



ASSOCALZATURIFICI

ITALIAN FASHION IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT ALMATY, THE BIGGEST FOOTWEAR TRADE FAIR FOR CENTRAL ASIAN MARKETS

Moda Italiana@Almaty, the event organised by Assocalzaturifici in partnership with EMI, Ente Moda Italia, with the support of the Italian Embassy in Kazakhstan and the practical assistance of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA), in partnership with Italian furriers' association AIP and leather goods manufacturers' association Assopellettieri, is about to open.

The key event for the footwear industry in Central Asia is coming up October 3 through 5, 2022. The Italian trade fair reserved for industry professionals aims to increase exports to these markets of footwear, leather goods, clothing and accessories made by Italy's small enterprises. More Italian fashions than ever will be on display at this year's trade fair: over 60 brands will be represented, in growing numbers thanks to the consolidation of investment to re-launch the industry after the pandemic on the part of Assocalzaturifici and EMI with other trade associations representing the footwear and accessories industries under the umbrella of Confindustria Moda, such as AIP or Associazione Italiana Pellicceria (the Italian furriers' association) and Assopellettieri (a leather goods trade association), traditional institutional partners in the event.

More than 200 highly qualified buyers are expected to attend the three-day trade fair, participating in a packed calendar of meetings and workshops with an important focus on the themes of innovation and sustainability, through a partnership with ITA Agency, which organises an incoming programme for dealers from all the principal markets in Central Asia and all the provinces of Kazakhstan. Now classified as a middle-income country, Kazakhstan has great potential for growth and a very high level of loyalty to Italian footwear companies, whose quality and hand craftsmanship are much appreciated in the country, going beyond the usual dynamics of brand awareness.

The attenuation of the pandemic and the consequent upsurge of international markets has favoured recovery everywhere, including Kazakhstan, an important market for Italian footwear and a major regional hub in the light of recent international developments. With 156 thousand pairs worth a total of 11.4 million euro (average price 72.88 euro/pair), exports in the first six months of the year grew +44.4% in terms of quantity and +51.7% in terms of value over the same period in 2021. Almaty also offers an opportunity to establish contact with buyers in Uzbekistan, a market that has been growing in terms of both the quantity (+46.5%) and the value (+67.2%) of Italian exports it takes in. Exports to the two markets, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, were worth more than 15 million euro in the first half of the year.

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According to **Assocalzaturifici Chair Giovanna Ceolini**: "Kazakhstan is a market with great potential, a reservoir of customers of great strategic importance at the moment. Trade is essential for our footwear companies, especially to countries where they have always been much appreciated, and events like these, organised in synergy with other industry organisations, offer a vital opportunity to grow an industry that has suffered severely from the two-year pandemic. After all, the worldwide popularity of Italian footwear confirms its importance as a strategic asset for the country."

"Kazakhstan is an important market for furriers too, both in its own right and as a hub. Exports of Italian furs in the first half of 2022, compared to the first half of 2021, reveal a 57% increase in value," comments **Roberto Tadini, Chair of AIP, the Italian furriers' association**. "One way of handling the difficult situation of our companies' current markets might be for the fashion industry to address the challenges all together, joining forces and working with other trade associations in Confindustria Moda to ensure that our products are appreciated all over the world".

"The progressive return to normality and the positive performance of the leather goods industry in the first half of the year – when it registered an increase in both industrial production (+12.4%) and sales (+15%), supported by recovery of domestic demand (+12.2%) and, above all, exports (+17.3%) – are very encouraging factors," notes **Assopellettieri Chair Franco Gabrielli**. "It is on this highly positive note that we set out for Almaty, an event of primary importance for the Italian industry. After the recent Mipel and Mipel Lab trade fairs, where we had the opportunity to meet with large numbers of players in the industry, the need to focus on international markets and strategies such as central Asia has emerged even more clearly. We look forward to meeting with buyers in the 'Stans' and continuing our dialogue aimed at promoting the excellence of Italian craftsmanship, with a view to increasingly global development and success."

"Kazakhstan is now more of a strategic gateway to the Russian market than it was in the past, in addition to the good state of health of its own domestic market and that of its neighbours," notes **Alberto Scaccioni, CEO of Ente Moda Italia**. "Considering the growth of clothing exports in the past six months (up +53.5%), and the increased number of exhibitors participating in the trade fair, I believe the event to be of great interest for small to mid-sized Italian enterprises, and it is more important than ever to be present."

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Martino Castellani, Director of ITA Almaty, notes that "La Moda italiana@Almaty is a traditional event which buyers in central Asia look forward to with great anticipation. In the wake of the outstanding results of the April 2022 edition, we have not only invited all the Kazakhi buyers but organised a large delegation from the area, and we are optimistic that this 35th edition in October 2022 will further boost the presence of Italian-made goods, traditionally much appreciated on markets in the area."

"Moda Italiana@Almaty is back, an important event in which we continue to believe, especially at this time," comments **Ambassador Marco Alberti**, "as we work to relaunch the economy after the pandemic". "The interest shown by local distributors and consumers in Italian footwear, confirmed at Micam in Milan," continued the Ambassador, "encourages us to reinforce our presence in the industry, focusing not only on quality but also on innovation and the sustainability of Italian footwear. Our sincere thanks to Assocalzaturifici and ITA Agency for all their hard work".

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