

US and European Footwear Industries Unite, Urging Meaningful Provisions in Trans-Atlantic Trade Pact

New York, 8 June 2016- Three trade associations representing the U.S. and European footwear industries issued a joint statement this morning urging the United States and the European Union to eliminate footwear trade barriers in the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP).

The statement, which was signed by the presidents of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC), and Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) calls for:

- ✓ Full, immediate, and reciprocal elimination of all tariffs for duty-free access to footwear products.
- ✓ Harmonization of labelling, product safety, testing regulations, and prohibited substances.
- ✓ Inclusion of customs facilitation provisions.
- ✓ Flexibility in the determination of the rules of origin.
- ✓ Regulatory convergence and/or mutual recognition of regulations and standards.

"The U.S. and European markets represent the largest global footwear arena, collectively purchasing 40 percent of the world's shoes," noted **AAFA President and CEO Rick Helfenbein**. "Harmonization of footwear regulations and standards and duty-free access across this region will reduce cost and add definitive benefits to our members and to their customers."

"A satisfactory T-TIP does not represent lowering the safety, social, and environmental standards in the footwear industry in any side of the Atlantic", explained **Cleto Sagripanti, President of the CEC**. "Consumers, everyday more sensible to the nature and origin of products, should be guaranteed that American and European companies speak the same language in terms of the safety of shoes they manufacture".

"Lower footwear duties through T-TIP means American and European companies can create new good paying jobs across our supply chains," said **FDRA President Matt Priest**. "As consumer tastes continue to rapidly change, we need free trade agreements like Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and T-TIP to lower barriers and duties so our designers and supply chains can be unleashed to innovate and meet new consumer demands. T-TIP means jobs, lower costs,



and innovation that will propel the footwear industry into a new era of growth and global competitiveness. FDRA believes in breaking down every trade barrier, and we are all in on T-TIP."

"It's terrific to see the U.S. and European footwear industries join hands to promote shared product safety standards and approaches," noted Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) **Commissioner Joseph P. Mohorovic** who was present to witness the signing.

The 13th round of the T-TIP took place in New York during April 2016. The 14th round will take place in Europe this summer.
