

Italian footwear brand Geox has built, in record time, what it describes as one of the most modern distribution centres in Europe.

Geox cuts the ribbon for new logistics hub



Italy's minister for economic development, Claudio Scajola, presided at an opening ceremony for a new head office and distribution centre that footwear brand Geox has established at Signoressa in the town of Trevignano in northern Italy. The ceremony took place on March 3.

The new facilities, which are only a few kilometres from the former Geox headquarters at Biadene di Montebelluna, cover a total area of 25 hectares.

The footwear company has said that it has completed the construction of the new site in record time and that its new logistics hub is one of the most modern in Europe, equipped with state-of-the-art technology and in an ideal location to link to ground and air transportation networks. A railway line borders the complex to the east, while a new road, regional highway 348—which links Belluno to the provincial capital, Treviso—runs beside the building on the west side.

At the opening, Mr Scajola commented: "The extensive expansion of Geox, and now the completion of this new plant and of this new logistics hub for storage and distribution, together indicate that a strategy of bringing out innovative products and diversifying the target markets for them is a fundamental lever for increasing competitiveness and for rejuvenating the Italian economy."

He went on to call the new facilities a rich mix of up-

The new site covers 25 hectares and offers good links to road, railway and airfreight distribution networks

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to-date technology and model efficiency. "This will help Geox win higher market share and increase its revenues," he said.

The minister went on to commend Geox's position in its chosen market segment, saying it was the second-most popular footwear brand, globally, in the sports-casual market. He added that Geox had shown in the past that it had the ability to face up to and overcome difficulties, such as the recent global economic downturn, which certainly affected demand for its breathable footwear models. The company achieved sales of €865 million in 2009, which represented a fall of 4% on the figure for the year before. Profit was €171.7 million, compared to €200.4 million in 2008.

Mr Scajola said the company had chosen a path of innovation, technological research, specialisation, establishing patents and building an international sales network. "These are the ingredients that have allowed the group to achieve a quick but solid success," the minister added.

For his part, the founder and chief executive of Geox, Mario Moretti Polegato, said at the event: "With the current situation in the world economy, in which the

Italy's minister for economic development, Claudio Scajola (centre), presides over the formal opening of Geox's new logistics and production hub in Trevignano, assisted by the company's chief executive, Mario Moretti Polegato (right).

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crisis and the recession have pushed companies to cut back on any type of investment, our group has faced up to the challenge by completing, in a little over a year, a plant and a logistics hub that have no equal anywhere in Europe. As an entrepreneur, and even more as the chief executive of the company, I'm proud of this project. I think it's a sign of loyalty and encouragement that we are giving the markets we operate in, confirming our unceasing desire to grow, and that innovation is part of our DNA."

Having the new logistics facility in Signoressa will be an important step in making sure the business stays efficient. It uses automation and will have the capacity to handle 30 million pairs of shoes every year, as well as 10 million garments from the apparel collections the brand has begun to make and sell to complement its shoes. It covers an area of 100 square-metres.

The warehouse area has the capacity to hold up to 23,000 cases (for pallets) in stock at any one time, and for an inbound flow of 4,000 cases an hour, with 2,400 cases an hour, or 36,000 cases across all shifts on any working day. This corresponds to 45 container loads.

Cross-docking (moving inbound goods into outbound flows—unloading, sorting, reloading—as seamlessly as possible) can take place in around 90 minutes. Geox intends to carry out cross-docking on at least some of the shipments from the new logistics hub.

Around 2,000 metres of automated conveyor and transportation technology are in place, connecting the warehousing and pick-and-pack areas—equipped with 2,000 photocells and sensors, and 51 automatic barcode readers—to 59 loading bays. Geox is convinced that the level of automation on the site will save hours on the shipment of each load of its footwear.

Mr Polegato said on announcing the company's results for 2009 that Geox's efforts to "rationalise and make more efficient our own production and distribution set-up" was possibly the main reason why he was satisfied with the company's performance last year. He said the results the company had achieved had only been possible in the current climate thanks to the strength of the brand, the "uniqueness of our [breathability] technology", and its flexible business model. All of this takes investment. 🌐



Geox's breathable sports shoe range works by allowing sweat on the bottom of the foot to evaporate through the sole of the shoe.

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