

Swiss Textile- and Clothing Industry with Positive Mood also in 2008

More decisive than the economic development is for the Swiss Textile- and Clothing Industry mostly how it will stand up to the global competition. However, the enormous pressure of costs and margin will continue unabated, as Max R. Hungerbühler, president of the TVS Textilverband Schweiz (www.swisstextiles.ch), CEO Bischoff Textil AG, St. Gallen, stated on 29 April at the yearly media conference in Zurich. The magic word for his industrial branch is strategy: always being a step ahead means the systematic orientation on complex and innovative products on one hand and orientation on luxury textiles as well as the outplacement of work-intense production processes on the other hand. The positive business result of the last two years shows, according to the TVS-president, that this strategy is paying off. For 2008 a positive result is expected again. Hungerbühler demanded at the press conference care and consequent extension of the foreign trade net of the most important economic partners of Switzerland. He welcomed the proposition of the Federal Assembly to better protect the indication of source "Schweiz" resp. "Swiss made" and to better regulate their use with clearly defined criteria. The TVS supports a future-oriented energy policy and demands for this reason climate-saving technologies and the replacement of nuclear power plants. The TVS deems the adoption of the new EU-chemicals regulation REACH for Switzerland not necessary at this moment. The Swiss legislation is according to Hungerbühler organized in a way that stringent adaptations are possible at any time. For that reason they advocate an EU-law-harmonisation only where it is necessary. The new contact office in Moscow, starting 1st of May, 2008, was welcomed. It has opened to work the booming Russian market. It was founded by the Swiss textile association together with the German federation textile+-fashion, Eschborn, the trade association

of the textile industry Austria, Vienna, and the Union des Industries Textiles, Paris.

On success course is the innovation network "Swiss Texnet" (www.swisstexnet.ch), founded two years ago by the TVS and several colleges, as was stated.

Philippe Baumann of Creation Baumann (www.creationbaumann.com) presented at the press conference the developmental story of his award-winning product, the world novelty "Gecko". The innovative textile adheres to all structure- and pore-lacking surfaces like glass, metall, varnish or plastics by means of an adhesive coating on the back. Marcel Halbeisen, project manager at the research institute Empa (www.empa.ch), St. Gallen, demonstrated the functionality of intelligent textiles. The image of the branch has much improved as is shown with rising numbers of prentices. The number of trainees, which started in summer 2007 their training as textile technologist EFZ for the first time, has grown by 10%. Also the technician- and master level has increased in class size. Due to the good economic situation the number of domestic employed increased in 2007 to the year before slightly by 3.8% to 16,400. For foreign branches they counted worldwide around 93,000 employees. In 2007 the sales of the total branch rose compared to last year clearly by 5.1% to 4.340 (4.131) Bill CHF. Textiles were reflected in the budget with 2.280 (2.150) Bill CHF – plus 6.1%, while clothing increased by 4% to 2.060 (1.981) Bill CHF. Furthermore rose the global export by 5.1% to 4.410 (4.195) Bill CHF. Around 75% of the Swiss Textiles went to the EU. With clothing the demand from the United States increased further. Germany, main buyer in 2006, followed narrowly in second place. Urs Rickenbacher, CEO Lantal Textiles Transportation Fashion (www.lantal.com), lectured at the yearly media conference about "The textile interior decoration of new plane types like Airbus A380 and Boeing B787 Dreamliner" and showed on April 30th the me-

dia representatives detailed their enterprise on location. The company, founded 1886, is a Swiss enterprise with home office in Langenthal and operates three plants in Switzerland and one in the USA. They rate themselves as the leading company for Interieurs in planes, passenger trains, travel- and city-busses, tramways and cruise ships with worldwide accepted design competency. 75% of all A380 are totally or partially fitted with textiles from Lantal. The consolidated sales was in 2007 with a capital stock of 1.250 Mill CHF at 115.5 Mill CHF, with an export share of 95%. The company owns more than 131 most modern weaving machines for flat woven fabrics, velours and carpets as well as own yarn dyeworks and finishing works in Switzerland and in the USA. There are 396 workers employed in Switzerland and 86 in the US. Sub-companies in Switzerland are Rohner Textil AG (www.climatex.com), Wollspinnerei Huttwil AG and in the USA Lantal Textiles, Inc., Rural Hall, North Carolina.

The oldest linen weaving plant still preserved is in Switzerland in Burgdorf, the gate to Emmental. Here the Schwob AG (www.schwob.ch) has their place of residence, founded in 1872 under the name Schwob & Frères. The enterprise is counted today among the internationally leading offerers of high-quality linen for table, bed and bathroom for cultured houses of gastronomy and the hotel business. Peter Hilpert, chairman of the company management, told the journalists on 30 April on a guided tour of their plant that the producing 11 Jacquard-weaving machines belong to the most efficient in Europe. In a 2-shift-operation there are up to 500,000 sqm fabrics being manufactured per year. The Jacquard weaving also integrates a design section and a heck box, making of own warp beams. The company is also active in the linen rental full service. Besides three own laundries Schwob works together with more than 20 partner laundries which have their shops in the region. The sales budget 2008 is composed of the segments textile production with 13.796 Mill CHF, textile care with 10.077 Mill CHF and service with 9.852 Mill CHF.

After the yearly media conference of the TVS on 29 April in the afternoon a visit of the com-

pany Jakob Schlaepfer (www.jakob-schlaepfer.ch), St.Gallen, was on the program. The enterprise, more than 100 years old, has around 80 employees and runs an "industrial hand-manufacture", which combines traditional embroidery techniques with constantly newly developed know-how. The company has accomplished a worldwide reputation as producer of innovative creations for Prêt-à-porter and Haute Couture no-one else in the world can make this way. Buyers of the extraordinary fabrics collections are a great number of renowned fashion creators and Haute Couture-places like Karl Lagerfeld, Dior, Gaultier, Valentino, Sirop, Abi Nader, Ashley Isham, Chakra, Dolce & Gabbana, Anna Valentine, Blanc de Chine, Westwood, Marc Jakobs etc.. The design team of Jakob Schlaepfer with 12 to 15 members is led by Martin Leuthold since more than 30 years. Michelle Rondelli (m.rondelli@jakob-schlaepfer.ch) explained to Textination that there are around 2,500 patterns created per year, where each collection has a subject and is designed differently each time. The firm is satisfied with the current business outcome. „The Haute Couture and generally the luxury business have produced very lucrative numbers. The fashion enterprises have grown hugely, especially so because of the new evolving markets like Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Middle East and so on". For the first time Jakob Schlaepfer has presented a decor-collection for home-textiles under his own label – more than two dozen trend-setting fabric creations. The designteam has also started into the subject Wall and created an own version of wallpaper. "Glinka" is a bonded holographic foil which can be used for the direct application on the wall as well as for covered panels. Parallel to the introduction of the collection they launched a Custom Tailored Service – individual fabrics concepts and –manufacturings for architects as well as private customers for unique interieurs.

Gert Krockert, Translation Dr. Heidi Arndt