Resort, Astoria Resort Hotel, Grand Hotel Liberty and Hotel Luise. **Over 1,100** brands and companies will be represented. As always, the hallmark of the fair is its international scope. There will be nearly 400 exhibitors from China, around 200 from Italy – representing all the major production districts – and 104 from Turkey.

In total, the event will host exhibitors from **41 countries** worldwide (40% from Europe, 60% from the rest of the world). **For the first time**, **Singapore, Hungary and Ukraine** will be represented, and a Mexican manufacturer will also return to the fair.

There will be several prestigious brands attending the fair in Riva del Garda, including: **Ipanema, Dogo, Ska, Armata Di Mare**, **Inblu, Gianmarco Venturi, Goldstar, Valleverde, Primigi, Savana, Aco Shoes, Suave, Xti, Refresh, Carmela, Camel Active, S. Oliver, Tamaris, Lotto.**

Forecasting **buyer** attendance is always a challenge, but what’s certain is that **155 hosted buyers from 28 countries** – split evenly between Europe and non-European markets – will be attending Expo Riva Schuh and Gardabags for the first time. Many are especially interested in the broader selection of accessories, bags and travel items.

Several of the industry's key institutions have also been confirmed, including – for the first time with their own stand (A2-B22) – the **Chengdu district** (Sichuan), a major international reference point for the footwear industry, particularly in women’s shoes.”

So the date is set: see you in Riva del Garda **from 14 to 17 June 2025**.