



**The president of FICE and vice-president of the Pikolinos Group
becomes the first woman to chair the European Footwear Confederation**

On the General Assembly of the European Footwear Confederation (CEC) held on the 1st of December in Elche (Spain), Rosana Perán, president of the Federation of Spanish Footwear Industries (FICE) and vice-presidency of the Pikolinos Group, was elected President of the European Footwear Confederation for the next two years. She has thus become the first woman to head it, succeeding the Portuguese Luis Onofre, president of the Portuguese Footwear Association (APICCAPS). In addition to the Members of the CEC, the public part of the General Assembly was attended by the President of the Valencian Region, the regional Minister of Innovation, Industry, Commerce and Tourism, the Majors of Elche and Elda and other public authorities, presidents of other related industries association and Spanish footwear companies.

In 2022, the EU footwear industry represents around 20,000 footwear companies across the continent, employing some 250,000 people. CEC's main objectives are to improve the competitiveness and growth of European footwear companies, promoting their interests and values. For that purpose, contribute to the development of the skills needed by the sector and encourage the transition to sustainability and digitisation.

During her intervention, she pointed that her main challenge will be to promote Industry 5.0, a new industrial revolution based on transforming businesses from a humanist point of view. At the same time, she assured that new technologies and innovations will not replace workers, but will enable them to acquire complementary skills, helping companies guarantee their growth and the development of professional careers of talents.

Moreover, she underlined that "we also need to actively work on social sustainability in the footwear industry. This should be based on taking ethical and social aspects into account throughout the footwear production and consumption chain". She added that "this means considering not only the environmental impact, but also the working conditions, equity and well-being of the communities involved in production", all factors that are crucial for the European footwear industry today.

Under the leadership of Rosana Perán, the CEC will continue to promote the interests of European footwear companies to ensure that the European Union's initiatives help them adapt to the sustainable and digital industrial transformation. It will ensure that their voices are heard so that the EU remains an open and reliable trading partner while establishing clear and fair rules for all stakeholders. The CEC will as well continue its efforts to attract the younger generations to the sector, and working on European initiatives to improve the skills of the current and future workforce.

Finally, the new president reminded that "over the last 10 years, CEC has led 25 European projects supporting the implementation of EU policies and facilitating collaboration across Europe. From now on, I am faced with the exciting challenge of continue transforming the industry. A sector that faces many challenges, but also opportunities, and its members associations play a relevant role in preparing and mobilising companies, facilitating the exchange of information and best practices between industry members to enhance their competitiveness and efficiency."