



Social Dialogue Committee – Footwear Work Programme 2014

Footwear is a sector that represents around 21,000 companies in Europe (including components), with approximately 230,000 employees. It is a sector which is situated in the high-end industries and which will require a lot of highly-skilled workers in the future.

For almost four years, the Social Dialogue Committee in the European Footwear sector was at a standstill for various reasons. However, the European Social Partners are now convinced that it is in the best interests of companies and workers that the European Social Partners recommence regular meetings.

The following action points are therefore to be proposed for the year 2014:

1. Develop the European Social Dialogue

This dialogue has been at a standstill for over 4 years. One of the first priorities of the common work will be to restore the functioning of interaction between social partners at European level. This will require regular contact, both on a formal and informal basis. Both Social Partners are also convinced that, wherever possible, joint positions should be developed vis-à-vis the initiatives of the European institutions and wherever there is an interest for our sector.

In June 2013, industriAll Europe and CEC introduced a proposal for a joint Social Dialogue project financed by the European Commission. This project, once approved, will lead to a number of Steering Group meetings, as well as national meetings. This, in turn, will allow the existing national Social Dialogue structures and practices to be analysed and mapped out. The objective will be to have a better understanding of the different regulatory frameworks and identify the main players.

2. Skills and qualifications

The Social Partners of the Footwear sector should be integrated into the existing Sector Skills Council on Textile, Leather and Clothing, in order to incorporate the specific skills and occupations of the Footwear industry, and to identify and develop the skills which are necessary for the further development of the sector.

3. Trade

The impact of Free Trade Agreements on the European Footwear industry, currently under discussion between the European Union and third countries (specifically Japan, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, the United States of America and Mercosur), should be assessed.



The functioning of the EuroMed Partnership and its impact on the Footwear industry will also be assessed.

4. Planning ahead for restructuring in the Footwear sector

The Footwear sector has undergone thorough restructuring over the last few decades, and this trend has not reversed, despite the successes of the high-end segment of the market. The longer-term evolutions of the sector should be planned ahead for, in order to forecast the quantitative and qualitative evolutions of skills needs.

5. Action plan for fashion and high-end industries

A significant segment of the European Footwear sector produces high-end and fashion products. This segment is highly creative. It generates trade surpluses and above-average wages and working conditions. The Footwear sector will be involved in the design and implementation of this action plan in coordination with the other fashion and high-end sectors and the relevant Commission services.