

I Press Release

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New AL-INVEST programme presented during EUROCHAMBRES' Latin America Day

On the occasion of a "Latin America Day" co-organised today in Brussels by EUROCHAMBRES and the Inter-American Development Bank, the fourth edition of AL-INVEST, the largest EU economic cooperation programme aimed at supporting the internationalisation of small and medium enterprises in Latin America, was presented.

AL-INVEST IV aims at enhancing social cohesion in Latin America through services such as technical assistance to SMEs, participation of Latin American and European enterprises in trade fairs and meetings with businesses and technical management in Europe and Latin America, market prospection studies, a contact network with European organisations and exchanges of experience, knowledge and technology.

The five clear priorities of the programme are harmony between internationalisation and local development, regional integration, European focus, representation of sectors and territories and synergy with other cooperation programmes.

"By boosting SMEs development, AL-INVEST plays an important role in enhancing EU-Latin America business relations, and strengthens the ties between EUROCHAMBRES and its Latin American counterparts. In times of turmoil, bridging the economies with similar programmes is one of the most interesting and valuable things to do," said EUROCHAMBRES' Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini.

In this respect, EUROCHAMBRES also welcomes the recently-announced intention by the European Commission to put economic development and regional integration at the heart of its forthcoming strategy towards Latin America.

AL-INVEST IV in practice

The Programme is implemented by three sub-regional consortia of business organisations who are held specifically responsible for three distinct areas of Latin-America: the first covers Central America/Cuba/Mexico and is led by NAFIN (Mexican governmental development bank); the second covers the Andean region, led by CAINCO (Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Tourism of Bolivia); and finally the third consortium covers the MERCOSUR countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay), Chile and Venezuela, and is led by the CNI (National Confederation of Industry). The three consortia rely on the support of horizontal services provided by a European Consortium led by EUROCHAMBRES.

This fourth AL-INVEST "venture" will run from 2009 to 2012 and the identified action plans will be carried out in the 18 Latin-American countries as well as in the 27 EU member countries. The European Commission's financial contribution to this programme amounts to 50 million Euros.

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All our press releases can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=153
More information on AL Invest IV on www.al-invest4.eu

Connecting **business to Europe**

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.