



## Press Release

### Towards Zero Adverse Impact of the European Leather Industry: EUROPEAN WORKSHOP ON ACCIDENTS/INJURIES AT THE WORKPLACE

Milan, 19 September 2023

On September 19, 2023, on the premises of Lineapelle, the international leather fair in Milan, the European social partners for the tanning and leather sector, COTANCE and industriAll European Trade Union, held a European workshop titled *Workplace Safety in European Tanneries: State of Play*.

The workshop, developed as part of the EU-funded social dialogue project “*Towards Zero Adverse Impact of the European Leather Industry – GREEN DEAL LEATHER*”, brought together national social partners, including the employers, *Acexpiel (ES)*, *APIC (PT)*, *FFTM (FR)*, *FVTBSL (AT)*, *MKSZ (HU)*, *UNIC (IT)*, *VDL (DE)* and trade union representatives from Italy (*UILTEC*, *Femca-Cisl* and *Filctem-Cgil*) and Spain (*CCOO* and *UGT FICA*), as well as many interested stakeholders.

The event was opened by **Mr. Manuel Rios, President of COTANCE**, who said:

*“Our common ambition is to drive positive change in the global leather industry by “leading by example”. The present report pulls together all sector-specific information on tannery workplace accidents in Europe for better understanding them and drawing lessons for improved workplace safety in tanneries.”*

**COTANCE's Secretary General, Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano**, explained the context, objectives and rationale of the *Green Deal Leather* project, emphasising: *“Since COTANCE started the Social Sectoral Dialogue with its Trade Union counterparts some 25 years ago, workers’ health and safety has always been at the top of our agenda. We understand that this concern ought to be the first priority when it comes to implementing Due Diligence in leather supply chains, as any accident at the workplace is irremediably a failure, with adverse consequences, above all, for the victim, but also for the employer.”*

With 1102 accidents in 2021, the incidence of accidents at work in European tanneries is 3,2%. This figure includes accidents on the way to or from the workplace. Serious accidents are rare, most are wounds (49%), including superficial cuts concerning mainly the upper limbs (47%) with half involving hands (23%). From 2019 to 2021 accidents have decreased by 16% (both female and males).

The workshop provided an exceptional forum for the exchange of information and best practices concerning the reporting and communication of health and safety risks across the leather supply chain, as well as their management within tanneries.

**Judith Kirston-Darling, Deputy General Secretary of industriAll-Europe said:**

*“Quality social dialogue is essential to ensure a safe tanning and leather sector in Europe. We encourage all employers to produce relevant data on occupational health and safety issues and to work closely with workers and their representatives at site level to ensure that all workers are properly trained, and that adequate health and safety measures are fully respected by both sides. By working together in an open and positive manner, we can eliminate accidents in the workplace and keep workers safe.”*

**Project website:**

<https://euroleather.com/news/projects/green-deal-leather>



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