

Portugal's Footwear Industry Steps into the Future at Web Summit 2025

FAIST project showcases how Portuguese footwear is becoming the most modern in the world through innovation, digitalization, and sustainability.

Portugal's footwear industry is taking bold steps toward becoming the most modern in the world. Driving this transformation is FAIST – Factory Agile, Intelligent, Sustainable and Technological, a major mobilizing project under **Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR)**. With an investment of **€50 million** and involving **45 co-promoters**, FAIST is setting a new benchmark for innovation, sustainability and industrial efficiency.

“Our goal is for the Portuguese footwear industry to remain at the forefront and consolidate itself as the most modern in the world,” says **Luís Onofre**, President of **APICCAPS**.

FAIST is part of the new **Strategic Plan for the Portuguese Footwear Cluster**, which aspires to transform the sector into an international reference for innovation and sustainability. The project also promotes local industrial development, increases exports, and strengthens Portugal's role in the global supply chain.

By investing in **automation, robotics**, and the national production of advanced technologies and sustainable materials, Portugal's footwear cluster is reinforcing its global leadership in **design, innovation, and digital transformation**.

Florbela Silva, the project coordinator, states that more than **75% of the project is already completed**. The Agile, Intelligent, Sustainable and Technological Factory aims to make the Portuguese industry the most modern in the world, “ensuring greater production efficiency and profitability, along with better working conditions and greater flexibility in the ability to respond to the market.”

To achieve this, **45 companies and entities** from the **scientific and technological system**, namely universities and technology centres, have joined forces. Together, they are committed to developing **34 innovative equipment, 20 software solutions, 5 integrated production lines, more than 15 innovative footwear and component products**, as well as **3 pilot units for experimentation and demonstration**.

According to **Florbela Silva**, **300 new jobs** will be created, **100 of which highly qualified**, mainly for senior professionals, in a project that aims to “increase the level of specialization of the Portuguese footwear industry for new product types” and enhance “the supply capacity of Portuguese footwear companies by strengthening their ability to produce medium and large orders using more efficient assembly processes.”

For the Director of the Innovation and Digital Manufacturing Unit at **CTCP**, FAIST “was created in response to the needs of the footwear and leather goods sector, focusing on preparing this sector for future challenges, making a decisive investment in digital technologies and the sustainability of processes and products, aiming for greater efficiency and profitability, quick response to the market, improved working conditions, and product differentiation.” Furthermore, it is important to “broaden the industry’s range of specializations with new product types based on knowledge, increase companies’ supply capacity, and promote the inclusion of qualified human resources.”

Knowledge, in particular, “will be the new basis for recruitment, contributing to gender equality and equal opportunities, strengthening social cohesion in regions where the industry is located, with an impact on employment, retention of qualified jobs, exports, and more sustainable regional development; increasing the visibility and recognition of the footwear cluster, which can aspire to expand its role in the global supply chain.” Additionally, it is important to “increase the national production of equipment and advanced technologies, invest in the manufacturing of sustainable products, and create automatic production lines.”

For **Florabela Silva**, it is crucial that FAIST enables “reindustrialization and the use of high-productivity processes that allow companies to manufacture small, medium, and large orders at competitive prices, thus gaining access to major distribution chains that in the past sourced from cheaper markets such as Asia.”

More information about the project can be found on the official website:

<https://www.faist.pt/>

FAIST at Web Summit 2025

FAIST will be highlighted at Web Summit 2025 in Lisbon during the masterclass:

“Step Into the Future: Innovation in Portuguese Footwear”, hosted by Florabela Silva (CTCP) and Paulo Gonçalves (APICCAPS).

The session will explore how the FAIST consortium is revolutionizing Portugal’s footwear ecosystem through automation, robotics, digitalization and sustainable innovation.

More inf about Masterclass here:

<https://websummit.com/sessions/lis25/bb0d1edd-d34a-43f6-b66b-60ce31826168/strategic-alliance-for-innovation-in-the-footwear-industry-hosted-by-apiccaps/>

About CTCP

The Centro Tecnológico do Calçado de Portugal (CTCP) is a leading innovation hub for the footwear and leather goods industry, promoting research, digital transformation and sustainable industrial practices.

<https://www.ctcp.pt>

About APICCAPS

APICCAPS represents Portugal's footwear, components and leather goods manufacturers, supporting the sector's growth through internationalization, innovation and competitiveness.

<https://www.apiccaps.pt/>

<https://www.portugueseshoes.pt/>

Media contacto:

APICCAPS: "Paulo Goncalves" paulogoncalves@apiccaps.pt