

## Press Release

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### **14th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) starts today in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, “Understanding Trends and Perspectives”**

- **APA-Chairman Hubert Lienhard: “German business has to adapt to power shift towards Asia”**
- **Understanding trends in Asia of high importance for German business**
- **More investments from Asia to Germany needed**

On the eve of the 14th Asia-Pacific Conference (APK) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, the Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA), Hubert Lienhard, encourages the countries of the region to solve economic, societal and political challenges in a joint dialogue and as partners. “Tensions in the region call upon German Business to exercise vigilance. The countries in East and South East Asia are some of the most important markets with significant impact on the world economy. Asia therefore needs, in particular, stability and peace.”

The 14<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific-Conference (APK), held from 20 to 22 November 2014 focuses on current economic and political trends in Asia. The German Asia-Pacific partnership offers huge opportunities for both sides, but also holds challenges. “German business has to adapt to the political and economic power shift towards Asia”, APA-Chairman Lienhard said. “Asia’s rapid growth will continue. German business is faced with a unique turning-point towards a stronger engagement in Asia. We cannot afford to miss out on these opportunities”. The growth potential and young population of most Asian countries provide for a prosperous and sustainable future.

The conference aims at taking a close look at the Asian countries’ development strategies, future-oriented sectors, innovative business ideas and consumer demands; it addresses the role of the political context for successful investments. It also deals with regional integration and its implications for the Asia-Pacific, analyzes business opportunities that arise, for instance, from the ASEAN Economic Community and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (ASEAN+6) which will present the largest free trade area in the world. Topics will further include the geo-political dimension of Asia-Pacific and the relationship of the ASEAN countries vis-a-vis China and India.

It is increasingly important for German businesses to understand how trends develop in Asia. Asia already accounts for roughly 30 percent of world GDP and 60 percent of the world's population; its middle class is growing. Integrating the demands from Asian customers and business partners into their business strategy thus becomes more important for German companies – for instance by locating R&D facilities close to customers in Asia.

APA-Chairman Lienhard: “We want to listen to our partners from Asia and understand how they prepare for the continuing shift in economic and political power towards Asia. This is reflected in the APK's theme ‘Understanding Trends and Perspectives’. Today it is important to better understand how things work in Asia and how Asia ‘works’.”

The German business community will also take the opportunity of the APK to further promote Germany as an attractive investment destination. Germany is the safe haven within Europe for Asian investors; it also has a strong track record in high-technology, research and development. Although Germany has an excellent reputation for its technological capabilities and its highly qualified labor force, investments from Asia in Germany (ca 26 bln Euro in 2012) are still behind German investments in Asia (ca 100 bln Euro in 2012). Asian economies are already important partners for German business. The trade volume of Germany and key Asian economies stood at 285 bln Euro last year. German exports to Asia amounted to 180 bln Euro last year.

**On APK:**

At the Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) 2014, the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Ministers from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretary General, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Hong Kong and more than 700 decision makers from business and politics will analyze current political and economic trends and power shifts. The conference is co-chaired by the German Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy, Sigmar Gabriel and the Chairman of the Asia Pacific Committee of German Business, Hubert Lienhard, CEO of Voith GmbH.

The APK held every two years since 1986, is a key forum for decision-makers in business and politics from Asia and Germany. The conference is co-organized by Germany's bilateral Chambers of Industry and Commerce in the Asia-Pacific region; the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

**On APA:**

The Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA) is the voice of German business active in Asia-Pacific. APA engages in the dialogue on economic policy with the German government and those in the Asian region. APA voices the concerns and interests of German companies' interests towards Asia-Pacific. APA strives for more intense cooperation with Asia-Pacific and helps promoting trade and investment in both directions.

APA is an initiative of the Federation of German Industries, the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the German Asia-Pacific Business Association, the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services and the Association of German Banks.

**Contact:**

Friedolin Strack  
Managing Director and Coordinator Germany  
Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business  
Tel.: +49 (0)30 2028 1423  
[F.Strack@BDI.eu](mailto:F.Strack@BDI.eu)

Ekkehard Goetting  
Coordinator Asia  
Asia-Pacific-Committee of German Business  
Tel. +852 2526 5481  
[goetting.ekkehard@hongkong.ahk.de](mailto:goetting.ekkehard@hongkong.ahk.de)