



SPAIN HOSTS THE 16th INTERNATIONAL FOOTWEAR CONGRESS

Elche, a town in Alicante will become the world capital for footwear technicians for a few days.

The International Union of Footwear Industry Technicians Congress will bring together papers from experts and businessmen from Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Switzerland.

From the 16th to the 18th of October 2008, the International Union of Footwear Industry Technicians (UITIC) will hold its 16th International Technical Footwear Congress. On this occasion the Congress has been organised by the Technological Institute for Footwear and Related Industries (INESCOP), on behalf of UITIC. This is one of the most important technical meetings held for the footwear industry worldwide, whose main objective is to address current technical and trade concerns.

Elche, the largest footwear manufacturing area in the country, will be hosting the delegates from all over the world who will meet in the Conference Centre in order to debate on the advantages of technology for footwear trading and production processes

For three days, what technology can bring to all stages of footwear production will be analyzed, starting with the consumer, who nowadays should be the main benefactor of improvements, and for whom more comfort and better service is sought .

There will be five separate sessions: Consumer, Product Innovation, Technology, Management and Sustainable Development.

In the Consumer session, a global perspective without limitations will be offered, given that shoe companies are becoming more and more global. Outlining consumers' needs and how to meet them will be another objective to be discussed, not forgetting shoe manufacture, which Europe should not discard.

Anti-counterfeiting measures will be the main topic of the Product Innovation session, dealing with shoe devices. Limited customs control and different steps taken by countries have made these measures vital in the shoe business.

Notwithstanding that addressing technology is nothing new, the UITIC's Executive Committee found the Congress an ideal opportunity to tackle technology as a tool and not as an objective. That is to say, to approach technology from another point of view because nowadays, from design to marketing, technology is more important than ever.

As regards Management, it is essential to mention different methods employed by those manufacturers that are succeeding, which have positive effects on the bulk of their businesses. Information technology and telecommunications will be discussed which help communication between the actors in the shoe industry value chain.

Sustainable development is at its peak, and shoe manufacturers are willing to improve the environment. For this purpose, information about hazardous substances and how to recycle will be provided. A close example is in France where an “eco-tax” is used in the recycling of used shoes.

With 17 conferences in total, the UITIC intends to address the contribution of technology to shoe manufacture.

Among these conferences INESCOP's paper in the Product Innovation session shall be highlighted. The Footwear Institute will show its latest research on anti-counterfeiting measures, pertinent now that the trade of counterfeited products is on the rise.

During the Consumer session, the paper on practical measures to protect footwear design stands out.

In the Technology session the possibilities of introducing virtual reality in footwear manufacture will be discussed.

In the management session, the Spanish firm Pikolinos, a clear example of how a paperless company can be better managed than those weighed down by paper, will be presented.

Finally, Sustainable Development will be stressed, especially now when the new responsibilities that footwear companies have to undertake are under debate.

Parallel Activities

For those attending the Congress several parallel activities have been scheduled such as factory visits, which include a guided visit to two shoe factories in Elche and Elda, as well as the visit to a footwear sourcing company of world renown and to INESCOP's facilities.

Moreover, for accompanying persons, several excursions around Alicante have been scheduled.

Regarding the Congress social programme, the welcome cocktail and the official dinner stand out. During the official dinner, the UITIC Awards will be presented. The organisers have taken great care in the preparation of these events and several entertainment performances have been arranged so that both evenings will be as enjoyable as possible.