



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **BALENCIAGA SIGNS EYEWEAR LICENCE PARTNERSHIP WITH SAFILO**

**Padua, 14 May 2007:** Balenciaga and Safilo Group announce today that they have entered into a worldwide licensing partnership for Balenciaga eyewear.

Balenciaga and Safilo have already collaborated on the development of the eyewear styles that featured prominently in Balenciaga's Spring-Summer 2007 fashion show in Paris. The initial collection featured women's sunglasses, two of which were developed specifically for the fashion show while the third is a re-edition of a vintage pair of Balenciaga eyewear from the 1970's. This eyewear, positioned at the top end of the luxury scale, is available in Balenciaga's directly-operated and franchised stores in Paris, New York, Hong Kong, Taipei, Seoul, Singapore and Dubai, as well as in Balenciaga's specialty retail and department store points of sale worldwide.

Vittorio Tabacchi, Chairman of Safilo Group, commented *"We are particularly pleased about the opportunity to work with such a distinguished and influential name in fashion. This agreement further consolidates the longstanding relationship with Gucci Group, which began in 1990. Balenciaga will allow us to reach a specific and refined customer who values quality particularly highly and, for this reason, is selective"*.

The licence announced today formalizes this partnership with a view to the launch of a full sunglasses range, starting in Autumn 2007, with optical frames to follow. These collections will be distributed through Safilo's network that reaches into the most prestigious optical stores and specialty retailers worldwide, as well as through Balenciaga's own points of sale. The licence agreement runs until the end of 2012.

Isabelle Guichot, President and CEO of Balenciaga, noted: *"We have been delighted by the quality and constructiveness of our collaboration with Safilo for SS07. This is a wonderful base from which we look forward to consolidate the partnership between our creativity, the very high quality of Safilo's products, and the clear selectivity of their distribution."*

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The Safilo Group is worldwide leader in the premium eyewear sector and maintains a leadership position in the prescription, sunglasses, fashion and sports eyewear sectors. Present on the international market through exclusive distributors and 30 subsidiaries in primary markets (U.S.A., Europe and Far East), Safilo distributes proprietary branded collections Safilo, Carrera, Smith, Oxydo, Blue Bay, as well as licensed branded collections, including Alexander

McQueen, Balenciaga, Bottega Veneta, Boss by Hugo Boss, Boucheron, Diesel, 55DSL, Dior, Emporio Armani, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Hugo by Hugo Boss, Imatra, Marc Jacobs, Marc by Marc Jacobs, Max Mara, Max&Co., Oliver, Pierre Cardin, Stella McCartney, Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent. In addition, the following collections are exclusively for the American market: Fossil, Juicy Couture, Nine West, Kate Spade, Saks Fifth Avenue, Liz Claiborne, J.Lo by Jennifer Lopez, A/X Armani Exchange and Banana Republic.

Balenciaga was founded in Paris in 1937 by Cristobal Balenciaga, widely regarded as one of the most influential couturiers of all time.

In 2001, Gucci Group acquired the House, in partnership with Nicolas Ghesquière, who is also Artistic Director.

Balenciaga has now regained its prominence and is considered as one of the most influential forces in the luxury fashion field. The House of Balenciaga creates women's and men's Ready-to-Wear, bags, shoes and other accessories sold worldwide through its highly selective network of directly-operated stores and department and specialty store partners.

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This press release is also available on the web site [www.safilo.com](http://www.safilo.com).