



# ASSOCALZATURIFICI

Milan, 5 May 2022

"I want Assocalzaturifici's position regarding the participation of Italian footwear companies in the Moscow trade fair to be perfectly clear: the trade association complies with the sanctions imposed by the international community against the country that started this war, but I cannot help sympathising with these companies, because the task of our association is supporting all our companies, even those that could not withdraw their requests to participate in the trade fair due to contractual obligations undertaken before the start of the war in Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine, now practically inaccessible due to the war, account for more than 50 percent of the sales of many of these companies."

Assocalzaturifici Chair Siro Badon invites us to consider the matter more closely.

"We're talking about shutting the door on two very important markets, right after a two-year pandemic. Companies that do business in the countries now involved in the conflict find themselves dealing with a very difficult situation. Footwear companies that work with Russia and, of course, Ukraine are not violating any European sanctions. They have worked and continue to work in compliance with international law, courageously facing the consequences of a conflict that has had a devastating economic impact on a number of Italy's industrial districts. Districts our association represents, and for which it must speak up. Assocalzaturifici, under the wing of Confindustria Moda, is working with the institutions to ensure that no-one is left behind at this dramatic time in history. We are asking the government to pass a number of essential measures to address this exceptionally critical situation. We are equally aware of the need to promote mechanisms for structural growth of our SMEs in order to support companies' international growth, the diversification of their products, and therefore their approach to new markets abroad. Having only a few destination markets, or depending heavily on certain high-risk countries, cannot guarantee stability and growth, as we are seeing not only in our own case but on the energy market. When the biggest supplier is out of the picture and you have no alternative, you risk a crisis. This is why we say it is time to put a stop to the controversy and invite everyone to imagine what our member companies are going through every day. They have been protecting their business relations with important customers, like so many other Italian companies that are continuing to work in the country, simply because they cannot stop, and they hope to resume their business relationships again as soon as possible. Now this is resilience, not an attempt to get around the sanctions, as some people have been implying in the past few days. And this represents my own personal hope. What we are going through is not only a time of economic difficulty, but a humanitarian tragedy. Widening or continuing the conflict would result in even greater and more dramatic economic damage not only to the footwear industry, but to the country as a whole. The increase in raw materials and energy costs is obvious to everyone, and I know that Confindustria continues to be in contact with the Draghi government, that they are aware of what we are going through. This is why I insist that this is not the time to fuel controversy in the industry, because we are facing some very important challenges."

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