**EXPO RIVA SCHUH & GARDABAGS EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS AND CONFIRMS ITS POSITION AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD FOOTWEAR MARKET**

**More than 8,000 visitors to the show from 103 countries and exhibitors from more than 41 countries, four days that consolidated the event's leading international role, both in terms of exhibition offer and as a reference hub for business and networking under the banner of innovation and sustainability.**

Riva del Garda, *15 June 2022* - Facilitating global trade by helping the production system connect to the market, in a sector where internationalization is an essential factor in competitiveness: this was the role taken on by the 97th edition of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, the marketplace dedicated to footwear and accessories that ended yesterday, 14 June, at the Riva del Garda Exhibition Centre.

The show gave us an unprecedented look into the world of shoes and accessories, which was investigated, explored, the focus of conferences and competitions, and experienced first-hand by those in attendance, against a complex economic and geopolitical backdrop. It also demonstrated the industry’s determination and the responsiveness of its key players, first and foremost Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags itself.

More than 8,000 visitors from 103 countries were in attendance over the four days. Italy (34%), Germany (10%), France (6%), Spain (5%) and the United Kingdom (4.5%) were the most represented, with visitors also coming from countries not previously represented at the show. “*We are very happy, because the effort and commitment to attract international incoming buyers enabled us to achieve excellent results in terms of attendance, allowing us to welcome buyers from new and unexpected countries in the southern hemisphere. For example, Australia, Mauritius, the Ivory Coast, Thailand, and then over to Latin America, just to name a few. These are very positive signs that show we are on the right track”,* said **GianPaola Pedretti**, Exhibition Manager for Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags.

Among exhibiting companies, the world's largest manufacturers and exporters and all the industry’s strategic markets – primarily Italy, Spain, Portugal and Germany – were present, along with a wide range of international exhibitors, in particular from Turkey, Pakistan, Brazil and China. India deserves a special mention: a few days ago, a memorandum of understanding was signed involving its main association EPCH (Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts), with a view to strengthening the presence and enhancing the quality of the group of Indian exhibitors at the show, already impressive with 95 accredited companies at this edition.

“*Markets, content, innovation, sustainability in a single hub to give the show greater appeal, but also to set out the future lines of business development for the sector”,* said **Alessandra Albarelli**, General Manager of Riva del Garda Fierecongressi. “*We achieved this through the Innovation Village, but also through the topics addressed in the events programme”.*

The numbers give an idea of the success of a show that has cemented its role as a reference point in Italy but above all internationally, for a dynamic sector undergoing constant change. Furthermore, again according to the data, Italy has confirmed its position as the world’s third largest exporter in the sector – after China and Vietnam – with a share equal to 23% (January-November 2021) and revenues from exports that amounted to €10,480 million in 2021, an increase of 17% on the previous year (Istat data).

“*Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags again showed its ability to navigate a changing scenario in which international buyers are looking for new partners and a variety of sourcing strategies to support positive expectations for the next six months*”, Alessandra added. “*The show has rediscovered, consolidated and updated its fundamental role as a platform for matching supply and demand, in the knowledge that it is always able to offer different opportunities and new markets. An extraordinary result, recognised by the large number of institutional delegations in attendance and the strategic alliances forged over these few days*”.

But more than the data, what explains the positive climate and renewed energy within the sector and the operators can also be seen in the success of the initiatives promoted by Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, which focused on innovation, both in terms of business and in terms of design and products. In this regard, the show re-introduced the Innovation Village Retail project, whose winning start-up was chosen from among the ten selected by the jury chaired by **Alberto Mattiello**, a member of the show’s scientific committee, and which will take part in the next edition of the show in January 2023. The winner was Wonderflow, the start-up founded in Amsterdam in 2014 by Italians Riccardo Osti, Giovanni Gaglione and Michele Ruini, which uses artificial intelligence to analyse a brand’s Voice of the Customer – from reviews to surveys – as well as that of their competitors, transforming them into data on which to base strategic decisions.

Space for design and its key players was also central to the Kind Leather Contest, supported by JBS Couros, a leading Brazilian leather manufacturer, and organized by Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, Arsutoria School and FotoShoe Magazine. The winner of this first edition of the competition was Indonesian designer Tommy Ambiyo Tedji, who received his award in Riva del Garda from Ambassador Hadil da Rocha-Vianna, Consul General of Brazil in Milan.

“*With our understanding of innovation and changes in the market, we again achieved extraordinary results at this edition of the show”,* concluded Chairman of Riva del Garda Fierecongressi **Roberto Pellegrini**. “*We supported exhibitors and visitors through the show’s digital platform, which ensured the presence of Asian manufacturing, with over 80 Chinese companies, of which 42 attended in hybrid mode. The numbers, partnerships and relationships established lay the foundations for future editions, and augur well for January 2023”.*

We’ll see you at the next edition of Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags, **from 14 to 17 January 2023**.

**Expo Riva Schuh & Gardabags Press Office**

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