



# APK

## 15<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business

3-5 November 2016, Hong Kong

Press Release

Hong Kong / Berlin, 3. November 2016

- **Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business sets agenda for Asian-German economic cooperation**
- **Building an equal long-term partnership**
- **Open borders and reliable frameworks needed for more innovation**

Just before the opening of the 15<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business (APK) in Hong Kong, the Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA), Hubert Lienhard, calls on “the benefits of open borders and the free movements of goods and services which are enormous for both the Asia-Pacific and for Europe. German business advocates equal market access. Europe is open for trade and investment – this is what we also expect from our partners abroad.”

The German Minister of Economic Affairs and Sigmar Gabriel said: "The EU and Asia continue to be the world's largest trading regions. It is therefore crucial that the EU presses ahead with negotiations on bilateral free trade agreements with countries from the Asia-Pacific region. The aim must be to reduce trade barriers so that trade between our economies can develop even better, to the benefit of both sides."

The APK, held from 3 to 5 November in Hong Kong, will focus on topics such as innovation, Industrie 4.0, mobility and urbanisation as well as economic and security policy concerns in the region. The conference is co-organized by the APA, the German Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy and the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce in the Asia-Pacific.

Apart from the necessity to defend free trade, Germany and the Asia-Pacific need the right political frameworks for successful, future-oriented businesses, as Lienhard remarks: “To tackle the most pressing challenges the world is facing, we need innovative solutions. Innovation needs reliable conditions to flourish. We urgently need the political will to work on these conditions. Among them a suitable infrastructure, laws that do not hamper creativity, and an inventive workforce.”

The Asia-Pacific region will remain the most important trading partner outside Europe for German businesses in the near future. In 2015, almost 14% of all German exports of goods went to the Asia-Pacific. It will also remain a top destination for German foreign direct investments, with a total stock of about 110 billion Euro in 2014. As for investment flows in the other direction, 2016 proved once again that Germany is ever more attractive for investors from the Asia-Pacific – 450 new investment projects (out of 1,900) originated from there. A further improvement of the conditions for market access, particularly in some Asian countries, would enhance this fruitful two-way exchange. On this, Lienhard notes: “By definition, open markets are no one-way streets. While Germany has largely welcomed investments flowing into the country from the Asia-Pacific, some countries in the region remain difficult



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destinations for German investors. That's why we call for a level playing field for the benefit of both our regions. It is our task here to further promote equality, partnership and sustainability.”

### About the APK:

At APK 2016, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka as well as ministers from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Thailand, vice-ministers from the Philippines and Vietnam as well as more than 1000 decision makers will analyse current political and economic topics. The APK 2016 is co-chaired by the German Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy, Sigmar Gabriel, and the Chairman of the Asia Pacific Committee of German Business, Hubert Lienhard, President & 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 the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad in the Asia-Pacific region; the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business (APA) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

### About the 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.

Further information:

<http://www.asiapacificconference.com>

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