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# Portuguese savoir-faire against all the odds

12 May 2017 1268 Views


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"We are here today to share with everyone that in Portugal there is an industry that is thriving. And is textile," said Ana Paula Mesquita, Magellan Consultancy President.

On Thursday May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Press Club in Brussels hosted an event under the topic The rebirth of Portuguese textile: Against all Odds, where guests talked about the renaissance and favorable times that the textile industry is experiencing these days in Portugal.

"In the textile industry, Portugal has the shortest lead time in the world. Between two and six weeks," said Paulo Vaz, Director of ATP (Association for Textile and Fashion of Portugal).



Paulo Vaz – Copyright: Tony da Silva

Having such efficient production methods, being the number one in the world becomes even more remarkable coming from a country where tough, fiscal austerity measures affected the whole economy in 2011. Now things look much brighter with an industry that represents about 10% of national exports as well as 3% of GDP. All of this thanks to strategic investing, as


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~ Love is like playing music. First you must learn to play by the rules, then you must forget the rules and play from your heart. ~ Photo by @aliig #welovebrussels

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well as support from EU funding programs. And this is a very positive outcome that permeates to other layers of the European economy.

"Inditex business model in Spain wouldn't be possible if it weren't for the cluster of textile industries in northern Portugal," explained Teresa Presas, Senior Researcher within Magellan "It's European synergy at play," she concluded.

But what about China, is often the question in people's minds.

"We've seen a lot of companies coming back to Portugal," said Manuel Torres, commercial director at Impetus Group. "Some think they've made the wrong move. Why? Because in China it's all mass production, and that's not what customers want, especially in fashion."

Portuguese textile industries are able to receive small orders from different fashion customers and deliver on time, faster than anybody. To be able to do so, they have invested a lot on technology.



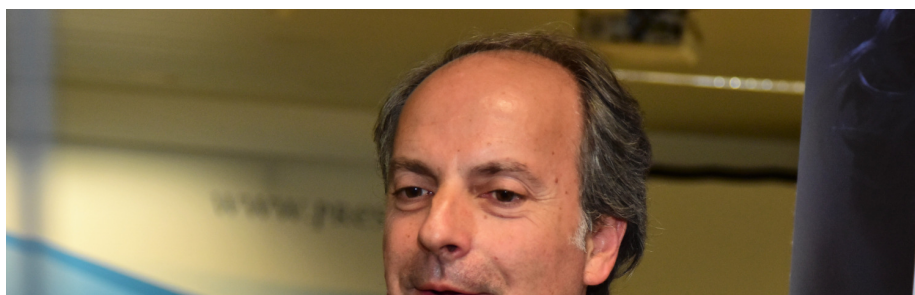
Manuel Torres – Copyright: Tony da Silva

161 Shares There's a very large entry cost," said Mr. Torres. "That's why countries like China can't compete with us. At least not right now. We need to be ahead of them."

f That's the fight that the Portuguese have chosen to take on, differentiate themselves in design and design over cost.

111 a tough competition," said Mr. Vaz. "These days even the luxury brands are using the mass models of the fast fashion brands. The requirements to meet their needs are ever increasing."

in Besides offering a successful case study in production efficiency, Portugal is at the forefront of innovation. Baby-grows that change color when a baby has fever, curtains that retain solar energy during the day and light up the living room at night, clothes to fight off the mosquito that carries Malaria, these are just some of the products that Portuguese designers and engineers have created to fulfill a need in the market. And opportunities seem to be lining up.



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Paulo Melo, President of ATP – Copyright: Tony da Silva

“Portuguese industries are not only manufacturing for others,” said Paulo Melo, President of ATP. “Noticing their expertise, their know-how, they have decided to launch their own brands. Brands you can now find in stores like Galeries Lafayette. And this is the kind of news we wanted to share with you here in Brussels.” he concluded.



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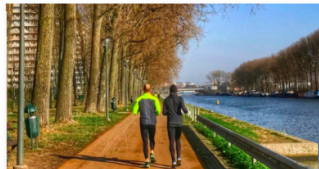
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