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A business organization at the service of Venezuelan executives

The Venezuelan Confederation of Businesses (CONINDUSTRIA) is the largest organization in the industrial sector in Venezuela. It represents 90% of manufacturers: Big, medium and small enterprises throughout the country. In addition, it provides business services and technical assistance to Venezuelan businesses, backs its development, modernization, growth, competitiveness and expansion abroad.

The organization seeks solutions to promote and enable the insertion of the production sector in national and international arenas; it is the perfect link and intermediary for domestic development, international trade and regional integration. Besides, it has broad experience in promoting exports, SMEs, regional integration, quality, competitiveness and strategic planning in the sector.

CONINDUSTRIA represents over 500,000 people, workers, technicians, professionals, researchers and executives in the production sector.

To date, we have gained vast, current knowledge of the industrial sector in general and its different sectors in particular. We have also become a modern services organization, creating and developing successful programs and establishing relations and alliances with institutions and businesses in Venezuela and abroad.

In short, we have developed an institution based on the following pillars: Service culture, professional support to businesses, openness to dialogue, acknowledgement of market and domestic needs.



Photo: MCV Consortium

Venezuela, as part of the MCV Consortium (Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela), seeks to achieve the international expansion and competitiveness of SMEs in Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela and ultimately, sustainable development. The National Business Confederation (CNI, by its Spanish acronym) of Brazil leads the Consortium and Venezuela's participation is coordinated by CONINDUSTRIA as main partner.

The second most relevant ally is the National Council for Trade and Services, (CONSECOMERCIO).

Through our work to date, we have improved SMEs' management, negotiation and innovation skills, providing them with training, technical assistance and walk-through processes.

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The European Union is composed of 27 Member States that have decided to share their knowledge, resources and destiny. Together, during an enlargement period of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development maintaining, at the same time, the cultural diversity, the tolerance and individual liberties.



Editorial...

This has strengthened and promoted the expansion abroad of roughly 700 businesses. These businesses had access to the AL-INVEST IV Program.

This project has led us to develop relations with local governments, universities and business chambers among others, thereby promoting local development.

Workshops and technical assistance activities have been organized to refresh the knowledge of executives on technical rules, quality, business and expansion plans, innovation, technology and diagnosis programs.

We should also highlight the Academy event for chairs and directors of chambers of commerce and industry last March. Thanks to it, executives improved their knowledge on how to enhance productivity in their chambers.

In short, we have empowered quite a few businesses and we hope to keep up the good work within the Program in the future.

In the following months we are aiming at increasing the number of companies benefiting from this Program and expanding it through the nation's territory.

In order to do so, we want to develop several projects, workshops, expositions, meetings and technical assistance events to strengthen and bring SMEs up to speed in very relevant subjects, such as improving quality, business plans, innovation and technology, best management practices, competitiveness and expansion abroad.

In the short term, we are going to undertake the following activities: The SME quality program, business plans, incubators, clusters, regional meetings, a franchi-



se management training program, a franchise exposition, an equiphotel CANADIFA exposition, the international book fair in Guadalajara and different technical assistance events for companies throughout the year, among others. With all this, we are pursuing to improve SMEs' productivity and reach the necessary standards to expand abroad and fulfill the goal of the Program.

Ismael Pérez Vigil
Executive President of
CONINDUSTRIA

Activities...

EuroChile boosts the economy after the debacle



The business foundation EuroChile promotes economic, trade and technology cooperation between Chilean businesses and institutions and the EU. This past month of April it has promoted a "Reactivation Plan for SMEs" (PRP by its Spanish acronym) supported by AL-INVEST IV Program to help businesses in the regions of O'Higgins and El Maule (Chile), deeply affected by an earthquake.

Among the first activities, there was a workshop to raise awareness targeting the association of berry producers of the municipality of Romeral, VII Region of El Maule. It took place on April 13

We also held a self-diagnosis workshop on April 27, with the participation of 35 raspberry and blackberry producers.

The Reactivation Plan for SMEs seeks to promote the local development of the production sector with economic potential in the area in the short and medium term. The ultimate goal is to increase regional progress, foreign investment of European Union businesses and promote sales.

Mission on Tourism

In addition, the foundation organized a workshop in its headquarters on April 15 to present new trends and past experiences from those attending the Technological Mission "Sustainability through the use of Renewable Energies in Tourism", which took place last March in Germany and Portugal.

The mission, organized in cooperation with AL-INVEST IV Program, was oriented towards sharing knowledge on sustainability, renewable energies and best environmental practices in tourism. Some participating businesses were Haftur S.A, Fantástico Sur Ltda., Hotel Hanga Roa Ltda., Producciones Danubio Ltda. and Turismo Valle Mar. Turismo Valle Mar.

Paolo Baldan, new AI-INVEST IV leader in Brussels



The Coordination and Services Consortium has presented the new director ad interim to lead the AI-INVEST IV team in Brussels.

Since last April 19, Paolo Baldan holds the position previously held by Jesús Corral. Baldan has extensive experience in international cooperation projects with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and with sponsoring institutions in the private sector.

He has carved his career in the field of institutions and programs financed by the United Nations and the European Commission.

Peruvian fashion in the first row

Peru Fashion 2010, the greatest event for Peruvian fashion—and one you cannot miss in the Latin American textile industry—brought many companies to Lima from April 28 to 30. The production of the event and the corporate training was sponsored by AL-INVEST IV Program.

The Bolivian Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism (CAINCO by its Spanish acronym), leader of the AL-INVEST IV Consortium in the Andean Region has participated in the project with PERUCÁMARAS, the Program's most relevant partner in Peru.

The association, along with national Chambers of Commerce, was in charge of providing technical assistance to the design of jewelry and craftwork to participating companies, and preparing the presentation of stands and catalogues in the framework of the Program.

Peruvian jewels and craftworks

Small enterprises from several Peruvian locations (Cuzco, Piura, Huancayo and Lambayeque) attended the event and showcased their products to an international audience.

Some of the jewelry and crafts workshops from Cuzco participating were Urpi Estrada, Joyería- Platería Sullca, Joyería Qolke Huilca, Quipaca Joya de plata, Pisac Kolque, Pez de Plata, Muebles Cusco Imperial, Cusco Hands and Georgina Dávalos de Lezama, among others. Relevant Spanish companies, such as Cortefiel, showed an interest in their products.

In house technical assistance was provided for jewelry design and the design and presentation of stands was prepared ad hoc for the fair.

The technology innovation center of jewelry



Photo: RA Consortium

CITE Catacaos and the Chamber of Commerce of Piura, regional co-executor of the AL-INVEST IV Program and PERUCÁMARAS trained the Peruvian businessmen participating in the event.

Artisan jewelers from Lambayeque and Huancayo were assisted by PromPerú and the Chamber of Commerce of Lambayeque and the Junin Regional Government respectively. They were offered technical assistance in the framework of the AL-INVEST IV Program.

Bolivia joins the textile event

Five SMEs of the Bolivian textile industry attended the fair and generated 327,000 dollars worth of business intentions.

Businesses participating with CAINCO were Abstratum, Expresiva and Patra.

Country Kids represented the CADEX clothing industry, and the company Ferbotex adhered to the mission as an independent.

Products offered included sports clothing, casual wear, baby clothes, work clothes, jeans and accessories.

Activities...

Argentina, in the lookout for foreign trade



Photo: MCV Consortium

The conference “Exporting Argentine Fashion to the World”—April 20 and 21 in Buenos Aires—raised awareness among Argentine textile companies regarding the relevance of promoting their products internationally.

The event was organized by the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA, by its Spanish acronym) and the Textile Industrial Chamber of Argentina (CIAI, by its Spanish acronym). The venue was the auditorium of the business institution.

The event is the first of a series of seminars and courses oriented towards training human resources in foreign trade, organized by the AL-INVEST IV Program.

VIPs such as the Secretary of the UIA, José Ignacio de Mendiguren, the President and Director of CIAI, Oscar Pérez Larumbe and Norberto Zibritovsky participated in the 100+ people event.

Program

The first session was starred by Joseph Bertrán, a highly experienced consultant in the field of trade analysis between European countries, who approached the need to develop negotiating skills to complete sales abroad and the relevance of having a business plan and knowing the characteristics of target markets.

Marcelo Shijman, Argentine expert in franchising, continued with the presentation titled “How to tap into international markets with clothing brands” highlighting the development of franchises.

The second session started with the lecture “The Italian Experience of the Exports Association” by Nicola Minervini, a consultant specialized in associating Italian and Brazilian companies. He also mentioned the importance of exports consortiums.

The event concluded with a presentation on new market trends in the fashion sector worldwide, given by Sonia García, consultant specialized in fashion monitoring.

New leaders for NAFIN

Due to recent structural changes in Nacional Financiera (NAFIN), leader of the Consortium in Central America, Mexico and Cuba (CAMC, by its Spanish acronym) last April 16, Susana Duque Roquero became new regional director of the group.

Roquero has broad experience in European Union programs and she will be in charge of relations with Mexican and Central American partners, as well as with the Services Consortium.

NAFIN appointed a new executive director last March, Juan Carlos Cabrera, with the goal of strengthening management and resource management processes.

Both will strive for the goals and objectives of AL-INVEST IV Program, to the benefit of social and economic development of the countries members of CAMC.



Photo: CAMC Consortium

Activities...

ARCA contributes to the preparation of the Andean Region

Because of its involvement within the AL-INVEST IV Program, the European partner ARCA has carried out training sessions with CAINCO, leader of the Andean Consortium this last April in Lima, Peru.

ARCA, which is part of the Services Consortium, is headed by EURO-CHAMBRES, and has provided financial support and given training sessions on outsourcing. The seminar looked in depth at practical and theoretical issues. The methodology used was the following: Presentation of a practical case study, theoretical lecture, Q&A session.



Photo: ARCA

During the first session, cases on outsourcing procedures performed by the attendants—divided in four groups—were solved. The rules and procedures AL-INVEST IV Program requires for these cases were presented, then the solutions proposed by the groups were explained.

The next session was on financial issues. Cinthya Cuellar, head of financial management at CAINCO, conveyed to the attendants the need to comply with management and financial rules when executing shares.

The mission has cleared up important doubts and has conveyed a message of transparency and equal treatment.

For ARCA, results obtained were as expected, although it is necessary to keep offering continuous training for consortium partners.

Union for renewable energies

The green industry is starting to grow businesses in Mexico, as witnessed by the first cluster of renewable energies and the development of different empowerment processes to improve the sector.

The union was formalized last April 20 in the Congreso de Morelos (Mexico), where 22 businesses and founding associations gathered. They also specify the process to accept new members into the group.

Due to the reduced acting capacity of Mexican businesses in environmental issues, and the lack of financing and political representation of SMEs in the sector and lack of technological innovation in the country, the Nacional Financiera (NAFIN) Eurocenter in Mexico, through the AL-INVEST IV

Program, supported the creation of a cluster of renewable energies.

In order to do so, NAFIN designed a comprehensive plan, divided into several phases, with the ultimate goal of strengthening private entrepreneurship and obtaining visibility before financial and political institutions.

Therefore, the training process started last August 2009 to raise awareness among companies regarding the use of different joint action structures and cooperation between businesses. Then, the Business Plan was designed for the cluster, and finally, on April 13 and 14, training was given to develop a marketing strategy, during which different purchase aspects were identified.

In the search of a green certificate

Ciudad del Carmen, in the district of Quintana Roo (Mexico), welcomed a seminar for hotels on Green Globe certifications, in the framework of AL-INVEST IV Program activities.

This seal is a global standard in sustainable tourism. The 10 companies participating in the training session assessed what possible environmental implications had

their facilities and ratified an environmental commitment.

They also recognized the relevance of obtaining the said certificate, which means including a process to improve their services and facilities, while ensuring profitability and respect of the environment, which in time generates special interest in European tourists.



Fonte: CAMC Consortium

AL-INVEST IV invites 24 Latin American companies to the Seafood Fair 2010

Seafood 2010, the annual fair of sea products number 1 in the world took place in Brussels from April 27 to 29. This edition welcomed 24 Latin American Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) participating in the AL-INVEST IV Program.

The event was an opportunity for Mexican, Guatemalan and Peruvian businesspersons to meet their competitors worldwide, learn the price of their products in the European market and the latest novelties in the field. We had the opportunity to chat with some of them and they shared with us their points of view.

How do you rate your company's participation in the Seafood 2010 Fair?

Daniel Lizárraga, manager of Pesquera Jalili (Mexico).



It has been very productive. First, I have been able to seize the current situation in the European market of the main product I sell:

prawns. Second, AL-INVEST IV has given a training seminar to Latin American SMEs on the requirements we need to fulfill to obtain the European certificate to import our products to the EU.

My company is trying to obtain that permit. In order to do so, we need to undertake several adaptations regarding the type of fleet used, specific hygiene issues on the vessels, freezing on board or the type of packaging.

Seafood has also enabled me to observe closely best practices in the European sector.

If I am better aware of the situation, it will be easier for me to adapt and sell my products in their market in equal conditions.

Have you achieved your main goals by attending the event?

Gabriel Biguria, sales vicepresident for Acuamaya (Guatemala)



Of course. At first, during my visit to Brussels I aimed at strengthening relations with my European clients, but I have achieved more than that, I have searched for new opportunities. Besides, my company already had the European certification to export sea products to the EU, and we have been selling prawn to Europe since 1984.

Attending the fair under the AL-INVEST IV sponsorship endows us with credibility before the EU and will open doors to other companies that did not know us before. Also, I am in awe with the high technology machinery other companies have. Undoubtedly, I am encouraged to apply their best practices.

Up until now, what was your company's business relation with Europe in the fishing sector?

Francisco Obregón, representing CPC Aqua Proceso (Mexico)



Up until now, our fishery sold prawn to European countries thanks to the distribution and manufacture of third companies certificated by the European Union.

But now we just built our own manufacturing plant a month ago and we are waiting for Brussels' approval to obtain the exports certification.

We are expecting to obtain it by July 2010 and then we will be able to expand our relations with Europe.

What is your main takeaway from AL-INVEST IV Program?

Jesús Castro, president of Productores Integrados (Mexico)

Genadis Fierro, owner of Mariscos Congelados de los Mochis



J. Castro – My company never had the opportunity to see first-hand the European market, and we are exporting 700 kilos of prawn per year since 1996!

A year ago, we decided to participate in the AL-INVEST IV Program, and we have had the possibility of attending the most important sea products fair worldwide.

G. Fierro - My main takeaway is the importance of adding value to the products we sell to Europe, for example, by presenting them live to potential clients. What best way to do so than Seafood Fair!

In Brussels they talk about...

The VI European Union–Latin American Summit brings both regions closer than ever

The European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean have taken a giant leap forward in their relations during the VI Summit that brought together both partners last May 18 in Madrid.

The signature of two Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with Colombia and Peru respectively, as well as an Association Agreement with Central America and the resumption of talks with Mercosur are the main milestones of these sessions.

Together with the creation of the Investment Mechanism for Latin America (MIAL by its Spanish acronym) and the European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC),

it has highlighted the scope and results issuing from negotiations.

The Association Agreement with Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) started to develop in 2007. It is the first bi-regional agreement for the EU and it is based on three pillars: political dialogue, cooperation and trade.

After eight rounds of negotiation, the Madrid Summit has been the scenario chosen to consolidate a project, not without difficulties in the process. The coup in Honduras on June 28, 2009 halted negotiations. Besides, differences on certain trade issues in the text slowed down their negotiations.

Despite all this, the EU and Central America have reached an agreement that consolidates the role of the EU in the region, where Europe is the main development aid provider with €840 million between 2007 and 2013.

Colombia and Peru have signed a Free Trade Agreement with the EU following Chile's and Mexico's example, which up until now were the only Latin American beneficiaries of a similar agreement.

Despite protests in some sectors (European parliamentarians and NGOs, for example) regarding human right violations in Colombia, the agreement was achieved, reflecting the commitment of the EU with this issue.



A foundation and a financing tool for Latin America

The creation of MIAL—an institution that will finance investment projects through the European Commission grants and other institutions—and the EU-LAC Foundation are two of the most relevant measures approved in the Summit.

The Foundation strives to strengthen the participation of civil society and other social players to promote mutual knowledge and understanding in both regions. The European Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES) has positively welcomed both initiatives. According to the organization, MIAL shall guarantee that resources truly reach SMEs and the Foundation must provide specific political contributions taking into account the opinion of the private sector.

At the same time, EUROCHAMBRES proposes the creation of European Business Centers in Latin America so that European SMEs have access to these markets and promote economic relations.

In the wake of Southern markets

Negotiations have resumed to achieve an Association Agreement between the EU and Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), another decision issued from these very productive sessions.

This agreement would be the most important one the EU has signed. It would enable the creation of a free trade area of 700 million inhabitants with a potential equivalent to €5 billion in exports both ways. Mercosur, with a population of almost 270 million inhabitants, is the fourth economic power in the world. It produces 20% of the world's bovine livestock, and ranks number 2 in corn exports, among other records.

The negotiations, however, have stark detractors in France and Poland fearing that the agreement will work to the detriment of the all-important agriculture sector.

In short, the "Madrid documents", which is the name given to the most ambitious package of measures the EU has passed with its Southern partners, will bring about a decisive turn in relations between both parties in the future.