Four leading international fashion federations discuss Covid-19 emergency

By Dominique Muret - 30 March 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the whole textile and apparel industry hard, pushing the sector’s main representative bodies to convene in order to assess the situation. A few days ago, the heads of the US, British, French and Italian fashion industry federations held a video conference to evaluate events and discuss the strategies that could be deployed to safeguard the industry.

The presidents, executive presidents and CEOs of France’s Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode (FHCM), Italy's Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana (CNMI), the USA’s Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) and of the British Fashion Council took part in this virtual meeting.

“We got together to exchange opinions and discuss the catastrophic situation we are living through, especially in Italy, a nerve centre for world luxury goods production. We talked about the industry’s problems and thought about the initiatives we could introduce to help the sector,” CNMI’s President Carlo Capasa told FashionNetwork.com.

“The [Italian] government and the EU authorities need to have a far-reaching plan to make sure our industry is protected,” he added. Italy in particular is threatened by the emergency, its supply chain consisting of a large number of factories and a plethora of small workshops and independent artisans.

“None of these must be allowed to disappear. Losing even the smallest links in the chain means disrupting the entire industry severely,” said Capasa. Last week, the main representative bodies of Italian fashion - CNMI, Altagamma and Confindustria Moda, the association of fashion industry companies - launched an appeal to the Italian government, submitting a list of interventions for a sort of Marshall Plan in aid of the sector.

The meeting also focused on the forthcoming fashion deadlines, notably the June fashion week marathon featuring the next menswear collections and womenswear pre-collections. According to the existing calendar, London is set to kick it all off on June 13, followed on June 16-19 by Pitti Uomo, which has already confirmed it will go ahead, then by Milan and Paris, the latter fashion week scheduled to end on June 28.

“It’s clear that the next fashion weeks will not be taking place in normal circumstances. We must understand how the situation is evolving, perhaps think about different formats. We are assessing this. For the time being, it’s too early to make a decision,” said Capasa. Amidst this uncertainty, another meeting between the four federations has been scheduled on April 7, to decide about the June calendar.

The current manufacturing and delivery problems will surely not make it possible for all labels to complete their collections by June. Not to mention the fact that, after a near-total halt to commercial activity, retail buyers risk not having the budget to buy from the new collections.

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