



Press Release

## **playtime BERLIN 2018: Impressions from POLOLO's season-opening breakfast Keynote speeches on natural leather and sustainable children's clothing addressing media representatives, cooperation partners and customers**

Tags: Berlin, breakfast, media, Playtime, Pololo, trade fair

Teaser: *POLOLO's Executive Director Franziska Kuntze and Heike Hess of the International Association for Natural Textiles (IVN) contributed their keynotes and were available for discussion to the distinguished guests.*

**[Berlin, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018]** POLOLO, the Berlin based children's shoe manufacturer, was once again present with an own stand at the "play-time BERLIN", which took place for the second time from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> at the Palazzo Italia in Berlin's famous "Unter den Linden" boulevard. On the trade fair's second day, representatives of the media, cooperation partners and customers were invited to a season-opening breakfast in the "LebenArt" café near the Brandenburg Gate: POLOLO's Executive Director Franziska Kuntze gave a keynote speech on natural leather and children's shoes, Heike Hess of the International Association for Natural Textiles (IVN) commented on aspects of sustainable children's clothing and cooperation partner disana reported on her company.

### ***Leather – skin-friendly natural material proven for millennia***

Franziska Kuntze reminded that leather, as one of the oldest clothing materials in its original form, had the qualities that are still highly valued today – breathability, water vapor permeability and skin compatibility. Added to this is its **protective function**, which was already appreciated millennia ago. POLOLO considers it an essential concern to avoid long transport routes and to abstain from chrome tanning – exclusively vegetable tanned leather is suitable for the own production of children's shoes. The colouring of the leather could actually be dispensed with, says Kuntze. But since children – and probably also parents – tend to prefer color varieties, it should be noted that while the so-called chrome leathers are always grey and therefore have to be dyed later, the leathers used by POLOLO get their colours directly from the vegetable tanning process, e.g. with Valonea oak or Tara fruit. Furthermore, POLOLO refuses to add an extra coating to the leather in order to **preserve the natural character** of this special material. Shoes made of natural leather are the best alternative to healthy barefoot walking – the material nestles like a **second skin** around the soft children's feet.

### ***Sustainability requires environmental and social responsibility***

POLOLO also stands for the claim of satisfying high social criteria, creating jobs in its own manufactory in Germany as well as maintaining and cultivating the **know-how** for handmade slippers. *"To make all this transparent, we decided to get certified according to the strict IVN standard for natural leather!"* Kuntze then briefly explained the **transparent supply chain** and underlined that POLOLO was also certified by "BioKreis". In addition, all POLOLO leather shoes are also very well suitable for allergic persons due to the lack of pollutants – therefore provided with the "ECARF" seal dedicated to **allergy-friendly products**.

### ***Children's shoes: investments in the feet's health pay off!***

It is recommended that the first-walkers go barefoot as often as possible or are protected by ecologically produced leather slippers to **train their foot muscles properly**. The purchase of health-promoting shoes pays off then, if the possible consequential damages by inappropriate cheap offers with chemicals treats are calculated, too.



Kuntze explained that children's feet could have a **very rapid growth** in the beginning: an average of one millimeter per month: *“Therefore, parents should regularly check whether the shoes fit at all, because too small shoes can cause damage!”* With POLOLOs this is very easy to do so: the sole could be removed or the leather covers could be turned over.

She reported on the history of the company and the gratifying experience that **interest in low-emission manufacturing of footwear is growing worldwide.**



Photo: POLOLO OHG  
f.l.t.r.: Franziska Kuntze (POLOLO) and Heike Hess (IVN)

### ***IVN quality seal as a decision support for manufacturers, dealers and end customers***

Heike Hess was delighted to address so many participants of the meeting with their **great interest**: *“This shows that the topic of sustainability of leather and textile products has a high significance, how exciting and important such a thematic exchange is for all parties.”*

The **very demanding, credible IVN quality seals** such as “NATURLEDER” or “BEST” indicate at a glance which particular product a consumer holds in the hand: *“Clothing that was made without polluting the environment and without the exploitation of workers!”* Consumers then could rely on buying a healthy product, and distributors and producers could be sure that their certified suppliers **meet high environmental and social standards.**

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**POLOLO** was founded in 2003 by Verena Carney (shoe designer) & Franziska Kuntze (business economist) in Berlin. The idea to establish their own shoe company came to the two mothers as a result of their unsuccessful search for pretty as well as sustainably produced first-walker shoes for their own children then. They started to design shoes themselves. Since the successful start – Initially at a Christmas market in Berlin-Zehlendorf – POLOLO is growing continuously and successfully. Today, more than 800 retailers, catalogues and consignments in Europe, Asia and America are among its customers. The company employs 23 people and offers over 100 children's shoe models.