



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

Rue de la Science n°14b- 1040 Bruxelles

Tel. +32.2.808.44.52- [www.cec-footwearindustry.eu](http://www.cec-footwearindustry.eu)

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**CEC re-elects Cleto Sagripanti as President**

*The European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC) is pleased to announce that Cleto Sagripanti, who has successfully served as CEC President for a term of 2 years, was unanimously re-elected as President by the CEC General Assembly last month in Venice, Italy. Mr. Sagripanti has been fully engaged in international initiatives aimed at reinforcing the strength and unity of Europe's footwear industry. The CEC looks forward to continuing its synergies with President Sagripanti to ensure a prosperous and growing European footwear sector with an ever-increasing global reach and reputation, particularly through the promotion of digital tools and skills and signature of EU free trade agreements.*

At the CEC's biannual General Assembly, which was held on 29 June 2017 at the Chamber of Commerce of Venice and Rovigo in Venice, Cleto Sagripanti was re-elected to serve a second term as the CEC's President, following two years of active dedication to the European footwear industry's needs and interests, particularly in the areas of re-shoring, market access, internationalisation of SMEs, and the simplification of regulations. His appointment was met with an enthusiastic applause from the Members, who were very pleased and satisfied with his work and performance as a spokesperson for the industry.

In the past few years, the CEC has encouraged and achieved positive outcomes for the European footwear sector, as evidenced by the recent conclusion of a satisfactory Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the EU and Japan, with the complete elimination of the prohibitive Japanese tariff quota system from the start, the reduction of tariffs into Japan from 30% to 21%, and their full liberalisation in 10 years. The CEC is also particularly satisfied with the rules of origin agreed, which provide for an alternative rule in line with the current rules of origin under the EU-Korea FTA, particularly considering the highly protected Japanese footwear industry and the difficult negotiations in which the CEC participated.

Other ongoing challenges include the negotiation of a favourable EU-MERCOSUR free trade agreement, designing a proper industrial policy that takes into account sectors' specificities with the European Commission, and facilitating the digitalisation of European footwear companies to maximise their export and sales potential. On this last issue, the CEC is working on enhancing the digital skills of employees whilst also exploring trustworthy online markets outside Europe where European footwear companies can sell their shoes directly to consumers in a safe and easy manner. With the slowdown of physical stores and fast-growing e-commerce, the CEC sees digitalisation as an immediate priority.

President Sagripanti will continue working with the CEC to push for a favourable agenda for European footwear companies and will remain alert to the fast-paced political, economic and technological changes affecting the industry and the consumers' expectations. "Our industry continuously faces many challenges, whether in manufacturing, skills-needs, export performance,



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and selling channels, but these should be considered as opportunities to thrive and make our footwear industry stronger than ever,” President Sagripanti declared, beginning his new term with optimism.

Reflecting on his experience as CEC President, Mr. Sagripanti thanked the General Assembly for renewing their trust in him, and concluded: “I have learned during these last two years that if you work hard and put in a lot of effort, you receive more than you give.”