

PRESS RELEASE

EU and SAARC Chambers tighten links **EUROCHAMBRES launches SAARC Chamber Academy**

Chambers of Commerce from the EU and from the SAARC region are set to strengthen their cooperation links thanks to EUROCHAMBRES' first SAARC Chamber Academy, from 21-26 May in Kandy (Sri Lanka).

The SAARC Academy is an intensive development programme for Chamber executives of the SAARC region (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and soon Afghanistan), aiming at reinforcing their management skills as to improve intra-regional integration. The long term goal is to boost economic cooperation between South-Asian enterprises and their European counterparts.

Christoph Leidl, Chairman of the Global Chamber Platform – which links Chambers of Commerce and Industry around the world, and counts the SAARC Chamber among its members – said: *“Strengthening links with South Asia is in the interest of all: the region has an enormous growth potential which needs to be enhanced by creating a stable, business-friendly environment. The SAARC Chamber Academy will give its contribution in this respect by helping business organisations in that area to improve the services they provide to local and European enterprises. We hope this pilot project will be the forerunner for many others to come.”*

This Academy is a concrete contribution to the EU's strategy to promote the integration process among the 7 SAARC countries, representing over 20% of the world's population but only 2% of global GDP.

The SAARC Chamber Academy is co-organised by EUROCHAMBRES and the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representing 670 Chambers and over 5 million enterprises in the region. The programme is implemented with the financial support of the Commission's Asia-Invest II programme.

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