



# ASSOCALZATURIFICI

## **ITALIAN FASHION COMES TO ALMATY, THE KEY TRADE FAIR FOR CENTRAL ASIA**

### **50 brands represent the best in Italian fashion**

It's almost time for La Moda Italiana@Almaty, organised by Assocalzaturifici in partnership with the Italian fashion industry association EMI, Ente Moda Italia, with the support of the Italian Embassy and the practical assistance of ITA Agency, and in collaboration with the Italian Furriers' Association AIP and the Italian leather goods association Assopellettieri.

From April 6 through 8 the traditional trade fair will be back to help small to mid-sized Italian makers of footwear, leather goods, clothing and accessories penetrate the Central Asian market. 50 Italian fashion brands will represent the best of Italian fashion at the event. Over 250 highly qualified buyers are expected to attend the three-day event, featuring a packed programme of meetings and workshops held through partnerships with the ITA Agency, which organises an incoming programme for all the principal markets in Central Asia and all the provinces of Kazakhstan. Now a middle-income country, Kazakhstan has great potential for development and a very high rate of fidelity to Italian-made goods, demonstrating the population's appreciation of their handcrafted quality, beyond the usual dynamics of brand awareness.

The attenuation of the pandemic and the subsequent recovery of world markets in 2021 favoured an upswing in Kazakhstan, the 44th largest market for Italian footwear exports in terms of value, 51st by quantity. With almost 207,000 pairs and an average price tag of 83.08 Euro a pair, exports to Kazakhstan registered a growth rate of +12.8% in the first 11 months of 2021 as compared to the previous year. The regions of Marche, Emilia Romagna and Lombardy manufacture three quarters of the footwear exported to the country. Almaty also offers an opportunity to establish contact with buyers in Uzbekistan, a growing market for Italian footwear exports in terms of both quantity (+31.6%) and value (+3.8%). Together, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan import Italian footwear worth more than 20 million Euro.

According to **Assocalzaturifici Chair Siro Badon**: "At this time of great geopolitical tension, which has had an impact on world markets, Kazakhstan has a very important role to play. Following the social tension and dramatic clashes in the country at the beginning of the year, the government has announced a series of political, institutional and economic reforms; once they go into effect, the reforms will also improve the business climate. Kazakhstan continues to be a market of great interest for Italian companies wanting to expand and consolidate their sales in Central Asia, where Almaty is a very important logistics hub, especially for Uzbekistan. The country has of course felt the economic and financial impact of the war in Ukraine, starting with partial devaluation of the country's currency.

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But the response has been encouraging so far, as demonstrated by confirmation of orders placed for this season's collections, which are very much appreciated by consumers with sophisticated tastes, great purchasing power and a predilection for everything Italian. To facilitate this exchange, we have signed an agreement with air carrier NEOS S.p.a. that will allow us to take our entrepreneurs to the country safely despite the difficulties involved in the current circumstances, with all the convenience of a direct flight from Milan".

"The Almaty event has become an essential date on the calendar for the Italian fashion industry," says **Roberto Tadini, Chair of AIP**, the Italian Furriers' Association. "The Kazakhstani market is of particular interest to furriers. We are living in a very complicated time, but by working all together, with Assocalzaturifici, Assopellettieri, Emi and ITA, we continue to offer important opportunities for our companies to do business and help them bring Italian fashions to Kazakhstan."

"I agree with my colleague, the Chair of Assocalzaturifici, that Kazakhstan, because of its geographical location and neutrality in the current conflict, stands to play an important role for exports of Italian products to former CIS nations," says **Assopellettieri Chair Franco Gabrielli**. "At this time it is very important to continue serving these markets and providing our historic partners with support. The fact that we can do this together with other trade associations in the fashion industry is in itself a great achievement."

"Kazakhstan would seem to be the only gateway to the Russian market at the moment," says **Alberto Scaccioni, CEO of Ente Moda Italia**. "We have always considered La moda Italiana@Almaty to be an event of great interest for small to mid-sized Italian companies, and it is now more important than ever to be there, due to both the country's domestic market and its location. I'm very confident that this edition of the event will be a great success."

**Martino Castellani, Director of ITA Almaty**, comments that "it has always been a pleasure to work with Assocalzaturifici, EMI and our other partners on an event that has become a tradition, but is also becoming more and more important, both for our own companies and for the local market. After the disorders of this January, the situation in Kazakhstan has returned to normal, and despite an initial drop in the value of the local currency due to the Ukraine crisis, the exchange rate has now returned to the level of May 2021, and is therefore also largely back to normal. And so we believe all the pieces of the puzzle are in place to make this edition a success, with the participation of 40 Italian companies and more than 250 buyers invited from all over Central Asia, including, of course, all the principal Kazakhstani buyers.

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The ITA office in Almaty and its *Punto di Corrispondenza* office in Tashkent have been working on promotion of the event all over Central Asia, contacting hundreds of buyers in an area 12 times the size of Italy and meeting with great interest among them, revealing the popularity of Italian fashions among the local population”.

“Last year, Italian exports exceeded pre-Covid levels,” points out **Ambassador Marco Alberti**. “We are seeing new dynamism in business, as well as effective dialogue between public and private, as a result of constant commitment on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Minister Di Maio himself. Italy is out there, and Italian companies want to demonstrate once again the importance of Kazakhstan for the growth of their exports. We’re working on this despite the difficulties inherent in the current international situation, working with ITA to take advantage of all the unused potential for our exports in the country. We’re happy that Assocalzaturifici, with Assopellettieri, AIP, the Italian Furriers’ Association, and EMI, or Ente Moda Italia, have confirmed their mission in the country, an essential opportunity to underline the quality of Italian-made goods for various stakeholders as well as the sustainability of Italian fashions and the country’s unique products.”

Opportunities for learning more about the Kazakh market organised by MICAM Milano will include a meeting with buyers and the press scheduled for 7 April at La Prima in Almaty, during an event introduced by a talk on “*Fashion and Sustainability: scenarios and trends in Italy and Kazakhstan*”, presented by the Italian Embassy with the participation of His Excellency Ambassador Marco Alberti, Assocalzaturifici, and a team of local bloggers, who will discuss the prospects of the market and the new drivers of sustainable consumption in the Central Asian country.

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