

### 36 European Footwear Brands conquer Kazakhstan Market

*A delegation of 36 European footwear companies just returned from a trade mission in Almaty, Kazakhstan as part of a European Commission funded campaign called "European Footwear: More than Fashion". This unique event was the first ever European footwear mission outside Europe for Small and Medium Enterprises and aimed to support the internationalisation of footwear companies manufacturing in Europe. The mission included a European footwear exhibition at the Ritz Carlton hotel and a visit to three of the main shopping centres in Almaty, which gave the brands an opportunity to make direct business contacts with local retailers and distributors.*

From 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 36 European footwear brands from Austria, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands set out to reach new consumers in Kazakhstan, an emerging market which has seen a rising demand in footwear products in the last 7 years and only produces 2% of the total market turnover. With Kazakh consumers becoming increasingly interested in accessing fashionable and high quality shoes outside Kazakhstan, the trade mission sought to increase the availability of European products in Kazakh shops.

Organised by the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC) in collaboration with the consultancy European Profiles, the trade mission began on 4<sup>th</sup> April with a visit to three of Almaty's main shopping centres and multi-brands shops to allow the European representatives to learn about the Kazakh retail culture and footwear market. On the following day, the brands displayed their shoe collections at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Almaty. The exhibition was attended by major Kazakh fashion retailers and distributors, who were enthusiastic about the classic and trendy selection of shoes on display. Many of the brands made new business contacts and initiated business deals with Kazakh companies, which was a testament to the global popularity of European fashion and design.

European footwear exports to Kazakhstan almost quadrupled from 2010 to 2014, but they still only represented 11,5% of the total imports into Kazakhstan in 2014, which confirms that European companies can still do more to increase their share of the Kazakh market. The European trade mission was conceived to reinforce the presence of European products in Kazakhstan and motivate further European footwear companies to take advantage of the potential offered by the Kazakh market, given Europe's reputation for creative excellence and innovative fashion.

Overall, the participating companies expressed satisfaction with the results of the trade mission as many have begun negotiating business deals with Kazakh partners, and showed great interest in replicating this experience in another country. Cleto Sagripanti, president of the CEC, concluded: "We are grateful to the European Commission for their direct support to European footwear SMEs, and the positive results achieved in Almaty this week make a strong case for a second trade mission in another non-European country in order to continue promoting European excellence and creativity in footwear fashion and encourage European footwear companies to conquer new markets".



### 36 European Brands - EU Trade Mission in Almaty

<b>24 HRS</b> SPAIN	<b>ALBERTO FERMANI</b> ITALY	<b>ARCHE</b> FRANCE	<b>ARREN</b> GREECE	<b>BALTARINI</b> SPAIN	<b>BOXER</b> GREECE
<b>BRENDA ZARO</b> SPAIN	<b>CABECEO</b> FRANCE	<b>CHANIOTAKIS</b> GREECE	<b>CHIE MIHARA</b> SPAIN	<b>COSTA ANATOMICAS</b> SPAIN	<b>DONNA LAURA VENEZIA</b> ITALY
<b>FRATELLI BORGIOI</b> ITALY	<b>GENNIA</b> SPAIN	<b>HÖGL</b> AUSTRIA	<b>JOAQUIM FERRER BARCELONA</b> SPAIN	<b>KALLISTE</b> ITALY	<b>KANNA</b> SPAIN
<b>LU'TAT</b> SPAIN	<b>MARILA</b> SPAIN	<b>MARINO FABIANI</b> ITALY	<b>MEGUMI OCHI</b> SPAIN	<b>MILANEZA &amp; COMFORT LINE ANATOMIC</b> GREECE	<b>MORELLI</b> ITALY
<b>NATALIA BLANCO</b> SPAIN	<b>ON THE ROAD</b> GREECE	<b>PONS QUINTANA</b> SPAIN	<b>RELAX ANATOMIC</b> GREECE	<b>RYŁKO</b> POLAND	<b>SOFTIES</b> GREECE
<b>SOFTWALK by RICAP</b> PORTUGAL	<b>VICTORIA</b> SPAIN	<b>VITTORIO VIRGILI - ICEBERG</b> ITALY	<b>WILLIAM MASSIMI</b> ITALY	<b>ZAMPIERE</b> SPAIN	<b>VARIOUS BRANDS</b> THE NETHERLANDS