

20th UITIC Congress: results beyond all expectations

The event held in Portugal enjoyed a high level of success, bringing together for one week more than 540 footwear professionals coming from 33 different countries, with more than 20 company visits and more than 30 guest speakers who discussed the future of the global footwear manufacturing industry.

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“It was an incredible Congress”: is the opinion expressed by Yves Morin, President of UITIC – the International Union of Shoe Industry Technicians, on the 20th edition of the event held from 16 to 18 May in Porto, Portugal, which was dedicated to the theme ‘From fashion to factory – A new technological age’.

Characterising the event was in fact a record number of delegates – presenting speeches, presentations and talks with a high content level, and a complete programme of great interest that included visits to local companies.

“Generally speaking, the Congress fully achieved its goal of acting as an international Think Tank for the footwear industry”, continued Mr. Morin.”

Without a doubt, contributing to the excellent outcome of the event was also the choice of the Host Country, Portugal. As in fact remarked upon by Ana Teresa Lehmann, Secretary of State for the Portuguese industry, who was invited to the opening ceremony:

“Portugal holds a privileged position, because it is an innovative and export-oriented industry, with more than 95% of its production destined for foreign markets and more than 80 million pairs of footwear exported in 2017”.



The importance of choosing Portugal as the host country was also underlined by Yves Morin, who commented:

“When I suggested the theme of this 20th Congress – From fashion to factory: a new technological age – I believed that Portugal was the right place for discussing this issue, because this is one of the few countries worldwide where we can simultaneously find the entire production chain, with excellent know-how and an expert understanding of fashion and design”.

According to Ms. Lehmann, the Congress’s theme also highlighted the role of technology as a driving economic force, while outlining its impact on the global industry. At this level, the Portuguese footwear manufacturing industry represents a competitive model and one of the most important examples of how modernity and innovation from one end successfully merge with tradition from the other end.

Great satisfaction for the positive outcome of the event was also expressed by Luís Onofre, President of APICCAPS – the Portuguese Footwear Manufacturers’ Association, who confirmed how the 20th UITIC Congress exceeded all expectations. Onofre underlined the role played by the Portuguese Footwear Cluster Roadmap for the Digital Economy, which was recently presented by the Portuguese footwear manufacturing industry, and which calls for an investment of 50 million euros by 2020 in order to take advantage of the opportunities created by the Industry 4.0.

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