



# AL-INVEST IV INFORMS

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## CONTENTS

### Special Issue on the Wood and Furniture Industry

#### Editorial

The Furniture Industry Avoids the Crisis ...1

#### Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela

Argentina: Strengthening the Sector.....2

Brazil: Wood Packaging .....2

#### Andean Region

Colombia: A Highly Performing Business Cluster .....2

Bolivia: CADEX and CAMIND, betting on Wood .....3

#### Business Mission to the FIMMA MADERALIA

AL-INVEST IV at the Fair.....3

Interview: María José Llaudes, AIDIMA.....3

#### Activities

Eurochile & the 'GlobalG.A.P.' Certificate ...4

Eurochile Promotes Tourism .....4

'Exporting to Europe' .....4

Argentina at Expocruz 2011 .....4

Uruguay at the SIMO Network 2011 .....5

The Road Ahead of Us in 2012.....5

A Trade Agreement with Expectations.....5

Cartagena de Indias & Bolívar at their best .....6

AL-INVEST IV at Expomype .....6

Innovation for SMEs in ICTs .....6

#### Brussels talks about...

The EU-Latin American and the Caribbean Foundation Found a "Home" .....7

Coming up .....7

Contact.....7

## Special Issue on the Wood and Furniture Industry

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

### The Furniture Industry Avoids the Crisis and Continues to Grow



FIMMA MADERALIA Fair 2011  
Source: CS

There is the perception that one spends a lot of time at home, and therefore, clients have new demands regarding the use of available space.

In addition, furniture is renewed more frequently, as a consequence of the impact of fashion in interior design.

Another important trend are the multi-functional pieces of furniture, specially designed for small rooms and children, office or work space at home and space for single and young people.

Besides, it is important to address environmental awareness. Being a key, growing issue in Europe, consumers no longer choose products based on their price and quality exclusively, but also bearing in mind environmental issues. The growing demand of environmentally friendly products mandates suppliers to bear in mind their production certification.

For a broader analysis of the wood and furniture industry, the "Wood and Furniture Fair File" is available on the AL-INVEST IV Program website, where you will find a study from the latest edition of the FIMMA MADERALIA Fair in 2011 (Valencia, Spain) and an analysis of the door and windows, paints and varnish, frames and ironwork subsectors:

<http://www.al-invest4.eu/attachments/MADERALIA%202011-Ficha%20Feria%20General.pdf>

The European Union market is positioned as the largest consumer and importer of wood and related products worldwide; a position which extends to the furniture market as well.

Sales in the 27 amounted to € 80.1 billion in 2008. Europeans spent € 161 per capita on average, with Austria, Luxembourg and Scandinavia on the pole position of countries which spent the most on furniture.

Despite the growth rate recorded in 2007, the onset of the economic crisis in 2008 caused an inevitable dip in growth. Between 2004 and 2008, the market grew on average 1.1% year-to-year, and considerable growth was recorded in new EU member state markets. The end of the real estate boom had a huge impact on the wood market. Undoubtedly, the slowdown in the building industry implied a Europe-wide slump in consumption in the wood and furniture industry.

However, sales in the furniture segments have picked up pace, since they have become a more central part of households. The logic behind it is the boost of interior design and house makeovers, to the detriment of purchasing homes.

Stefan Unsel  
GIZ Project Manager  
Capacity Building International



This publication has been made with the assistance of the European Union. The sole responsibility for its content lies with AL-INVEST IV and in no case shall it be deemed to reflect the EU point of view.

## Mercosur, Chile and Venezuela

The spirit of the MCV Consortium is as strong as wood in its will to strengthen and promote the sector. Market studies, workgroups and training are some techniques used to achieve that.



FIMMA MADERALIA Fair 2011 Source: CS

## ARGENTINA

### Market Studies and Workgroups to Strengthen the Sector

Currently, the Argentine Industrial Union (UIA by its Spanish acronym) is putting together a market study on the Chilean and Peruvian industries, supported by the AL-INVEST IV Program and in collaboration with the Argentine Federation of the Wood Industry and Related Segments (FAIMA by its Spanish acronym). The objective? Detecting opportunities for international expansion and market integration within the territory.

In addition, the UIA and FAIMA developed the Innovation and Technology Management Group Program (GIGT by its Spanish acronym) in 2010 and 2011. Many companies in the field received 9 months of very useful technical training to put together a Work Plan and implement the latest technological advances thanks to this initiative.

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## BRAZIL

### Perfectly-Fitting Wood Packaging

The AL-INVEST IV Program started a project to renew wood packaging in 2010 through the Federation of Industries of the State of Paraná (FIEP/CIN-PR by its Spanish acronym) and some local trade unions. It resulted in training for 31 furniture and wood products companies seeking to improve their competitiveness by applying innovative packaging systems to enhance design and presentation. How? By adapting to customers' demands and to the regulations of national and international markets.

After some good results, 15 companies more joined the project to receive the same training. The final report assessing improvements in innovation will be made public in early 2012.

For more information: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBumjqTlnX8>



## Andean Region

As logs on the sea, wood companies of the Andean Region Consortium want to stay afloat. Therefore, the Chambers of Commerce are set to the task of offering them all resources available.

## COLOMBIA

### A Highly Performing Business Cluster

The Chamber of Commerce of Cartagena created in 2009 the Wood Business Cluster. From then on, everything has worked smoothly. Thanks to the teamwork of participating SMEs, a purchasing team was consolidated to expand the portfolio of providers, both locally and nationally.

Once again, participation in fairs, such as the Furniture and Wood fair in Bogotá and the I International Encounter of Furniture and Wood Design in Medellín, brought on spectacular results. Companies learnt about the latest technological advances in machinery and made direct contact with important international manufacturers.

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FIMMA MADERALIA Fair 2011 Source: CS

## BOLIVIA

### CADEX and CAMIND, Betting on Wood

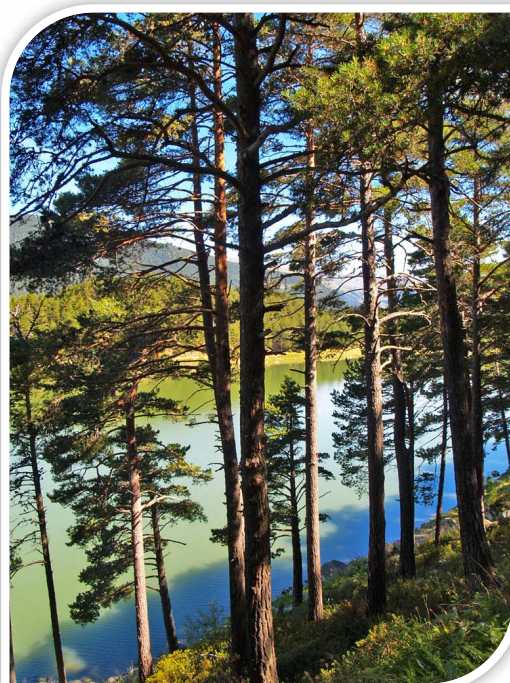
The European market has shown great interest in Bolivian wood, provided it has the FSC certification of compliance with environmental standards. Therefore, the Andean country must apply these parameters, which will become a legal requirement by 2013.

To make its humble contribution, the Chamber of Exporters of Santa Cruz (CADEX by its Spanish acronym) promoted the participation of companies in the most relevant fairs of the Old Continent, such as Maderalia 2009, that took place in the Spanish city of Valencia, or Interzum 2011, taking place in Cologne (Germany).

In addition, the consistent and sustainable work by this business cluster at CADEX, having created links with other European projects, such as the Dutch Center for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI by its Dutch acronym), will enable developing intelligent market information systems, promote trade with the EU and create links with certified wood providers, among others.

On a different note, the Chamber of Industry of Cochabamba (CAMIND by its Spanish acronym) has had a business cluster specialized in wood since 2009. Thanks to that, 45 businesspeople have enjoyed training, technical assistance and attended fairs. These businesspeople mainly seek further technification of their work processes.

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## Business Mission to the FIMMA MADERALIA Fair 2011

### Participation of AL-INVEST IV at the Fair



A total of 850 exhibitors came together for the 35th edition of FIMMA (International Fair of Wood Machinery and Tools) MADERALIA (International Fair of Wood and Furniture Providers), between October 25 and 28 in Valencia (Spain). As much as 70% of participating companies came from abroad.

The AL-INVEST IV Program was present at the fair with a stand and organized a platform for bilateral meetings in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Valencia. Delegations from Latin American companies, namely Peru (FENAFOR), Argentina (ASORA-FITECMA), Colombia (M&M), Mexico (PORTE Magazine) and the Dominican Republic (Asonaimco Association) participated in several activities organized by AL-INVEST IV.

The visit to the Furniture, Wood, Packaging and Alia Technological Institute (AIDIMA by its Spanish acronym) and to the port of Valencia were noteworthy. The focus this year has been on bringing architects and interior designers closer to the world of wood.

For more information:

[http://www.al-invest4.eu/actividades2/actividades-consorcio-servicios/para-pymes/index.php?option=com\\_empresas&view=empresas&id=141&Itemid=230&lan=es](http://www.al-invest4.eu/actividades2/actividades-consorcio-servicios/para-pymes/index.php?option=com_empresas&view=empresas&id=141&Itemid=230&lan=es)

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### Interview to María José Laudes, Head of International Cooperation Projects at AIDIMA (Furniture, Wood, Packaging and Alia Technological Institute)

The Chamber of Commerce of Valencia organized, together with AIDIMA, a technical visit for companies attending the FIMMA MADERALIA 2011 Fair. What's your balance of this activity?

The outcome of the visit was positive, since we have shown attending companies from Latin America what innovative actions AIDIMA undertakes and what are the new research lines on which we are working. Interesting subjects regarding the European regulation and its possible impact on Latin American countries have been mentioned.

What is your opinion on the general results of the Fair?

Despite the economic crisis, the attendance of professionals in our field has been high. Other parallel activities are noteworthy, such as talks regarding new materials and designs.

What are the strengths of Latin American companies in the European wood and furniture market?

I would broadly mention the low cost of labor, which enables them to compete against Asia. They also have a language advantage, which enables them to reach agreements with Spanish and Portuguese companies. From an exports perspective, the increasing amount of certified forests in these countries has become more and more important.

From a technological point of view, what new trends in terms of new materials, applications and technological innovation can we see?

Use of leaner boards, water or dust finishing, nanotechnologies, green materials, materials with sensory properties, domotic products and materials beneficial for your health, among others.

## Eurochile Supports the 'GlobalG.A.P' Certificate

The Business Foundation EUROCHILE, executing the AL-INVEST IV Program in Chile, will deliver the reports to obtain the 'GlobalG.A.P' certificate shortly.

The goal is to report on best farming practices by the 15 nut producers of the cooperative Agronuez, in the Chilean region of Choapa.

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## Eurochile Starts the Social Network of Tourism



The AL-INVEST IV Program, through its partner Eurochile, has started a social network aimed exclusively at developing the Chilean tourism sector. With the name 'Tourism Community of AL-INVEST IV', it works in a similar way to Facebook. Users may exchange information and communicate with each other, which will significantly increase their network of contacts and the business opportunities for their companies.

Ivonne Palma, AL-INVEST IV Program Coordinator for Eurochile, highlighted the importance of belonging to this network. "The most important part is that the users will bring the community to life and they can start networking and meeting other companies with the same needs or concerns".

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## Online Course on 'Exporting to Europe'

After a very successful first training program on 'Exporting to Europe', the Coordination and Services Consortium of the AL-INVEST IV Program has launched a second series, which started last October. This time, 54 professionals in foreign trade from the Program's institutions will receive training.

The training will enable professionals to provide advanced competitive intelligence services on European markets.

There are two modules to this training program: one is online, the other is onsite. The latter is targeted at students who have successfully passed the online sessions.

The three onsite sessions will start on March 2012. There will be one for each Program region.

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For more information: <http://gc21.inwent.org/alinvest4>

## Unparalleled Participation by Argentina in Expocruz 2011

September 2011, Santa Cruz, Bolivia



The most important multi-sector fair internationally, Expocruz, took place last September in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz. This year, it had more than 800 foreign stands from Germany, Argentina, China, Spain, the United States and Russia, among many others.

The successful participation of Argentina is noteworthy. It positioned itself as the largest delegation, with more than 300 companies, and the largest national representation.

In addition to being valued as the best foreign pavilion, the Latin American country obtained amazing business results, as per the more than 4,000 contacts obtained and sales worth \$110,000.

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## Uruguay, Starring in the 'SIMO Network 2011'

October 4-6, Madrid, Spain

Thanks to the support of the AL-INVEST IV Program, and through the Eurocenter of the National Chamber of Commerce and Services of Uruguay and the ProExport Program of the Institute Uruguay XXI, a delegation of Uruguayan companies could participate in the SIMO Network 2011 Fair, focused on networking and spreading high-tech trends which took place last October in Madrid.

On average, each attending company held 18 meetings, which meant many new contacts with companies around the world. Uruguayan companies could as well learn about new trends and opportunities in the industry. In some cases, budgets are being exchanged already and the details of business deals will be sorted out in the short term.

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SIMO Network Fair 2011  
Source: CS

## The Road Ahead of Us in 2012

October 26-28, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia



Members of the Andean Region Consortium  
at the Meeting Source: RA

The Consortium of the Andean Region of the AL-INVEST IV Program has already put together its action plan for 2012. As a result of the Consortium's Planning Meeting, which took place at the end of October, 50 attendants from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Europe set the ground for next year's activities in favor of SMEs and institutional strengthening.

Besides, the discussion through these three days in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra was immediately useful to prioritize activities in the short term that have not yet met the goal pledged to the European Commission.

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## A Trade Agreement with Great Expectations

November 3, Lima, Peru

The Chamber of Commerce of Lima (CCL by its Spanish acronym), together with the EU Delegation to Peru and the AL-INVEST IV Program, launched last November 3 the PROMO UE event, a place to learn about business opportunities in the framework of the coming Free Trade Agreement signed between Peru and Colombia with the European Union in May last year.

According to Carlos Durand Chahud, President of CCL, "once the FTA comes into force--that is the first half of next year--Peru will enjoy a new trade and investment framework for bilateral relations with the European Union". Mr. Durand believes as well that the domestic market "will be much more attractive for European capitals, which currently surpass 50% of Foreign Direct Investment to Peru", since it is expected that the Andean country will consolidate exports for some 500 million consumers in the EU.

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PROMO EU Event  
Source: RA

## Extracting the Maximum Potential out of Cartagena de Indias and Bolívar

November 2, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

Under the title “Local Development Forum of Cartagena”, last November 2 a symposium was held to exploit the potential of the Colombian regions of Bolívar and Cartagena de Indias.

Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Cartagena (CCC by its Spanish acronym) and the Italian partner institution Retecamere, and under the umbrella of the AL-INVEST IV Program, the event was a brainstorming mix of visions and projects for the regions to overcome their challenges in competition and development and put to good use their huge potential.

Besides, attendants offered their point of view on the current situation of several sectors, possible solutions to problems identified and the role CCC may play in solving them.

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## AL-INVEST IV Supports More than 200 Companies in Expomype

November 4-6, Santa Cruz, Bolivia



A total of 205 companies participated in the Expomype Fair 2011 thanks to the support provided by the Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism of Santa Cruz-Bolivia (CAINCO by its Spanish acronym), the Chamber of Exporters of Santa Cruz (CADEX by its Spanish acronym) and the Government of Santa Cruz, within the framework of the AL-INVEST IV Program.

According to Cecilia Osorio, Coordinator of Business Clusters at CAINCO, these businesspeople “have undergone a process to enhance their products and brand presentation. Many among them have experienced the 2010 and 2011 editions of Expocruz, so Expomype has been their third experience at a local fair”.

For more information: [http://www.alinvest4can.org/?page\\_id=2601](http://www.alinvest4can.org/?page_id=2601)  
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## Dosage of Innovation for SMEs in ICTs

Supported by the AL-INVEST IV Program, the Exports Chamber of Costa Rica (CADEXCO by its Spanish acronym) will shortly offer training sessions for companies in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

The objective? To show to attending SMEs what innovative tools and resources they can use in their daily activity to reinvent and update products and services offered.

Training will be made up of lectures and workshops. It will end with a diagnosis offering information on the situation of the innovative process at companies.

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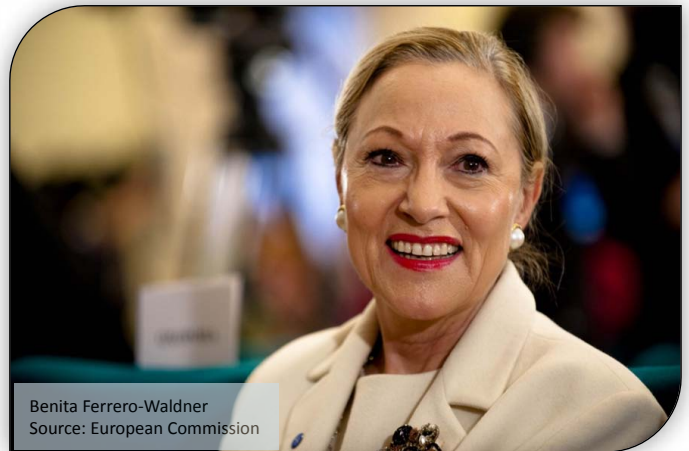


## The EU-Latin American and the Caribbean Foundation Found a "Home"

The German city of Hamburg inaugurated last November 7 its headquarters for the EU-Latin American and the Caribbean Foundation. The foundation was originated at the EU-Latin America summit in Madrid in 2010.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, President of the Foundation and former European Commissioner of Foreign Relations, declared at the inauguration event that the goal is to "cooperate and create synergies". "The new foundation has been the only one putting together in one platform the 60 countries from both regions: the 27 from the European Union and the 33 from Latin America and the Caribbean."

The Managing Director of the Foundation, up until now the Peruvian Ambassador to Brussels, Jorge Valdez, explained that the new institution will organize symposia, courses, exchanges, publications and conference to serve the "network of networks" as reported by the agency DPA.



## Coming up

### Events

I International Forum to facilitate trade: "Thinking of Global SMEs".  
Bolivia.

November 23, 2011 – November 24, 2011 (RA)

POLLUTEC. Paris, France.

November 29, 2011 – December 2, 2011 (MCV & CAMC)

Seminar on "Foreign Direct Investment and SMEs: an Opportunity to Dynamize a Strategic Alliance between the EU and Latin America".  
Santiago de Chile, Chile.

December 5, 2011 – December 6, 2011 (CS)

Fair of Jobs that Promote Development.

November 2011 – January 2012 (CAMC)

Support Program to Access the European Market.

November 2011 – January 2012 (CAMC)

More events: <http://www.al-invest4.eu/calendario/656>

### Contact

For more information visit our website

[www.al-invest4.eu](http://www.al-invest4.eu),

or Check our Facebook profile



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/AL-Invest-IV-Consortio-de-Servicios/175340069146180?ref=ts>



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Share your comments!

### Publications

Sector Analysis on "Renewable Energy":

<http://www.al-invest4.eu/minisite/renovables/europa/europa1.html>

"Exporting to Europe" Handbook:

<http://www.al-invest4.eu/guia-como-exportar-a-europa/1001-guia-como-exportar-a-europa/521-guia-como-exportar-a-europa>

Special Issue on the 2011 Annual Meeting:

<http://www.al-invest4.eu/attachments/Monogr%C3%A1fico%20Encuentro%20Anual%202011%20ENGLISH.pdf>

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"The AL-INVEST IV Program is one of the most relevant regional economic cooperation programs of the European Commission in Latin America. The main goal of the IVth phase of the Program is to promote social cohesion by supporting Latin American SMEs in their consolidation and internationalization, sharing innovation and knowledge and creating economic relations with their European counterparts".