



## **LODZ DECLARATION**

Lodz, May 17th 2008

The **European Textile Collectivities Association** (ACTE), meeting in Lodz, Poland, at its XVI General Assembly, APPROVES the following declaration:

**Noting that** the XV General Assembly of ACTE, that took place in Carpi on December 7th 2007, decided to declare the year 2008 “Thematic Year of Innovation”. Within this framework, ACTE constitutes an R&D&I working group with the aim of improving the transfer of knowledge and establishing synergies among the adherent members of the member territories. The two conferences “*InText – Innovation in Textile Territories*” and “*The Thread of Innovation*”, that will be organized in Lodz and Terrassa respectively, will try to promote the debate and raise public awareness about the importance of creativity and innovation.

**Noting that**, on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, the European Commission adopted a proposal to declare the year 2009 “European Year of Creativity and Innovation”. The aim of this European Year will be to “promote creativity for all as driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences through lifelong learning”<sup>1</sup>.

**Considering** the following:

- The capacity of Europe to respond effectively to the challenges and possibilities of globalization will greatly depend on its capacity of creativity and innovation.
- Innovation is highly related to the concept of creativity. On March 2007, the European Council presented the so-called “*knowledge triangle*” comprising education, research and innovation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2008) 159 final of March 28th 2008

<sup>2</sup> Presidency conclusions – European Council, March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2007

- Motivation and entrepreneurial mindsets are fundamental to boost the creative and innovative capacity. The fundamentals of these qualities are acquired at early phases of the personal development.
- The future competitiveness of the European textile, clothing, leather, footwear and fashion accessories industries will also depend on their capacity to incorporate innovation in the products, processes and models of business, including organization and marketing and provisioning.

### ***An adequate framework***

- 1- **Emphasizes** the need for creating an environment favourable to creativity and innovation and become a strong impetus for a long-term policy priority at European level.
- 2- **Recalls** the objectives of the *Action Plan for Europe: investing in research*<sup>3</sup> aimed at enabling all regions to benefit from increased investment in research and boosting the public research base and its links to industry.

### ***The innovation communities***

- 3- **Welcomes** the recent adoption by the European Parliament of the Regulation<sup>4</sup> according to which is created the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), which will promote the integration of the knowledge triangle higher education, research and innovation throughout the European Union. **Considers** that the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sectors should be priority fields and, for this purpose, **asks** the EIT to include them in the future “*Strategic Innovation Agenda*” (SIA) and in one of the “*Knowledge and Innovation Communities*” (KICs). The fact that these so-called *mature sectors* are still very important within the European manufacturing industry proves that they have been able to adapt to the new challenges caused by the market through a constant innovation.

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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission: “Investing in research: an action plan for Europe” COM(2003) 226 final

<sup>4</sup> Common Position adopted by the Council with a view to the adoption of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Institute of Innovation and Technology – Brussels January 11th 2008

4- **Recalls** the proposals included in the EU Innovation Strategy<sup>5</sup> aimed at encouraging cooperation between all the public and private stakeholders (business, the public sector and consumers), in particular in the forms of clusters, knowledge transfer between the public research base and industry and strategic partnerships between business and universities.

5- To this end, **considers** that it is necessary to boost the Technological Centres orientated to the sector, as referents in terms of innovation in new products for those companies of small size and with less capacity to generate innovation, and as tools of technological transfer.

### ***Non-technological innovation***

6- **Asks** the Commission to proceed to define at community-level the “non-technological innovation”. Like the technological innovation, the non-technological innovation needs to be clearly defined, promoted and encouraged. Especially the efforts of SMEs in this field must be encouraged through different means of support, including tax or state aid.

### ***Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets***

7- **Asks** the public local, regional and national authorities:

- i. To include entrepreneurship in curricula for schools at all levels (from primary to higher education),
- ii. To create mechanisms of funding to support the education centres in the promotion of entrepreneurship learning,
- iii. To pay special attention to a high-level training of teachers,
- iv. To promote the cooperation between educational establishments and the local community, especially businesses,
- v. To encourage the learning through practical experience (creation and management of mini-companies by the students).

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<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 13 September 2006 “Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU” COM(2006) 502 final

8- **Urges** the European Commission:

- i. To disseminate good practices and to raise the visibility of entrepreneurship education,
- ii. To promote transnational exchanges,
- iii. To promote the training of educators in entrepreneurship through EU programmes.