

I was 27 or so when I was hired as Secretary General of COTANCE. Now I'm 54 and I do not regret my career choice. Europe's leather industry needed someone in Brussels to coordinate its public advocacy and I was ready to take on the world. Europe's Tanners gave me the opportunity of a lifetime: help them to build the leather industry that their children and grandchildren would be proud to run. That was an offer I could not refuse. Tanning is a tiny economic activity compared to others, but one that spreads wealth and employment. It does so with one of mankind's oldest and humblest arts; transforming the hides or skins of animals into the most beautiful and useful material. What I found and still find most seducing in this sector are its people, dignified by their art of giving new life to an unavoidable waste, always searching how to do it better, and how best to reveal its beauty. It is culture in action!

Gustavo Gonzalez-Quijano
Secretary General
COTANCE - European Leather Industry



David Hinds, Scottish Leather Group



Lee Oddy, Charles F. Stead & Co Ltd



I discovered the leather industry as an adult, when I was mandated by my Trade Union to look after its social credentials at European level. In industriAll-European Trade Union we believe in industry and the jobs it provides. What can I say to a youngster contemplating their future about working in a tannery?

It's a real job! You have to be smart, careful, accurate, inventive and considerate of your fellow workers with whom you will be producing leather, something real that you will find in everyday items.

It's a good job! You will be able to stand on your own feet financially. And, as in any other industry, your income will rise with the level of responsibilities.

It's a beautiful job! You will be welcomed by the other workers in the trade and join a big international family, all striving to make the most beautiful leather in the world.

Be wise, choose leather!

Luc Triangle, Deputy General Secretary
industriAll-European Trade Union

Project partners & supporters:

COTANCE; industriAll-European Trade Union; UK Leather Federation; ACEXPIEL; Fédération Française de la Tannerie-Mégisserie; Verband der Deutschen Lederindustrie; Associacao Portuguesa dos Industriais de Curtumes; Asociatia Producatorilor de Piele si Blana din Romania; Bulgarian Branch Union of Leather, Furriers, Footwear and Haberdashery Industries; Textile, Habillement, Cuir, Blanchisserie-CGT; FITAQ-UGT; Confpeltex; Trade Union of Mine-, Energy- and Industry Workers (BDSZ).

Participating tanneries:

Bader GmbH, Charles F Stead & Co Ltd, Curtidos Badia, Curtidos Riba Guixá, Curtumes Boaventura Lda, Curtumes Iberia SA, Dermys Louro SA, Eagle Ottawa, Gmelich + Söhne GmbH, Institute of Creative Leather Technology, HCP-Gordon Choisy, Heller-Leder GmbH, Hutchings and Harding, Jacob Prod Com SRL, INDUCOL SA, Miret y Cia, Pielorex SA, Pittards Leather, Scottish Leather Group, Sudleder GmbH, Tanneries Bodin-Joyeux, Tanneries Carriat, Tanneries Dupire, Tanneries Roux, Taro Industry SA, Tehnomat Merkuriy, A&A Vesa SRL.

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For further information:
COTANCE, 40 rue Washington,
B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgium
cotance@euroleather.com
<http://www.euroleather.com>

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Leather is my Job!

Through the EU-sponsored project, 'Leather is my Job!', COTANCE and industriAll-European Trade Union are proud to present the faces and stories of the men and women who have devoted their careers to making leather. Their testimonies should serve to break down the preconceptions and prejudices that affect the leather industry and inspire a new generation of leather workers.

This leaflet presents a snapshot of their experience. To discover more, please go to <http://www.euroleather.com/leather-is-my-job>.

Europe's tanneries offer excellent opportunities, where young people can realise their potential in an industry that knows no borders and that is as necessary as it has always been.

Join the leather industry, bring your talent and achieve your ambitions. This is a challenging career but, as these testimonies attest, a worthy and rewarding one.

"Not a job you learn in books"
Stéphane Mariet
finishing supervisor, Tannerie Bodin-Joyeux

"Tanning is kind of an art"
Leticia Melo dos Santos
Institute for Creative Leather Technology



www.euroleather.com/leather-is-my-job



/leather.is.my.job

Cover picture: Laurent Muzica, Tannerie Carriat



«I like the great **diversity** of issues to be solved; the fact that it involves both desk work and field work, while constantly improving the process in response to changes in legislation»

Gabriel Popescu,
Environmental Officer, Pielorex SA, Romania



«Have an **open mind** and give it a go!»

Michelle Oglesby,
Dispatch manager,
Hutchings and Harding Ltd, UK



«The outcome of finishing gives me great satisfaction. The leather is refined; it has a uniform colour, a certain gloss or touch as appropriate, a uniformity of the surface, which are **part of your soul** and effort put in during work»

Maria Dulceata, Finishing operator,
Taro Industry SA, Romania

«It's a fascinating job and we are relatively few doing it. We feel like **a big family**»

René Geupel,
Operation supervisor, Sudleder GmbH, Germany



«Women have a certain **sensibility** for aesthetics, for the finishings, the colours, the quality... we feel it, we live it... it is at the tips of our fingers»

Mari Rodriguez,
Machine operator,
Curtidos Badia SA, Spain



«If you are patient, responsible, have interpersonal skills, willingness and capacity **to learn every day**, the tanning industry is the place to be»

Marc Rovira, Quality control and floor manager,
Curtidos Riba Guixa



«I like the result of work, namely the transformation of the raw material, from a less agreeable product to the **spectacular**, pleasant and very useful finished product»

Adorian-Ovidiu Inasel,
Trainee, A&A Vesa SRL, Romania



«**Quality** is my passion»

Mirella Molnár,
Production operator,
Eagle Ottawa



«**Curiosity**, perseverance, a sense of relation-building, the investment and the **passion** for the material are indispensable assets to succeed in the fascinating world of leather»

Charly Louvel,
Operation supervisor,
HCP-Gordon Choisy, France



«There's a lot of **science** that goes into leather»

Brian Duncan
Pre-finish supervisor,
Scottish Leather Group, UK

«It's very fulfilling to think that the leather I produce might fit an Airbus or a **luxury** hotel in Dubai»

Kai Frädrich, Lab technician,
Gmelich & Sohne GmbH, Germany



«**Respect of the material** is at the heart of tanning»

Roxane Cannamela,
Quality supervisor,
Tanneries Dupire, France



«I didn't understand the **complexity** of being a tanner until I got my degree as leather technician. Now, with practical experience, I enjoy the variety of my job»

Osman Yildirim,
Production supervisor,
Bader GmbH, Germany



«People would be **impressed** with what is done in a tannery»

Matthew French,
Leather operative,
Pittards Leather, UK



«An industry which brings **quality, craftsmanship and technology** together in a product – leather»

Panaiot Panaiotov,
Manager, Tehnomat Merkuriy,
Bulgaria