



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

A new Member joins CEC

Brussels, 11 January 2017

In 2016, the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC) welcomed a new Member, the Association of Hungarian Light Industry. Such new membership was formalised at CEC's General Assembly held in Brussels on 15 December 2016 and reinforces CEC's representation at European level while at the same time opening the door for CEC's support to Hungarian companies.

Members of the CEC welcomed the Association of Hungarian Light Industry (AHLI) at their December General Assembly in Brussels. AHLI represents the Hungarian footwear industry through its branch the Hungarian Association for Leather and Shoe Industry (BCE), which also includes components.

Footwear and leather goods manufacturing in Hungary suffered a steady decline in the late eighties, at which time it produced around 45 million pairs of shoes per year and employed 40,000 people. Towards the middle of the nineties, production began to stabilise with some minor drops, including during the European economic crisis. Today, the sector employs around 6,700 people and produces around 11 million pairs of shoes. Special focus is given to orthopaedic footwear, well positioned in Europe, which is a market that is expected to grow considering consumers' longer life expectancy.

The CEC will work towards the reinforcement and growth of the Hungarian footwear industry, in particular on skills development to preserve its tradition of footwear craftsmanship, while facilitating new partnerships for Hungarian companies in Europe. The reinforcement of the industry could attract and bring back investments from European brands currently manufacturing outside Europe.

During the General Assembly, the President of the CEC, Mr. Cleto Sagripanti, emphasised the relevance of industry associations working together under a unique umbrella to effectively deal with common challenges and pursue shared goals in the face of globalisation. "Together, we have a stronger voice, we save time and resources, and we reach better outcomes for our industry," Mr. Sagripanti stated, mentioning topics like the negotiation of free trade agreements between Europe and third countries and access to EU initiatives and funding, like the recently approved project on which CEC Members will work together with trade unions under the EU Social Dialogue for attracting young workforce to the sector.

The CEC's current full Members include footwear associations from Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, and together they represent 88% of the total production value of the footwear industry in Europe.