



## **FOOTWEAR IN THE 21st CENTURY: THE ERASMUS+ SCILED PROJECT COMES TO A CLOSE BUT THE KNOWLEDGE ALLIANCE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND COLLABORATE**

Scholars and companies of the European footwear sector gathered on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 to mark the end of the Erasmus+ SciLED project “Footwear in the 21st century” during a final event that showcased the project's many achievements. As one of the leading research efforts in footwear manufacturing in Europe, the SciLED consortium has produced interactive digital training tools and up-to-date and versatile training modules to complement and enrich Higher Education programmes in footwear comfort performance, design engineering, and sustainability. It has also launched a Knowledge Alliance comprised of European Higher Education institutions, companies and research centres, which will continue to research and innovate in this field. Meanwhile, the material developed by SciLED addressed to Footwear designers and Product Managers is expected to become a fixture of many European footwear programmes.

### **SciLED Academy: a one-stop-shop for interactive, up-to-date education material**

One of the distinctive features of the Erasmus+ SciLED project is its commitment to creating education material that excels in both form and content. The consortium has updated two existing qualification profiles by enriching the main body of knowledge associated with the Product Manager and Footwear Designer profiles with specific comfort, sustainability, and design engineering skills sets. These fields of expertise were already relevant when the project was conceptualised and have now become indispensable as a result of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Divided into three modules and each comprised of lessons, video lectures, exercises, and tests, the content is intended to complement existing university training programmes and is readily available for free on the online SciLED Academy. Moreover, the SciLED experts went beyond high-quality content and developed a fully digital Footwear FabLab that presents all the important operations needed to create a piece of footwear.

### **Tested and approved by university students**

The final event was also the occasion to present the feedback from students on the material developed by the consortium. A one-week mobility action in Portugal provided European students from Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain with the opportunity to test the material and learn to incorporate new comfort parameters and sustainability strategies into their way of thinking. Students interviewed mentioned that the SciLED material proved to be a great source of inspiration and a very useful guide to improve their theoretical knowledge. Students from universities that have joined the Knowledge Alliance tested the SciLED training material with their master's students. The feedback was highly positive, with students mentioning how “the coursework is useful, entertaining and interesting at the same time” and that “the SciLED academy offers nicely structured modules with very interesting video lectures and are easy to use and navigate.” Some of the master students further stressed how the material allowed them to better understand the shoe as a whole and the importance of comfort and performance requirements. They also reported that it helped them fully grasp the concepts and applications of sustainability in footwear, in particular at an early stage of the shoe conceptualisation.

After three years of research and content development, the SciLED consortium was extremely proud to present the results of its work to such a large and varied audience. The palpable interest in its content from university professors and companies looking to upskill their workers and the excellent feedback received from students are evident signs that the SciLED material will become a staple in many university departments across Europe. It represents the beginning of a Knowledge Alliance that will continue expanding and collaborating in what it is becoming the “Footwear of the 21st century”.



Confédération Européenne de l'Industrie de la Chaussure  
European Confederation of the Footwear Industry

