

PRESS RELEASE

INVESTING IN LATIN AMERICA'S BOOM
CAN ITS 'JAGUARS' CATCH UP WITH ASIA'S 'TIGERS'?**A one day Policy Summit on EU-Latin America Relations**
Organised within the AL-INVEST IV Programme^[1]**Co-organised by Friends of Europe and EUROCHAMBRES**
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Rich economic rewards and alternative businesses opportunities await European businesses that engage in the fast growing Latin American marketplace. Similar opportunities exist for Latin American business in Europe. This was the message that came out loud and clear at the international conference "Investing in Latin America's Boom" held in Brussels on March 15th.

With a rise in green technology on the continent, **Patricia Espinosa Castellano**, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Mexico, stated the benefits of the industry, "The time of economic growth that fails to take care of the environment has ended. Green growth not only enhances health and quality of life, it also strengthens our economies. **Anabel González**, the Minister of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica, agreed and advocated to improve industries and production, "Overcoming the middle-income trap is a key issue. We have to overcome poverty and inequality by improving productivity and competitiveness through innovation."

Participants at the event were also warned that European companies can expect swift competition from China. The US' share of exports to Latin America from around the world has fallen, from almost 50% a decade ago to approaching a third today (35%), but it is China not Europe that has displaced American businesses. With 10% of all Latin American trade, China is rapidly increasing its share and is now the largest trade partner of Brazil, Chile, and Costa Rica. The EU 27 is only slightly ahead of China and is, with roughly 14%, Latin America's second biggest trading partner.

A major element in Europe's trade and investment strategy in Latin America is to stimulate smaller companies – SMEs – to target opportunities there. Latin America's economic performance has by and large been in marked contrast to many other parts of the World, and has also seen significant improvements on that of years past. Despite the global economic slowdown, average GDP growth in Latin America was 6% last year, and this year will slow significantly to 4.5%. Yet in the 1980s and 1990s the region suffered from stagnant growth of about 1% a year.

Speakers included, amongst others:

Patricia Espinosa Castellano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mexico

- "The time of economic growth that fails to take care of the environment has ended. Green growth not only enhances health and quality of life, it also strengthens our economies."

Anabel González, Minister of Foreign Trade, Costa Rica

- "Overcoming the middle-income trap is a key issue. We have to overcome poverty and inequality by improving productivity and competitiveness through innovation."

João Aguiar Machado, Chief Negotiator for EU-Mercosur trade negotiations and Deputy Director General for Trade

- "When we are faced with the challenge that China poses, there is no other region in the world with such a close affinity to the EU as Latin America in of history, language and culture. We need to work together".

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra MEP, Co-President of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, European Parliament Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Rapporteur for the EU strategy for relations with Latin America

- "Concluding an EU-Mercosur trade deal is about political will and where there is a will, there is a way"

Carlos Eduardo Abijaodi Director of Operations of the Brazilian National Confederation of Industry (CNI)

- "Our infrastructure is not good and needs to be enlarged. We have opportunities in many sectors"

For the Policy Summit's programme and further information please [click here](#)

Photos: Please feel free to download pictures online: www.flickr.com/friendsofeurope

Partners: A one day Policy Summit on EU-Latin America relations, organised within the European Commission's AL-INVEST IV Programme and co-organised by *Friends of Europe* and EUROCHAMBRES

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*¹ The **AL-Invest IV Programme**, financed by the EU, is a European Commission initiative which aims to support the internationalisation of Latin American SMEs, in collaboration with European business organisations, in order to reinforce social cohesion in the region. The AL-Invest IV Coordination and Services Consortium led by EUROCHAMBRES provides the Latin American partners with technical and horizontal services.*