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Newsletter February 2023



Over 100 footwear companies make a "commitment" with the Planet

The Cluster of Footwear and Leather Goods in Portugal has the ambition to become an "international benchmark and strengthen its exports, combining virtuously sophistication and creativity with productive

efficiency, based on the technological development and management of the international value chain, thus ensuring the future of a national production basis, sustainable, and highly competitive”.

Aware of its responsibilities before society, the footwear cluster has followed the increasing importance placed on sustainability. After launching in 2019 the Action Plan for Sustainability, between 2021 and 2022 saw the BioShoes4All project, whose aim is to leverage the transition to a bio-sustainable and circular economy, be approved for financing by the RRP and, in December 2023, introduced the Strategic Plan of the Footwear Cluster 2030, in which the concern with sustainability underlies all the proposals presented.

Fully conscious that the cluster needs to undertake sustainability as one of the pillars which will turn us into an international benchmark in the industry, APICCAPS and the Footwear Technology Centre invited the sector to mobilize and publicly sign a Green Pact. The first public act will take place on the **24th of February, at 9:30 am**, at Palácio de Cristal, in Porto, in a ceremony chaired by the European Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius.

In practical terms, companies that sign the Green Pact commit to work and contribute to the goals set by the United Nations and Europe, namely, achieving net-zero carbon emissions in 2050 and halving carbon emissions in 2030.

“Being a very broad and technical subject, it is paramount to mobilize the cooperation between companies, customers, and entities, so all companies in the cluster were invited to take on the Green Pact of the Footwear Cluster”, says the President of APICCAPS, Luís Onofre. “The entire footwear cluster was invited and called upon to contribute to the environmental sustainability of the planet, developing and innovating

in products and processes, increasing its overall efficiency and circularity, thus being inclusive and competitive”.

Companies of the footwear and leather goods cluster will initially undergo “an initial diagnosis” phase that will lead, later, to “the definition of an individual action plan”, which, according to each company’s situation, will determine the actions to be carried concerning matters such as eco-design, methods for selecting materials, waste reduction, the production and use of green energies, or the implementation of new business models that reduce the use of virgin materials or reuse materials from renewable or recycled sources. Throughout the process, “support for the monitoring and implementation of the action plans” will be provided.

For Reinaldo Teixeira, President of the Footwear Technology Centre of Portugal, “the challenges and opportunities that the cluster is facing regarding sustainability are of great relevance and complexity. If we don’t properly respond, the increasing regulatory requirements and the attention that consumers devote to this issue can grow into a serious threat to our cluster”.

APICCAPS is expecting that over 100 companies, accounting for 800 million euros, will subscribe the Portuguese Shoes Green Pact in the initial stage.

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