

New York, 8 June 2016

JOINT DECLARATION

**by the American Apparel & Footwear Association,
the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry, and**

Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America

Supporting the Removal of Trade Barriers on Footwear

in the

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP)

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), the European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC), and Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA) hereby express our support for tariff elimination, regulatory harmonisation and/or mutual recognition, and the removal of other non-tariff barriers to trade in the footwear sector within the framework of the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP)**.

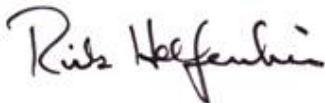
The last two years have shown a significant increase in reciprocal footwear trade between the European Union and the United States, which demonstrates the rising consumer demand for footwear products offered by the respective trading partners and their desire for greater variety and choice.

Specifically, from 2014 to 2015, exports to the US from the EU rose by 9 percent in numbers of pairs, and 19 percent in value; whereas exports to the EU from the US increased by 14 percent in pairs and 27 percent in value. This promising trend confirms the value and importance of accelerating the T-TIP negotiations since the agreement has the potential to further boost bilateral trade by lowering barriers to trade through different avenues, from the elimination of tariffs to regulatory harmonisation.

The T-TIP can foster greater footwear industry partnerships, consumer value, and job creation by eliminating high footwear tariffs (which can range up to 67.5 percent). In addition, the T-TIP provides an opportunity to streamline customs procedures and harmonise product safety and labelling regulations, which will confer important trade benefits as well.

We therefore urge the negotiators to reach a satisfactory T-TIP that:

- Ensures full, immediate, and reciprocal elimination of all tariffs for duty-free access to footwear products.
- Harmonises labelling, product safety, testing regulations, and prohibited substances to avoid duplicating costs.
- Facilitates customs provisions.
- Allows more flexibility in the determination of the rules of origin.
- Promotes regulatory convergence and/or mutual recognition of regulations and standards, while guaranteeing consumers' safety.



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Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, the **American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)** is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its four million U.S. workers, and its contribution of \$350 billion in annual U.S. retail sales.

The **European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC)** is the main voice of the European Footwear Manufacturing Industry, incorporating the major national footwear associations and federations of the European Union (EU) Member States. CEC's mission is to promote the right environment and conditions for European footwear manufacturing to thrive and become more competitive and innovative. In the EU 300,000 footwear manufacturing workers are responsible for a yearly production of 600 million pairs. From 2009 to 2015, European players saw the rise of their products' export price by 27 percent, while their exports volume to non-EU countries increased by 39 percent (from 150 to 215 million pairs).

Founded in 1944, the **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA)** represents the entire footwear industry from small family-owned footwear businesses to global footwear companies. It also serves the full supply chain of the footwear industry from research, design and development, to manufacturing and distribution, to retailers selling to global consumers. In all, FDRA supports over 130 companies and 250 brands, or 80 percent of total U.S. footwear sales, making it the largest and most respected American footwear trade association.