

Colombia inspires Heel's confidence

President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón and Heel's CEO Ralph Schmidt met at a business convention in Germany

Berlin (Germany) / Bogotá (Colombia) – Colombia is the most important market in South America for Heel's natural medications. Following an invitation by the Embassy of the Republic of Colombia, CEO Ralph Schmidt attended a business convention organized by the Embassy and Proexport in Berlin on April 13. Here, he also met with the most prominent speaker, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Colombia has been changing significantly. The improvement in the security situation has nurtured steady economical growth. Since 2000, the GDP per capita has grown by 57 percent to nearly \$10,000 when adjusted for purchasing power. Colombia, with its 46.3 million inhabitants the second largest Spanish-speaking nation, is attracting greater attention. More than 300 representatives of leading German companies came to the convention in Berlin to learn about business opportunities in Colombia.

"For us, Colombia has already become one of the most important markets in the world," says Ralph Schmidt, CEO of Heel, a leading manufacturer of natural medications. "The country with its large population has a dynamic and diverse economy. And the security situation has also improved significantly. However, safety and political stability on a democratic basis remain the prerequisites for making Colombia a rising star with a bright future – also for Heel," he adds.

Heel's founder, Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg, started holding scientific presentations in Colombia in the 1980s. The Colombian doctor Dr. Alberto Duque was the first to translate Reckeweg's books into Spanish. This supported the company's good reputation throughout South America. In fact, Heel even established a subsidiary in Bogotá in 1997. Today, nearly 90 employees cater to

the needs of customers, distribution partners and the scientific medical community.

Heel Colombia has organized more than 200 scientific educational events with speakers from the Colombian medical sector and international guests. The program addresses physicians as well as practitioners of traditional medicine. More than 8,000 health professionals have participated in the educational program that enables its attendees to better understand and apply natural medicine more effectively on an up-to-date scientific basis.

The scientific and commercial exchange between Germany and Colombia is expected to increase now that Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Santos have signed several agreements on educational and scientific cooperation. In addition, bilateral trade that has been rising by 75 percent between 2005 and 2010 is expected to receive an additional boost from a free trade agreement with the European Union that is scheduled to go into effect in 2012.

Heel is a pharmaceutical company that develops, manufactures and distributes medications based on natural substances. Being the global leader in homeopathic combination preparations, the company is also a pioneer in the field of scientific research in natural healthcare. In cooperation with academic institutions, Heel actively fosters the concept of Integrative Medicine and is striving to build the bridge between homeopathy and conventional medicine to improve patient care and health. The 'Biologische Heilmittel Heel GmbH' with its corporate headquarters in Baden-Baden/Germany and a staff of 1,300, achieved an annual turnover of 184 million euros in 2010 – more than 70 percent of which was generated outside Germany. Heel medications are available through subsidiaries and distribution partners in over 50 countries around the world. www.heel.com

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Picture: Ralph Schmidt, CEO of Heel, (right) met Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, the President of the Republic of Colombia, during a business convention in Berlin. Colombia is an important market for Heel's natural medications. Source: Colombian Embassy in Germany.

Pictures in print quality:

<http://www.oha-communication.com/en/heel.html>

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