



First Public-Private Dialogue European Union- Latin America

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT and SMEs

Santiago de Chile, 5-6 December 2011

First results and future prospects

The First Public-Private Dialogue European Union–Latin America on “Foreign Direct Investment and SMEs” was held in Santiago de Chile on 5 and 6 December 2011. It was organized jointly by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Coordination and Services Consortium of the AL-INVEST IV Programme, led by EUROCHAMBRES.

The objective of the meeting was to implement a positioning strategy on matters related to SME support policies and, more specifically, on issues associated with internationalization and its connection with foreign direct investment. This objective is associated with the preparation of recommendations for the next European Union–Latin America and the Caribbean Summit to be held in Chile in 2013.

The meeting was attended by approximately 85 delegates. More than 40 of them represented Latin American business support organizations while more than 15 were there on behalf of European business associations. Also present were high-ranking executives in the Latin American and European public sector in charge of SME support policies, representatives of the European Commission, the AL-INVEST IV programme, EUROCHAMBRES, and international organizations.

The first impression received from the evaluations of the meeting is that the objective pursued was successfully accomplished. The participants’ recognized that positive results were achieved with regard to: i) the dissemination of up-to-date information on the SME support policy situation and the internationalization of SMEs in Latin America and the EU; ii) the exchange of experiences between the public and private sectors of both regions on the main issues related to SME competitiveness and internationalization; iii) the identification of proposals to promote the strategic alliance between the European Union and Latin America before the upcoming Summit of Heads of State and Government and other forums that require the definition of actions to strengthen public–private dialogue concerning the SME support institutions of both regions.

The meeting combined plenary sessions featuring presentations on the main issues with workshops at which participants identified common themes related to the need for greater public–private coordination in the SME support policies of the region’s countries. Progress was also made in the identification of obstacles and, above all, in the formulation of proposals to spur the internationalization of SMEs by participation in supply chains, overcoming hurdles in the way of access to financing, making them more competitive, and improving market access.

The ECLAC and EUROCHAMBRES are studying the organization of a further event to be held in Europe in order to monitor the actions that have resulted from this first meeting. This should make it



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possible for representatives of both regions to continue making progress on the definition of a joint public–private strategy by formulating specific proposals to promote the internationalization of the SMEs.

The ECLAC and EUROCHAMBRES are also interested in collecting information on successful cases of SME internationalization from both regions, with particular emphasis on the strengthening of supply chains. Such documentation on specific European and Latin American cases of participation by SMEs and large companies could lead to a preliminary study of good practices that would be used as a basis for illustrating the real possibilities of collaboration.

The systematization and documentation of successful cases should be seen as part of an institutional cornerstone of learning that gives practical support to the proposals that will enrich the public–private dialogue sustaining a strategic alliance between the European Union and Latin America.

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