



30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

## **Present and future of the European Footwear Social Dialogue**

*Paris – The final conference of the European project “Developing Social Dialogue in the European Footwear Sector”, jointly organized by the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC) and industriAll European Trade Union (industriAll Europe) gathered social partners from European Member States in Paris to discuss the state-of-the-art of the sector, and identify new joint initiatives.*

CEC and industriAll Europe accompanied by representatives of national employers' and workers' organisations, and supported by a representative of the European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, met in Paris on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 to present the results of one year activities carried out under the project “Developing social dialogue in the European Footwear Sector”, co-funded by the European Commission.

The results of the activities and data collected along the project were disclosed in a study report, soon available in several European languages. The book describes the existing structures and legal framework of the social dialogue at national level, with focus on Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Romania, the main players in terms of production and employment, which also shared their joint initiatives in terms of training and education in their respective countries.

In terms of statistics collected, the social partners underlined the general positive evolution in terms of employment with no drastic jobs losses despite the economic crisis, and the more encouraging figures on production with an increase of 11% in number of pairs and 25% in value between 2009 and 2013. In the same period, a particular success story relates to exports to third countries (mainly represented by EEUU, Switzerland, Russia and Honk-Kong), which have increased by 46% in number of pairs and 73% in value.

These positive results lead the participants to focus on the most urgent priorities for the sector, which should concentrate on attracting young generations to the industry, addressing skills mismatches and creating a level playing field in international trade that guarantees the respect of social and environmental standards.

The European social dialogue will continue bringing tangible results to the footwear sector, and, in this relation, the intense debate concluded with the presentation of a potential joint action at European level focused on attracting young people to the sector while revitalising the image and values of the sector led by craftsmanship, tradition, heritage and “savoir faire”.

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