The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Sanctions Hit Italian Shoemakers Hard

By The Moscow Times

December 16, 2014



BRUSSELS — Bad relations between the EU and Moscow have helped cut exports of Italian shoes to Russia by about a fifth, the sector said in a letter to the EU foreign policy chief, urging consideration of economic effects before any new sanctions are agreed.

The EU has imposed measures including economic sanctions in response to Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in March and the months of unrest that have followed. In turn Russia has taken measures against imports, particularly food.

Footwear has not been specified by either side but Italy's shoe exports have still been hit by Russian consumers becoming less keen on pricey imported goods.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini has to mediate between nations that have pushed for more sanctions, and others, such as her native Italy, which have favored a softer stance.

Cleto Sagripanti, head of Italian footwear industry association Assocalzaturifici, which groups brands such as Salvatore Ferragamo and Tod's, said the body appreciated geopolitical issues but argued the EU could not ignore the impact the crisis is having on European businesses.

Italy's 6,000 shoemaking companies employ 80,000 people and in many cases, the small, specialist firms are located in regions with few alternative sources of employment.

Russia was Italy's fifth-biggest footwear export market in 2013, after France, Germany, the United States and Switzerland, which re-exports to nations including Russia.

Shoe exports in the first half of this year fell 17.5 percent in volume and 21.4 percent in value from the first half of last year. The total value of the sector's exports to Russia for all of 2013 was 643 million euros ($800 million), according to the industry body.

In the letter dated Dec. 10, Sagripanti offered to share data with Mogherini and asked for a meeting to discuss how the EU can help address "this enormous challenge for our industry."

A spokeswoman for the EU External Action Service, headed by Mogherini, said the letter had arrived and Mogherini would reply "in due course."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/16/russian-sanctions-hit-italian-shoemakers-hard-a42352