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**A new profile and training programme
on Luxury Footwear Manufacturing is now available**

On 19 September 2017, the Erasmus+ High-End Shoe project held its Final Conference at the most prestigious shoe fair in Europe, TheMICAM. At the centre of the fair's luxury shoes pavilion, the project partners presented the main project outcomes and outputs, namely the Luxury Footwear Manufacturing Technician profile and corresponding training programme that will boost the skills and competences of the workforce in the high-end/luxury sector in Europe and reinforce the competitiveness and leadership of this European footwear segment in the world.

The European funded Erasmus+ project High-End Shoe has reached its objectives since it was first launched in October 2014. With an updated High-End Footwear Manufacturing/Tailor-made Technician profile, curriculum, and training course ready to be shared with its first users, the project partners held a Final Conference on 19 September to present the project's main results and its plans to ensure the validation and wide-spread use of the training and educational programme produced for high-end shoemakers. Indeed, the validation of this new profile by national authorities will be crucial to ensure that the results lead to the long-term objectives of bridging the skills gap in high quality luxury manufacturing and reinforcing the added value of European footwear.

The European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC), actively engaged in boosting the high-end/luxury footwear sector in Europe and co-creator of this project, presented the latest facts and figures on the European footwear sector, showing the position of European shoes in the world, a high added-value consumer product that is testimony of the European culture and its creative industries. Europe's strong position in footwear is evidenced by its exports to non-EU countries, which, despite the highest global average price, have increased by 40% in quantity and 90% in value in the in the last 7 years. This is a positive sign for the footwear sector in Europe to continue to excel and increase its global reputation in producing quality footwear.

The CEC also called the audience to reflect on the concept and meaning of luxury in today's culture and fashion, including current and expected changes in attitudes towards luxury and consumer behaviour in the near future. The European footwear sector has to be attentive to generation Y and Z's values and social patterns, which are different to those of the previous generations. Millennials are highly digital and connected global consumers, but also very conscious consumers who look for high quality and differentiation and are also sensitive to social and environmental sustainability of the product to be purchased. European footwear companies have to anticipate and adapt to this new reality with upgraded skills and new business models that enhance the European creativity and excellence.



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In addition, the Portuguese Footwear Technological Centre, project leader, demonstrated the need for a new specific profile and training programme for high-end footwear manufacturing delivered under the High-End Shoe project. The innovative training programme is composed by an eLearning modules and work-based training part. The presentation was followed by a testimonial from a student who had participated in a two-weeks' pilot training in luxury footwear manufacturing for men's shoes made in the Goodyear style under the HES project and who had, like the other 14 students, acquired useful practical shoemaking skills, which proved the quality and value of the new training programme.

The outcomes of the HES project will soon be available in six languages (CZ, EN, FR, IT, PT and SP). The project consortium, which also includes Politecnico Calzaturiero in Italy, INESCOP in Spain, Lycée de Dauphiné in France and the Czech Footwear Association, would like to invite European high-end companies, other VET centres and new talented designers to benefit from this new tool and contribute to validate the pertinence and quality of the profile and training programme.

Indeed, project partners want to raise awareness on the need for industry and public recognition bodies, in those European countries with a relevant footwear industry, to validate the new training programme. The official public recognition of the profile "Footwear technician on High-End Footwear Manufacturing" and related training programme will allow companies to find highly qualified and competent footwear technicians whilst ensuring and reinforcing the leading position of European high-end and luxury footwear manufacturing in the world.

For more information, please visit the project website at www.highendshoe.eu