

Russia is studying a plan to reduce imports

Russian imports have to decrease from current 51% to 39% by 2020. So demands the plan developed by the Federation's Ministry of Industry and Trade that aims to reduce the national economy dependence from imports in several industrial sectors. A proposal for the appropriation of additional state funds has been put forward for about 500 billion roubles until 2020. However the Russian Federation's Minister of Industry and Trade underlined that – even if a huge amount of money were poured into economy in the considered lapse of time – the effects wouldn't be visible at all. So this decision seems to come from a moderately conservative alternative, which expects a decrease to 39%, moving from the premise that the main activities included in the plan are of regulative nature.

But what's happening in the manufacturing sectors, and in the leather-footwear sector in particular?

Cleto Sacripanti, president of Assocalzaturifici, remarks that the main problem in the Russian crisis is a structural one, and it involves distribution changes in this area. That market that had become the first outlet for the exports of many small and medium enterprises of made in Italy is now looking at products in the medium and medium-low end, almost all manufactured in China or Turkey. This means that the path we should pursue is the one that

aims at the high end of market. The results of the Russian event Obuv' Mir Koži also confirm this trend. Nevertheless the Russian and CIS markets remain a strategic economic-commercial area for made in Italy footwear and leathergoods. In the first semester of 2014 footwear exports to those Countries registered 18,4% reduction in volume and 21.7% reduction in value compared with the same period in 2013: we exported 3,531,000 pairs, for a total of approximately 250 million euros. Obviously we can't disregard this reduction, but we can not even underestimate what that market continues to represent. This is the situation for finished products. The problem is completely different as far as leathers are concerned.

A government decree forbids exports of raw hides and wet blues from Russia to Italy. This ban was introduced last October 1st and should last until April 2015. According to some statistical data provided by Russian customs, in 2013 Italy was the first customer for banned products, with total imports for 95.4 million euros in 2013 and 48.6 million euros in July 2014 (-20.4% compared with the same period of the year before).

The sector of footwear, tannery and leathergoods machines seems to have better prospects: apart from the cooperation agreement between Assomac and the "Leather Academy" based in Yogyakarta



(covered in a different page of this issue), Russian enterprises seem to be going to enter business with the Italian enterprises that work in leather technology. On the other hand if consumption trends go towards lower quality products, the Government aims to encourage the do-

mestic enterprises and the raw materials to be processed to leather remains in the domestic market, then it is probable and desirable that Russian manufacturing companies equip themselves with technologies made in Italy. ■

Original interpretations with vegetable leather

Craft The Leather, coorganized by Consorzio Vera Pelle Conciata al Vegetale (Genuine Italian Vegetable-Tanned Leather Consortium), by the Association of Tuscan Tanners and by Toscana Promozione gathered more than 1000 votes among Cuir à Paris visitors and through the Parisian event's page on Facebook. Most of consents went to Belgian Louise de Groote from London College of Fashion for her special interpretation made with vegetable leather. ■



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