

# EU WELCOMES CPEC, SUPPORTS PEACE PROCESS IN REGION

ISLAMABAD

SHAMIM MAHMOOD

THE European Union (EU) welcomes the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and supports peace process in the region, says designated ambassador to Guatemala (Central America), Stefano Gatto. "The CPEC will open new doors to South Asia. It will create more jobs, infrastructure, trade and investment for the regional countries and in the region. The EU will continue its political, social, economic and technical cooperation with Pakistan. To support the government in Pakistan is our priority. Pakistanis are cooperative and hospitable people. EU welcomes and supports peace process in the region," he said. "During an interview, Gatto said that the environment is conducive for improved economic and social conditions. Respect for democratic principles and human rights are fundamental and non-negotiable conditions for the EU, he said. The strengthening of democratic institutions in the region has improved considerably, in-

cluding a far reaching devolution process through the 18th amendment to Pakistan's constitution and the promotion of human rights at both a federal and provincial level, he added.

He said that Pakistan and the EU have signed up to all major international human rights conventions and are working together in major international forums such as the United Nations, adding that EU supports Pakistan's commitment to strengthen its democratic institutions and promote human rights across all part of the society. The EU played an important role through its Election Observation Mission during the 2002, 2008 and 2013 Pakistan general elections. Since 2008, over 70 recommendations made by the election observers have been followed up. As per EU practice, the 2013 EU Election Observation Mission has prepared a new future EU engagement with Pakistan stakeholders for the 2013-2018 electoral and parliamentary cycles. He

termed the transfer of the power from one elected government to another elected government in 2013 as EU's success. He said strengthening Pakistan's parliamentary institutions in their core functions of legislation, oversight and representations is a priority for EU-Pakistan relations.



The EU works with the civil society in Pakistan to eliminate violence against women and children, support women's political empowerment, prevent trafficking in human beings, strengthen juvenile justice reform and ensure the religious minorities, said

Gatto. The EU is supporting the government of Pakistan as well as civil society to deliver on Pakistan's obligations according to international human rights laws and protect, promote and fulfill human rights with a focus on women and children rights, freedom of religion and belief, and rule of law and access to justice. The EU also strives worldwide for the abolishment of death penalty, he added.

Gatto said that at present, Pakistan benefits from the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+) which in its present form has benefited the traditional sectors, mainly textiles and leather. As a result, almost 20 per cent of Pakistan's exports enter the EU at zero tariff and more than 70 per cent at a preferential rate. The EU is one of the main development partners of Pakistan, focusing on issues like education, rural development and governance rather than physical infrastructure. This is a sort of "soft" co-operation, centered on the concept of human development. Progressively, Pakistan and the EU have widened the scope of their political relations, which embrace issues as diverse as the multilateral agenda, counterterrorism, disarmament, governance, human rights and energy.

Talking about his around two-year presence in Pakistan, he praised the Pakistani people and said that since he arrived in Islamabad, he always found Pakistani people welcoming him with a smiling face. Pakistan is a rich fertile country. The richness of its heritage and the kindness of its people attract foreigners.

PAKISTAN KEEN TO FORGE CLOSER  
TIES WITH BELARUS

EU CLIMATE DIPLOMACY DAY 2015

GERMAN DELEGATION VISITS PAKISTAN





# H. E. Stefano Gatto

**"GSP + has given excellent results to Pakistan in its first year of application"**  
say H. E. Stefano Gatto,  
Acting Head of Delegation of the  
European Union to Pakistan



**Pak Euro World:** What was your first impression about Pakistan since you arrived here?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** I arrived in Pakistan in October last year, and the most positive impression I have of Pakistan is the extraordinary kindness and hospitality of Pakistanis. The country may face many complex challenges, but this does not prevent Pakistanis to be overwhelmingly very welcoming people.

**Pak Euro World:** What spheres do you see European Union & Pakistan collaborating in?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** The common agenda between Pakistan and the EU is very wide, covering fields as diverse as political relations, counter-terrorism, human rights, rule of law, governance, trade and commerce, development co-operation, with the EU a one of the main donors to Pakistan, with a recent decision to increase funds for the next seven years: 653 million Euro in non-reimbursable grants till 2020.

**Pak Euro World:** Are you satisfied with the state of economic relations between European Union & Pakistan after GSP+ status?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** GSP + has given excellent results to Pakistan in its first year of application: increase of 1 billion USD in

exports to the EU, + 20% in one year only. The challenge now is consolidation in the next few years and widening of exports to sectors other than textiles and clothing to increase the impact in the country.

**Pak Euro World:** Does EU feel that Pakistan is actively participating in the war against terrorism? Or it is a playground for terrorist activities as India blames?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** Pakistan is one of the main victims of terrorism and the EU actively cooperates with Pakistan on several grounds in this field. Concerning the relations with India, the EU encourages good co-operation between these two countries in the common fight against international terrorism.

**Pak Euro World:** Pakistan is still fighting against terrorism (operation started a year back) and taking some necessary measures even than some EU countries have shown reservation investing in Pakistan. Your comments please.

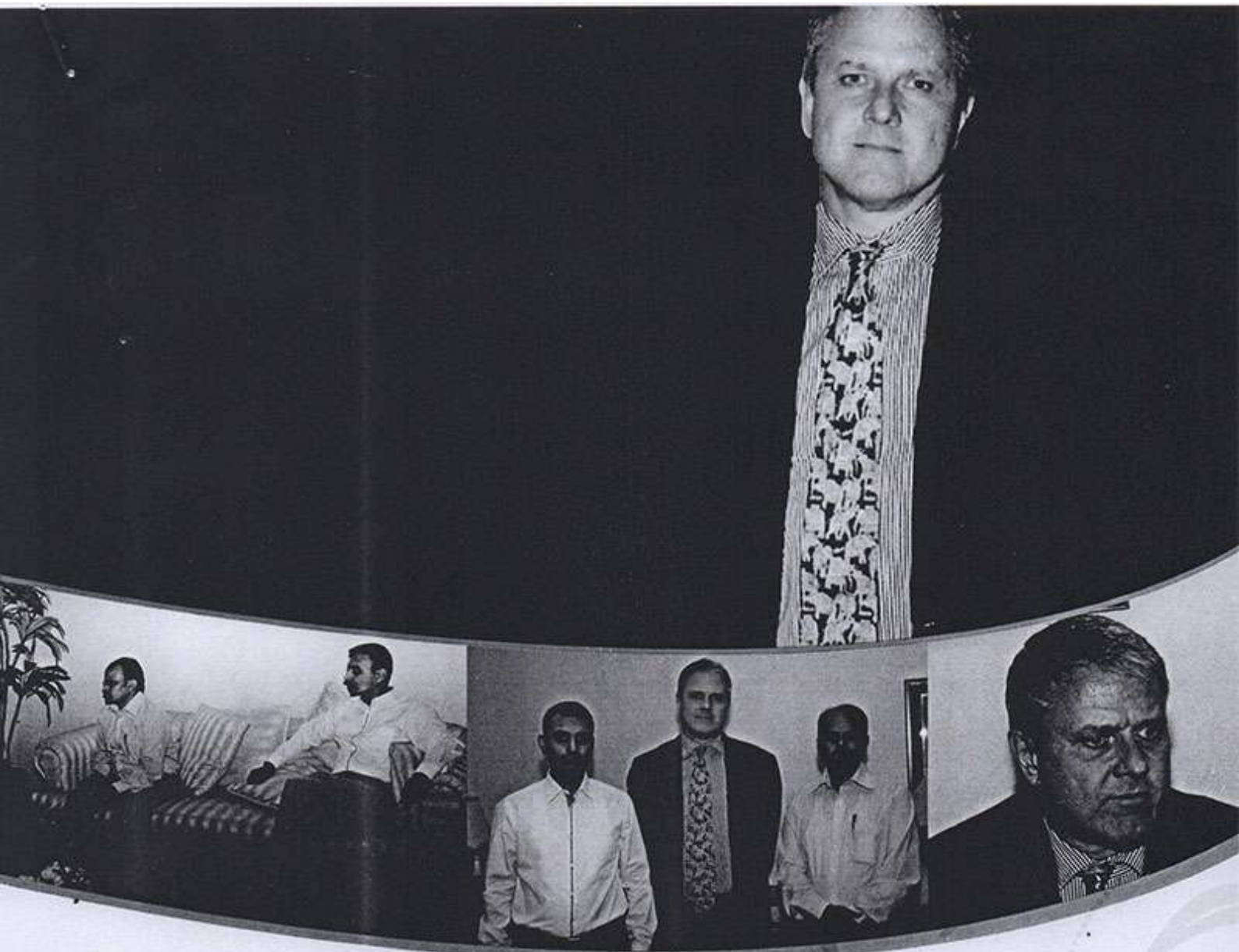
**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** The investment climate worldwide is very competitive, and several considerations motivate investors' choice. Security may be one, but predictability in the investment perspectives is another. In the last few years European investors have been active rather in other Asian countries, but some European companies are present

in Pakistan and not necessarily unhappy with their business performances. However, the competitive scenarios remain very dynamic and Pakistan has interest to work at constantly improving the scenarios favouring international investments.

**Pak Euro World:** EU repeatedly asking Pakistan to abolish death sentence. Your comments please.

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** EU countries have abolished death penalty permanently and in all circumstances. It is not that the EU countries have not been exposed to horrible terrorist attacks, but we do not believe death penalty is a useful deterrent to prevent and avoid terrorism. The problem with death penalty is its irreversibility, which requires total certainty and very high standards of performance of the judicial system in order to avoid possible and abuses, which would have no remedy possible. The fact that military courts have been empowered to judge terrorism-related suspects shows that the confidence in the judicial system is limited, weakening the basic link between certainty and penalty. In addition to that, international conventions that Pakistan has subscribed (ICCPR) prohibit execution of persons underage at the moment of the crime and oblige to clear beyond any





reasonable doubt allegations of torture to obtain confessions.

**Pak Euro World:** How is EU assisting Pakistan in attaining the social up bringing goals?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** The EU is providing substantial assistance to Pakistan, the main sectors of co-operation being education and vocational training, rural development and governance, plus humanitarian assistance through the EU humanitarian agency ECHO. GSP +, a major trade concession, providing duty free access to Pakistani goods into the EU, is also linked to the improvement of human rights standards, including labor standards, which ultimately benefit Pakistani citizens.

**Pak Euro World:** What are the specific fields of interest for Pakistan Business Community in EU & EU Business Community in Pakistan?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** For the time being, the Pakistani business community is rather focusing on textile and clothing. As said above, the main challenge would be

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**Pak Euro World:** How can Pakistan & EU cooperate in the fields of trade, tourism, education & energy?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** In trade, the EU is supporting several programs, together with UNIDO and the Ministry of Commerce, to facilitate improvements in selected sectors to increase Pakistani competitiveness in international markets. Education and vocational training are among the main sectors of EU co-operation, mainly to the GIZ – implemented TVET program. In energy, the main contribution from the EU could come from the diffusion of alternative energies technology (wind, solar), become very prominent in Europe. Pakistan will have a potential in tourism when the security situation will be more stable.

**Pak Euro World:** What would be your message to Pakistan?

**H. E. Stefano Gatto:** My message to Pakistan is that the many challenges facing the country are primarily a responsibility for the Pakistani people and government: the main factors for solving the problems are internal. However, international co-operation with good friends as the EU countries has the potential to bring useful ideas, experiences and needed resources. The EU will stand behind the process of development of Pakistan and if some different viewpoints emerge in some aspects, it is more rationale to analyze them carefully before discarding them a priori without proper consideration. Friends talk also of difficult subjects.



## MERCOSUL

## VINHO

# Argentina quer aumentar exportações

Governo do país solicitou a revogação de uma resolução que limita suas vendas ao mercado brasileiro

Hamilton Almeida  
Buenos Aires

O governo argentino está solicitando que o Brasil abra uma exceção aos países do Mercosul e revogue a exigência de autorização prévia do Ministério da Agricultura nas operações de importações de vinhos. A resolução de número 32, assinada pelo secretário de Defesa Agropecuária, Luiz Carlos de Oliveira, no final de setembro, criou esse novo trâmite burocrático que afeta as importações provenientes de qualquer país do mundo.

O diretor executivo da Associação Vitivinícola Argentina, Mario José Giordano, afirma que ainda não havia sido registrado, até a semana passada, "nenhum problema concreto" nas exportações ao Brasil. O que pode acontecer é que as operações de exportações fiquem mais lentas, mas não se espera que haja paralisação nos negócios.

Giordano reafirmou, de qualquer maneira, que os países do

Mercosul devem ficar isentos do alcance da Resolução 32 e lembrou que o Brasil ainda é um mercado relativamente pequeno para os vinhos argentinos. A Argentina está colocando no Brasil cerca de 5% das suas exportações totais de vinhos. Esse comércio estava limitado, até a metade do ano passado, por uma cota de 120 mil caixas/ano de seis garrafas cada.

Imediatamente após o fim dessa restrição, as exportações se multiplicaram e chegaram, no final de 1999, a 247 mil caixas (US\$ 4,8 milhões). Para o ano 2000, as estimativas do Instituto Na-

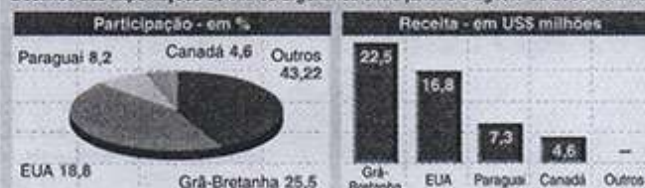
**Brasil responde por 5% das compras**

cional de Vitivinicultura indicam um total de 550 mil caixas (US\$ 11 milhões) entre vinhos finos e comuns, o que representaria uma expansão considerável de 122%, em unidades, em relação ao desempenho do ano passado. Com esses números, o Brasil passaria a ser o quinto maior comprador de vinhos argentinos.

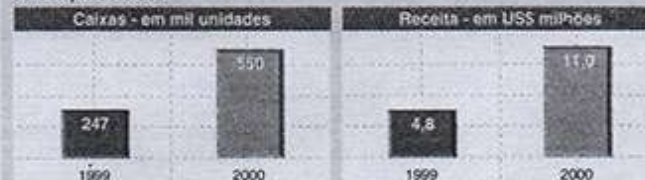
A Grã-Bretanha (US\$ 22,5 milhões no acumulado janeiro-

## Sob as bênçãos de Baco

Destinos das exportações de vinhos argentinos entre janeiro e agosto de 2000 - em %



Vendas para o Brasil



Fonte: Instituto Nacional de Vitivinicultura



agosto deste ano), os Estados Unidos (US\$ 16,8 milhões), o Paraguai (US\$ 7,3 milhões) e o Canadá (US\$ 4,6 milhões) são os principais clientes externos do país. Nos anos 70, os argentinos consumiam cerca de 80 litros per capita de vinho por ano. Agora, esse índice diminuiu para 38 litros e o país investe para ampliar a sua participação no exterior, principalmente na Europa.

A produção total de vinhos deste ano é da ordem de 12 milhões de hectolitros, uma quantidade 10% menor do que a safra de 1999. Nos anos 90, quando começou a apostar mais no comércio exterior, conquistou-se modestas posições nos disputados mercados europeu e norte-americano. A evolução dos negócios foi, no entanto, explosiva. Entre os anos de 1992 e 1999, as expor-

tações cresceram 316%, passando de US\$ 34 milhões para US\$ 140 milhões.

Considera-se que o país ainda está dando os primeiros passos nos mercados externos, pois as exportações não ultrapassam 8% do total da produção. As estimativas são de que as elas acumulem um milhão de hectolitros neste ano, sendo 600 mil de vinhos varietais (finos). □

## SERVIÇO

## Um guia prático dos acordos internacionais

Luciana Tuszel  
São Paulo

O Sindicato dos Despachantes Aduaneiros de São Paulo e a Comissão Parlamentar Conjunta do Mercosul lançaram, na semana passada, o livro "Guia Prático dos Acordos Internacionais Assinados pelo Brasil no Âmbito do Mercosul - Aladi". O guia é o segundo volume da coleção Comércio Exterior & Mercosul, criada para difundir informações referentes às operações de comércio internacional. O primeiro livro é o "Código aduaneiro do Mercosul e suas normas de aplicação".

O objetivo do novo guia, se-

gundo Santiago Martin Gallo, assessor técnico da Comissão Parlamentar Conjunta do Mercosul, é mostrar as vantagens dos acordos firmados pelo governo brasileiro no contexto de integração da América Latina. "O guia poderá servir como um instrumento a mais para a capacitação dos despachantes aduaneiros", diz Gallo. Para ele, esse tipo de iniciativa pode colaborar no aumento das exportações brasileiras, especialmente para os países que compram produtos de maior valor agregado. Na medida em que os despachantes adquiram mais conhecimento, terão

maior capacidade de orientar clientes interessados em exportar, afirma o assessor. O guia é composto por uma seção de respostas a perguntas básicas sobre o processo de in-



tegração regional, como, por exemplo, qual é o papel das pequenas e médias empresas e das entidades de classe na integração econômica.

Também faz parte do livro uma seção destinada a explicar o funcionamento dos acordos realizados no âmbito da Aladi.

Em outro capítulo, é explicado com detalhes como é o regulamento do Regime de Origem e como é o seu funcionamento na prática.

Além disso, há uma lista dos principais produtos exportados pelo Brasil aos países integrantes da Aladi. O guia prático ainda apresenta a internalização de todos os acordos

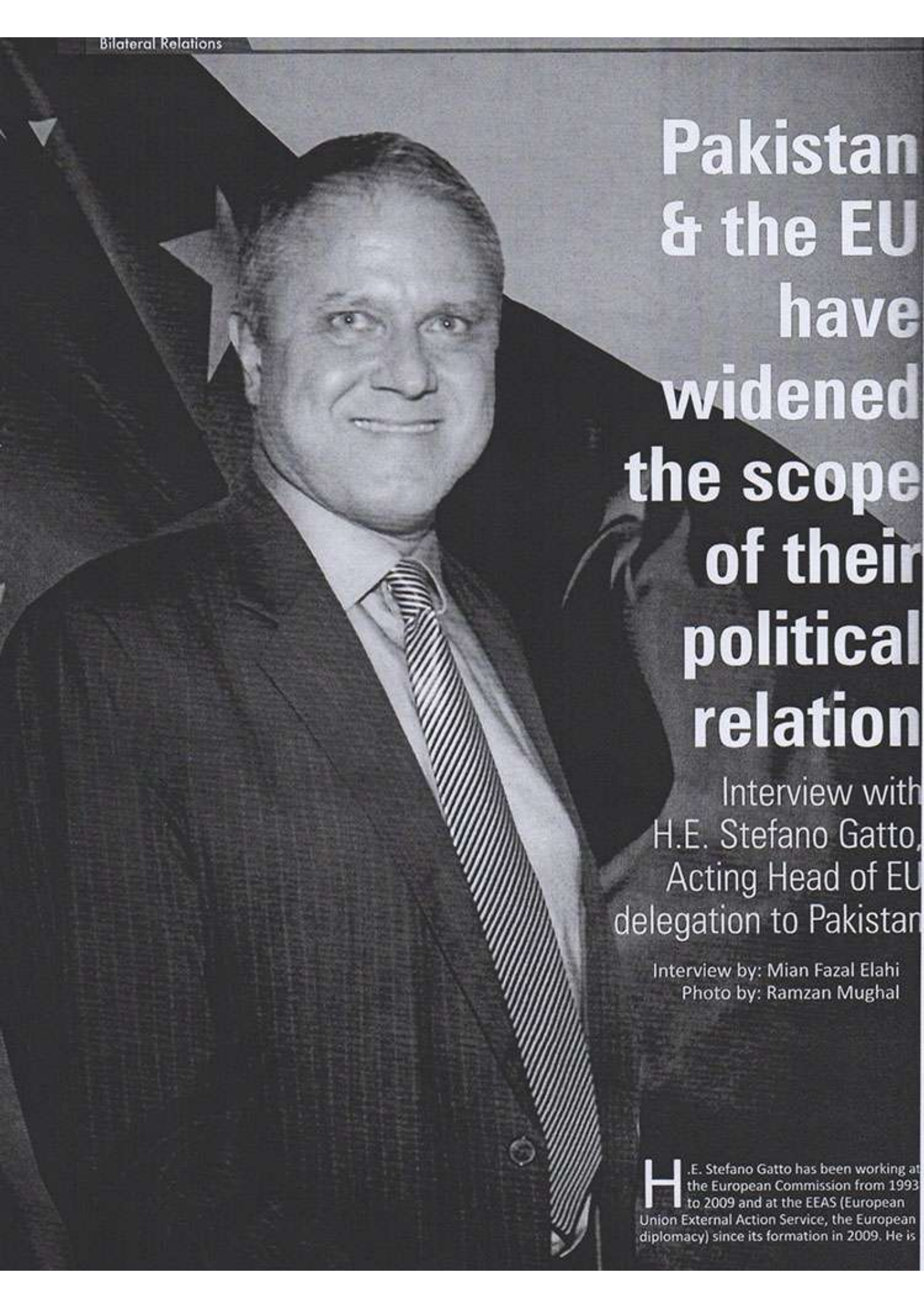
assinados pelo Brasil no âmbito da Aladi e da legislação brasileira.

No seu final, foi feito um diretório de informações que fornece uma lista de endereços de entidades ligadas à integração regional de todos os países-membro da região.

Existem também outras coleções, como Normas jurídicas do Mercosul e Cidade, Cidadania e Integração, além de boletins com informações do Mercosul. Quem estiver interessado em adquirir o guia prático ou qualquer outro volume pode pedir informações pelo e-mail: mercosul@originet.com.br. □

**Livro explica o regulamento do Regime de Origem**





# Pakistan & the EU have widened the scope of their political relation

Interview with  
H.E. Stefano Gatto,  
Acting Head of EU  
delegation to Pakistan

Interview by: Mian Fazal Elahi  
Photo by: Ramzan Mughal

**H**.E. Stefano Gatto has been working at the European Commission from 1993 to 2009 and at the EEAS (European Union External Action Service, the European diplomacy) since its formation in 2009. He is





Acting Head of Delegation since March 30th, 2015. The 'Diplomatic Focus' has found the opportunity to talk to him and learn about his early life, education, services, experiences, awards and rewards, achievements and more importantly his role in bringing close Pakistan and the EU countries in the field of trade, education, culture, tourism and diplomacy.

**Q. Your Excellency! First of all, we are thankful to you for giving us time. After that, I would like to learn a bit about your early life, family and career.**

Thank you for providing me this space on the occasion of the Europe Day. Beyond being a European diplomat, I think my life itself is a vivid example of European integration in practice. Born Italian, with a father that at his turn had grown up in France, I lived many years in Spain before joining the EU public service in 1993, and I feel myself fully bi-cultural but on top of it a European more than a national of one given country of the Union. I have degrees from four European universities in four different European countries and degrees

in four different European languages. My wife is from Spain, and my son has both our nationalities and studied in a third European system. I am a fan of two

An Italian citizen, he has been living many years in Spain, which is his second homeland, and posted for the EU in Belgium, Luxembourg, Brazil, India and El Salvador, where he has been heading the EU Delegation between 2009 and 2013. He joined the EU Delegation to Pakistan as Deputy Head of Delegation in October 2014.

football teams from different nations and they happen to be the ones qualified for the forthcoming final of the Champions League, Juventus and Barcelona, what has become quite a conflictual issue for me. And I am one of the few Latin Europeans loving and playing cricket, but that is another story indeed! I live in Pakistan with my wife Isabel, our son Matias studies in a Spanish university,

**Q. Your Excellency! The EU has great and significant role not only in the region but worldwide. Please tell us about its history and functions in brief?**

The European Union is the most accomplished process of regional integration in the world, born at the end of WW II to rebuild a continent destroyed on brand new bases: converging economic interests would avoid possible future conflicts. In this sense, the success has been complete, because not only we avoided those conflicts, now unthinkable after centuries of divisions, but in the process the economic prosperity of our countries also increased exponentially.



## Profile of Mr Stefano Gatto

Acting Head of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan

Mr Gatto holds degrees in Economics (Bocconi University, Milan) and History (UK) and Masters' degrees in International Relations (Madrid) and European Law (Luxembourg).



After five years of experience in the private sector, he joined the European Commission in 1993. Until 2009, he has occupied several positions of responsibilities in the field of EU external policy, to subsequently join the EEAS (European Union External Action Service, the European diplomacy) since the creation of that body in 2009.

An Italian citizen, he has been living many years in Spain, his second homeland, and posted for the EU in Belgium, Luxembourg, Brazil (1998 – 2002), India (2002 – 06) and El Salvador, where he has been heading the EU Delegation between 2009 and 2013. He has been posted back to EEAS headquarters in Brussels between September 2013 and September 2014, to join the EU Delegation to Pakistan as Deputy Head of Delegation in October 2014. He is Acting Head of Delegation since March 30th, 2015.

He speaks and writes, apart from his native Italian, English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Catalan.

He has published numerous articles on international affairs in several magazines in different countries, focussing mainly on European, Asian and Latin American affairs, international trade, electoral matters and development co-operation.

He has published three books: two essays (respectively on Latin America developments during the 90s and a comparison of the Italian and Spanish economic crises after 2009) and one collection of short stories, in Spanish.

**Q. Why was there a need to the formation of the EU?**

The EU was born as a reaction to the disasters of two world wars, which had originated in Europe and had ravaged our continent. The EU changed completely that mindset, and this is recognized as the motivation for the Nobel Peace Prize given to the bloc in 2012. In the EU, we have developed a unique form of cohabitation, that we call "sharing of sovereignty": our nations have delegated to the EU part of their prerogatives with the goal of pursuing together a greater good. This has been successful, and the recent crisis has only showed that we have to further pursue our integration: the effects of the financial crisis would have been far worse on separate nations than has been on a bloc of integrated countries

**Q. How many countries are the members of the union?**

We started from 6 in 1957 to the current 28, with few others still to come from the Balkans.

**Q. What are the criteria for becoming an EU member?**

You need to be a full – fledged democracy, respectful of fundamental human rights and liberties and of international law. The country must be a market economy with the capacity to compete in a single market with no restrictions to the free movements of goods, persons, services and capitals within the EU.

**Q. Your Excellency! It's about three decades of relations between Pakistan and the EU Countries. How do you see the development throughout the years?**

Pakistan and the then European Community established diplomatic relation back in 1962. Then, the relations were essentially commercial. Pakistan became later eligible as partner for development, and the EU has just increased the allocation of development funds to Pakistan, attributing 635 mi Euros of grants till 2020. The EU is one of the main partners of development partners of Pakistan, focusing on issues like education, rural development and governance rather than physical infrastructure. It's a

sort of "soft" co-operation, centered on the concept of human development. Progressively, Pakistan and the EU have widened the scope of their political relation, which embrace now issues as diverse as the multilateral agenda, counterterrorism, disarmament, governance, human rights, energy.

**Q. Sir, the European Union is Pakistan's largest trading partner. How do you see the role of the mutual trade in bringing closer Pakistan and the EU countries?**

The engine of the EU has always bene trade: we are the main trade actor in the world, with a combined weight in international exchanges comparable to the US and still superior to China. It's only natural for Pakistan to have intense trade relations with the biggest world market (the EU is still the first trading partner of Pakistan): the trade balance is favorable to Pakistan especially since the concession of the GSP+ status to this country, which has increased exports to the EU by 20% in 2014. The consolidation of this trend is

what we are trying to pursue.

**Q. Your Excellency! In these modern days, the importance of bilateral trade has increased two-fold. What do you think what further steps should be taken to increase and enhance the trade between Pakistan and the EU countries furthermore?**

The big challenge for the next few years is the consolidation of current exchanges (with textiles and clothing as the first exporting sector to the EU) and the widening of the spectrum of exports to some new nontraditional products: we are supporting Pakistan with technical assistance for this (focusing on agri-food, leather, and fisheries).

**Q. What opportunities you see for Pakistani people there in EU countries and your people here in Pakistan in the field of investment?**

European countries have a stock of considerable investments in Pakistan, dating from previous periods. In the current situation, European investors are not very prone to invest in this country: they will certainly do, in light of its potential, when the security situation will have improved.

**Q. Your Excellency! Education has great role in the development of a country and the EU is supporting education everywhere. Can you please tell us about your programs in support for the education in Pakistan and other any plans to bring increase in the exchange program for education?**

Education and vocational training are indeed the main priorities for our cooperation with Pakistan: we are supporting contributing to the educative policies of several provinces, knowing that the education is the real key for development. We will continue supporting the Pakistani youth for years to come.

**Q. Your Excellency! Apart**





**Q. During the education, the EU has been helping Pakistan in the hours of need for example during floods and earthquakes many times. How do you see these steps in enhancing the ties between Pakistan and the EU?**

Humanitarian assistance has always been present in Pakistan: we want to go beyond post-disaster support and currently with what we do with the rest of the world we support, through our humanitarian office ECHO, preventive policies and adaptation to climate change, a key issue for the future.

**Q. Your Excellency! You have been working in Pakistan for quite a long time. How did you find Pakistan in terms of culture, hospitality and atmosphere?**

For seven months, it's still short. I was familiar with the region having been based four years in Delhi before. Despite the well-known security environment, Pakistan and Islamabad surprise you for friendliness and hospitality of its people, which is quite exceptional. I must say, and it would be impossible denying it: the culture of South Asia is an essential contribution to human civilization.

**Q. Your Excellency! Both Pakistan and EU countries share cordial ties in**

**the diplomatic field for quite a long time. As per your great diplomatic experience in the field, what do you think how much is the potential for both to further enhance the mutual relations?**

Relations are very good despite we might have different sensitiveness on some specific issues. Pakistan and the EU may work further together with the development of the economic and regional scenarios in mind.

**Q. Your Excellency! You have been in the diplomatic field for quite a long time and certainly there would have been some memorable moments as well as some bitter experiences/challenges. Would you please like to share some of them with us?**

My more memorable moments are those when I had the feeling that initiatives proposed or promoted by the EU were changing for the better the life of people: I felt so on several occasions in Latin America or Asia. My bitter moments are those when bureaucracy and inertias play against efficiency and good results.

**Q. Your Excellency! What aspect of Pakistan attracts you the most?**

The richness of its heritage and the

kindness of its people. I also like the food, but it's better to make use moderation in that field!

**Q. Can you please tell us what your hobbies are in which you pass your free time?**

I read quite a lot, I write (I already published four books and I hope there will be many more to come), I follow and try to practice some sports.

**Q. How do you see the role of 'Diplomatic Focus' in enhancing the bilateral ties of Pakistan with other countries of the world?**

Diplomatic Focus seems to me an excellent tool to know more about the diplomatic community in Pakistan.

**Q. Any message you want to give to the readers of 'Diplomatic Focus' and especially to the youth of Pakistan?**

Be sure that the EU will always stand close to this country and ready to support your efforts to build a sustainable future. And do not believe the story that Europe is declining in importance, because she has still so much to offer!

*Thanks a lot Your Excellency! For giving time out of your busy schedule and of course for your nice talk.*



## Hard Talk



By Nasir Habib



## European Union and Government of Pakistan sign two Financing Agreements worth €59 million Euro

**F**inancing Agreements of the Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme and the International Labour and Environment Standards programme were signed between the European Union and the Government of Pakistan. Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan signed the Agreements on behalf of the GoP while Mr. Stefano Gatto, Chargé d'Affaires signed on EU's behalf.

The EU and the Government of Balochistan have jointly designed a six year programme to which the

EU will contribute €45 million (5 billion Pak Rupees approximately) to support community-led local development and local governance. The Balochistan Rural Development and Community Empowerment Programme will help communities as well as provincial and local authorities to partner in reducing the negative impact of economic deprivation, poverty and social inequality, environmental degradation and climate change. It aims to build and empower resilient communities in identifying and implementing socio-economic development activities on a sustainable basis in partnership

with local authorities.

The programme objectives twofold: to enable communities implement community-led socio-economic development interventions and capability influence public policy decision making for quality service delivery and to capacitate local authorities manage and involve communities in the local public sector planning and implementation process. The Programme will assist the Government of Balochistan in formulation Policy Framework institutionalise and support community-led local develop

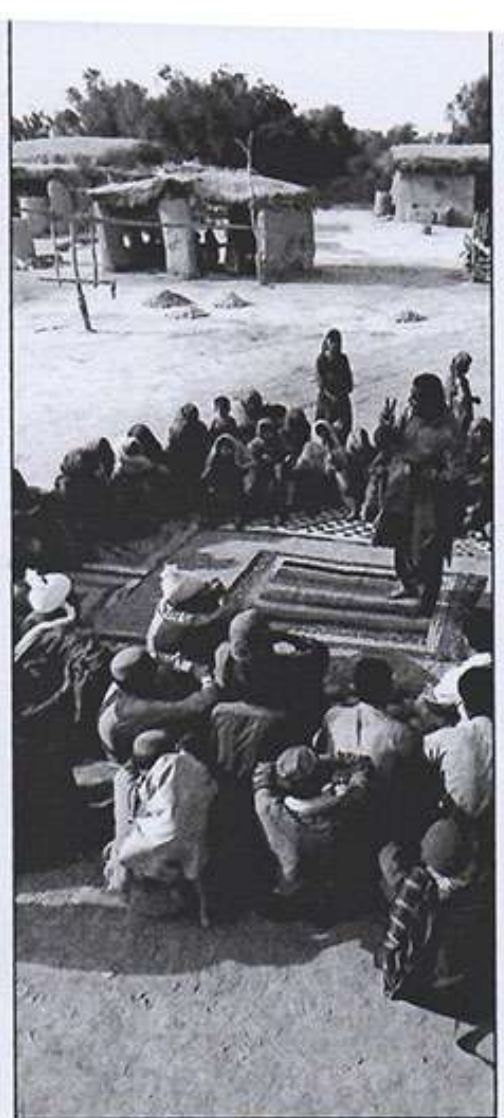


pproaches, and to improve Public Finance Management in the Province.

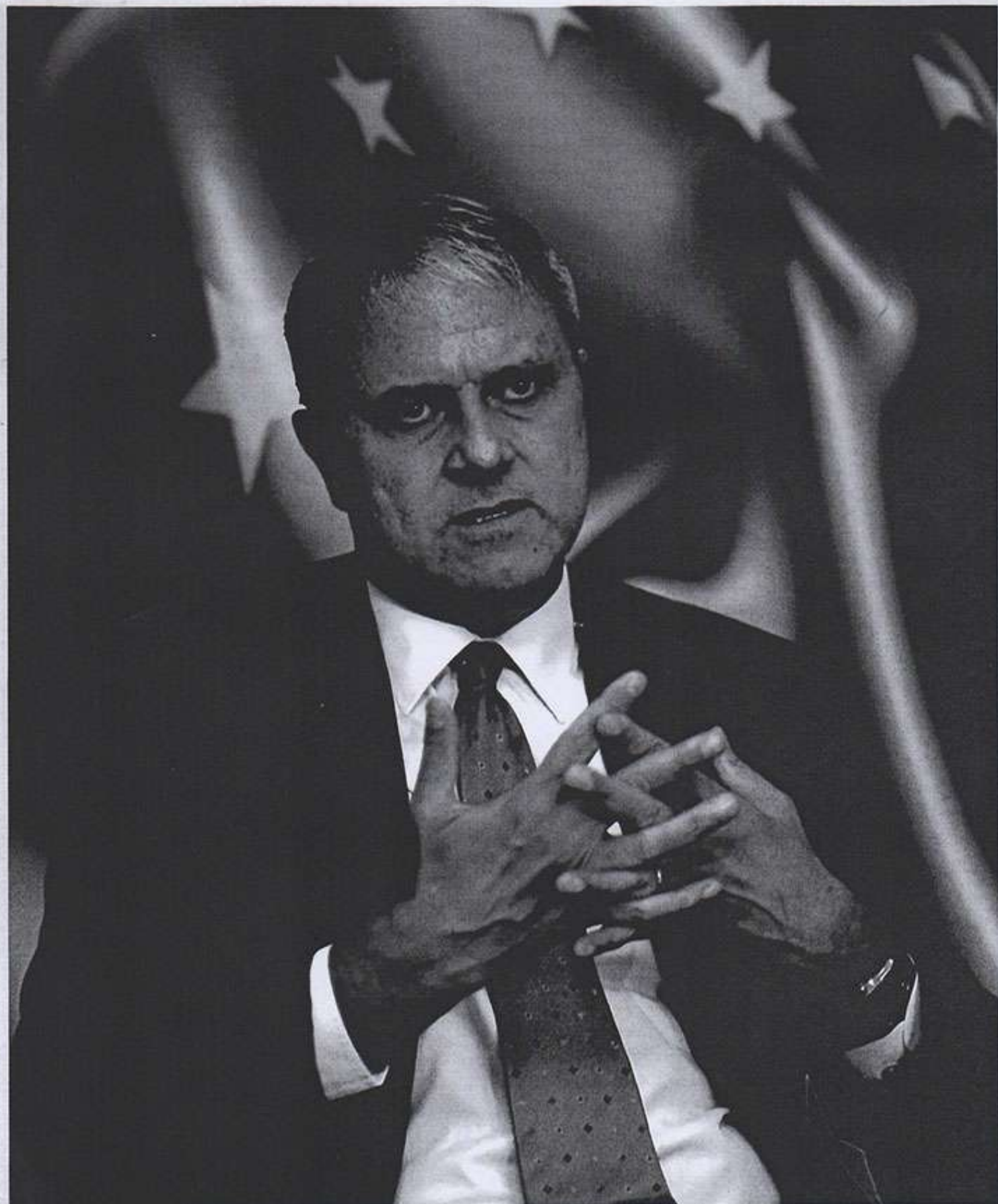
Chargé d' Affaires Mr. Stefano Gatto also thanked the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Climate Change, ILO and WWF on the occasion of the signature of the financing agreement of the EU funded project International Labour and Environment Standards (ILES) in Pakistan. Mr. Gatto said at the occasion that the EU firmly believes in the importance of rule of law as a key factor for inclusive growth and development, applied to every dimension of law, and in particular labour law. The project will not only help the competitiveness of Pakistani products if they are labelled "fair trade" but will also help Pakistan to improve the use of international standards in terms of environment. Furthermore, the respect of international environmental standards will allow Pakistan to use the label of "green" products, which will increase competitiveness of Pakistan, he

added.

This €12.6 million Euros project International Labour and Environment Standards (ILES) will promote the enforcement, implementation and compliance with ILES by public and private sector institutions and organizations in Pakistan. The programme objectives are twofold: 1) to assist public sector institutions (Federal and provincial) to improve the enforcement of existing legislation and compliance with ILES in Pakistan, as well as define new laws where necessary and 2) to assist the textile and leather sectors' small and medium enterprises to institutionalise the implementation ILES legislation through their active engagement. This six year programme should start later this year. The EU has allocated 653 M€ to finance development projects in Pakistan during the 2014-2020 period, focusing principally on rural development, education and vocational training, as well as on governance, human rights and rule of law. ■







Exclusive interview with

## **Mr. Stefano Gatto**

Designated Ambassador to Guatemala (Central America)





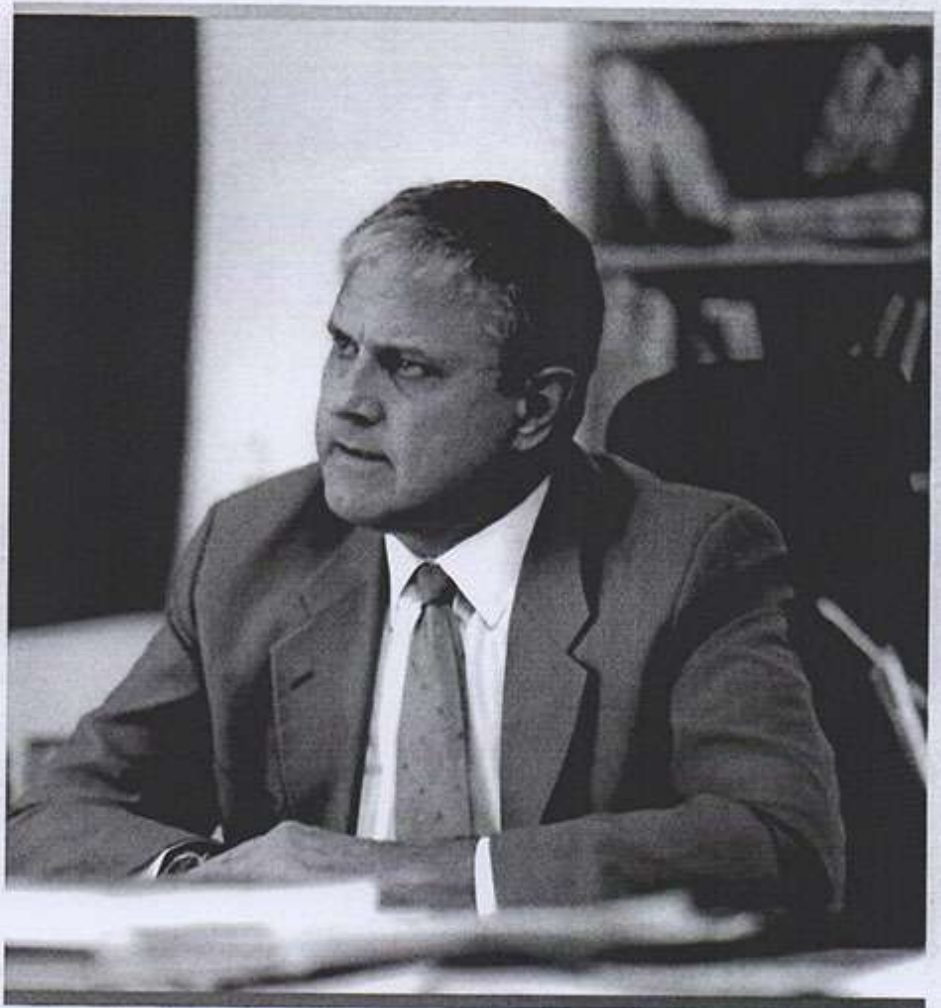
# EU welcomes CPEC and supports peace process in the region

“The EU works with the civil society of Pakistan to eliminate violence against women and children, supports political empowerment of women, prevention of human trafficking and ensuring rights of the religious minorities, **said Mr. Stefano**”

The European Union (EU) welcomes the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and supports peace process in region, says designated ambassador to Guatemala (Central America), Stefano Gatto. The CPEC will open new doors in South Asia. It will create more jobs, better infrastructure, trade and investment for the regional countries and peace in the region. The EU will continue its political, social, economic cooperation with Pakistan. To support civilian government in Pakistan is our priority. Pakistanis are cooperative and hospitable people. The EU welcome CPEC and supports peace process in region," during an interview, he said.

During the interview with Fire, Mr. Stefano Gatto said that democracy is conducive for improved economic and social conditions. Respect for democratic principles and human rights are fundamental and non-negotiable conditions for the European Union. The functioning of democratic institutions in Pakistan have improved considerably, including a far reaching devolution process through the 18th Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution and the promotion of human rights at both; Federal and Provincial level.

Pakistan and the EU have signed up all major international human rights conventions and are working



together in major international forums such as the United Nations. EU supports Pakistan's commitment to strengthen its democratic institutions and to promote human rights across the country. The EU played an important role through its

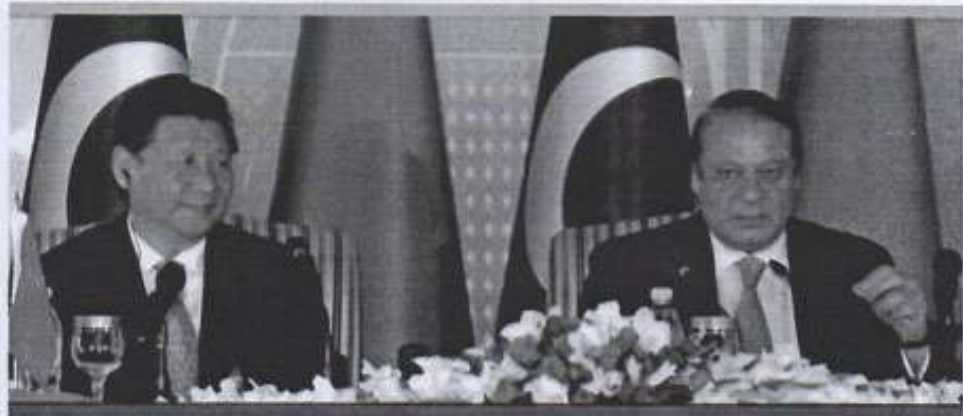
Election Observation Mission during the 2002, 2008 and 2013 Pakistan general elections. Since 2008, over 70 recommendations made by the Election Observers have been followed up. As per EU practice, the 2013 EU Election Observation Mission has prepared a



new upcoming EU engagement with Pakistan stakeholders for the 2013-2018 electoral and parliamentary cycles. Mr. Stefano termed the transfer of the power from one elected government to another elected government in 2013 as the EU success. He said strengthening Pakistan's parliamentary institutions as the core function of legislation, oversight and representations is a priority for EU-Pakistan relations.

The EU works with the civil society of Pakistan to eliminate violence against women and children, support women's political empowerment, prevent trafficking in human beings, strengthen juvenile justice reform and ensure the religious minorities, said Mr. Stefano. The EU is supporting the government of Pakistan as well as the civil society, to deliver on Pakistan's obligations according to international human rights law to protect, promote and fulfill human rights with a focus on women and children rights, freedom of religion, belief and rule of law and access to justice. The EU also strives worldwide for the abolishment of death penalty, he added.

Mr. Stefano Gatto informed that, at present **Pakistan benefits from the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+), a system that in its present form has benefited the traditional sectors, mainly textiles and leather.** As a result, almost 20 percent of Pakistan's



exports enter the EU at zero tariff and more than 70 percent at a professional rate. The EU is one of the main development partners of Pakistan, focusing on issues like education, rural development and governance rather than physical infrastructure. It's emphasizes more on "soft" co-operation, based on the concept of human development. Progressively, Pakistan and the EU

have widened the scope of their political relations, which embraces new issues as diverse as the multilateral agenda, counterterrorism, disarmament, governance, human rights and energy.

Talking about his nearby two years presence in Pakistan, he praised Pakistanis and said since his arrival in Islamabad, he has always found Pakistanis welcoming and with a smiling face. **Pakistan is a rich fertile country. The richness of its heritage and the kindness of its people attract foreigners.** Comparing Pakistanis with Indians, as he has served in India for a long time too, he said, Indians are very straight and rude, whereas, he found Pakistanis flexible and cooperative. Mr. Stefano visited many cities of the country like Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Kashmir and found northern areas of Pakistan mesmerizing, lush green and natural scenic which according to him makes Pakistan a wonderful tourist spot. ■





Multi-stakeholder partnerships

# Speakers call for integrated approach to tackling nutritional challenges

Say risk could be reduced through micronutrient fortification

OUR CORRESPONDENT  
ISLAMABAD

Speakers at a conference on Wednesday stressed upon government, civil society and private sector to join hands for creating awareness about linkages between nutrition and economic development, and for proposing solutions to nutritional challenges faced by the country.

The national conference "Health and nutrition: shaping a healthier nation" was jointly organised by the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR), National Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (NAPHIS) and Nestlé, Pakistan.

"It is need of the hour to look at health and nutrition with an integrated approach," Federal Minister for Science and Technology Rana Tanveer Hussain said.

"The National Nutrition Survey indicates that stunting, wasting and micronutrient malnutrition are endemic in the country," he added.

There is a gap between research and development, which the government is try-

ing to address, Hussain said. "Obesity and under-nutrition go hand-in-hand as lack of information induces consumption of unhealthy food," the NAPHIS Director-General, Zahoor Ahmad, said.

Food Fortification Programme Technical Director Dr Tausif Akhtar Janjua said that the issue of micro-nutrient malnutrition through fortification was one of the best investments the country could make.

"Almost 50 per cent deaths among children are due to malnutrition and overall annual loss to the economy is three per cent of the GDP," he said.

"It was more than the loss due to the energy crisis," he added.

"Direct links with decreased physical productivity, while indirect links include impaired cognitive development, schooling and productivity and costly inefficiencies such as illness and death," Janjua said.

"Nearly half of Pakistani mothers and children suffer from under-nutrition," he said.

National Institute of Health Chairperson Dr Farnaz Malik said that the risk of under-nutrition could be reduced through micronutrient fortification.



"It is need of the hour to look at health and nutrition with an integrated approach

Federal Minister for Science and Technology  
**Rana Tanveer Hussain**

"Around two million people die every year due to 200 food and water-borne diseases," she said.

European Union (EU) Delegation Deputy Head Stefano Catto highlighted the role of the EU in enhancing maternal and child nutrition by reducing mortality, morbidity, and growth and development deficiencies due to under-nutrition.

PCSIR Chairperson Dr Shahzad Alam stressed the importance of early life nutrition, which he termed

most critical determinant of future life.

He said that Pakistan was one of the few Asian countries, which had shown little improvement.

Nestlé Pakistan Managing-Director Bruno Olierhoek said that multi-stakeholder partnerships were being formed across the world to tackle nutritional challenges.

"We want to make sure that we are part of the solution," he said.

"The UNIDO is committed to cooperate with Pakistan for establishment of a coordinated and coherent management system to ensure safe and healthier food of quality not only for export but for domestic consumption as well," the UNIDO Country Representative Esam Alqararah said.

Ministry of National Food Security and Research Federal Secretary Muhammad Abid Javed said that the government was playing its part to address nutrition challenges.

"Safe and nutritious food is a key element of the National Food Security Policy," he added.

Dr Baseer Khan Achakzai of health ministry said that they were soon going to launch a huge survey to measure malnutrition and water intake throughout the country.



# Pakistan's GSP Plus status could be under threat, says EU

Country must comply with 27 UN conventions, particularly respect human rights

PEER MUHAMMAD  
ISLAMABAD

The suspension of GSP Plus status of Pakistan cannot be ruled out if the South Asian nation fails to comply with 27 conventions of the United Nations, particularly those that are related to human rights, said the European Union ambassador to Pakistan.

He was talking to reporters on the sidelines of a seminar on "GSP Plus in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges", organised by the Democracy Reporting International here on Thursday.

The ambassador, Jean-Francois Cautain, pointed out that there were precedents when the EU suspended the GSP Plus status of different countries after they could not comply with the UN conventions.

In this regard, he cited the example of Sri Lanka as its preferential trade facility was suspended due to human rights violations years ago.

He clarified that the moratorium on death penalty was not directly part of the 27 con-

"The EU has completed its assessment of the progress pertaining to the GSP Plus status and the commitment made by Pakistan

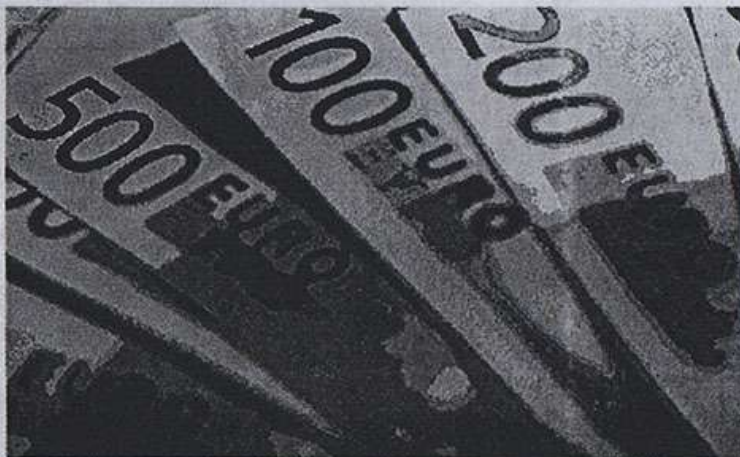
EU Ambassador  
Jean-Francois Cautain

ventions, but it was linked with the conventions on human rights and democracy.

"The EU has completed its assessment of the progress pertaining to the GSP Plus status and the commitment made by Pakistan; an assessment report will be presented to the EU parliament before a review of the facility in January next year," he said.

Speaking to the audience, German Ambassador Ina Lepel stressed that compliance with and implementation of the UN conventions were in favour of Pakistan and any deviation would hurt the country's image.

EU Mission Deputy Head Stefano Gatto acknowledged that in the first phase



**IMPROVEMENT:** In the first year after winning the GSP Plus status, Pakistan's exports rose 21.24% and they increased a further 12.5% in the first seven months of 2015 compared to the pre-GSP period. PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan had made progress at the institutional and policy levels as far as commitments to the UN conventions were concerned. Now, "there is a need to progress at the implementation level," he said.

Federal Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir, who was also present at the event, said Pakistan's exports to the EU had risen more than 33%

compared to the pre-GSP Plus period. In the first year after winning the GSP Plus status, exports rose 21.24% and they increased a further 12.5% in the first seven months of 2015 compared to the pre-GSP period.

"The statistics of exports for 19 months under the GSP Plus programme suggest that this scheme has proved to

be a resounding success for Pakistan."

Dastgir told the audience that GSP Plus came under the title of Special Incentive for Sustainable Development and good governance was an incentive to show progress on international human rights obligations and was not a reward.

He insisted that Pakistan

was the only country that had made institutional arrangements and established a treaty implementation cell in order to meet international commitments.

According to Dastgir, Pakistan has made three significant achievements since the current government took over in June 2013. "Incidents of terrorism have dropped by 70% and financial stabilisation and consolidation of democracy are the other noteworthy accomplishments, which the world also acknowledges."

The chairman of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association said the GSP Plus scheme had opened the doors to export of Pakistani products to the EU market in a smooth manner.

Almost 80% to 85% of the country's exports to the EU comprised textile products, he said, adding the textile industry had set a target of increasing annual exports from \$13 billion to \$26 billion over the next five years.

"It could be possible if the sector is provided with special incentives and a level playing field."



## Pakistan must diversify exports to Europe, says EU envoy

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August 24, 2015 - Pakistan

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Acting ambassador of the European Union (EU), Stefano Gatto, has asked Pakistan's business community to diversify its exports to Europe in the post-GSP Plus scenario

Pakistan's exports mostly consist of textiles and leather goods currently, but efforts should be made to diversify the export range in order to fully benefit from the EU's GSP Plus scheme, he said while speaking to office bearers of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

"Pakistan needs to focus on strengthening its capacity in order to effectively compete in the international markets," the Pakistani media quoted him as saying.

Gatto said that Pakistan's exports to EU had been gradually improving after the grant of GSP plus status, however after every two years, the 28-nation European bloc would assess whether Pakistan was fulfilling the conditions required to get duty-free access to European markets or not. The first assessment had begun, which would be officially reported in January 2016, he added.

Commenting on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said it could bring economic improvements and Pakistan would be able to play the role of a bridge between the Central Asian Republics (CARs). But Gatto termed the lifting of moratorium on death penalty and establishment of military courts serious issues "We want to see strengthening of civilian courts rather than giving the role to military courts," he added.

KCCI Senior Vice President Muhammad Ibrahim Kasumbi stressed the need for improving the perception about Pakistan particularly in the EU countries. He said the security situation in Karachi has improved significantly due to the ongoing operation against criminal elements. He also endorsed Gatto's statement that Pakistan needs to export traditional and non-traditional goods to the EU markets in order to fully benefit from the GSP Plus scheme. (SH)



Duty-free access

# EU envoy stresses on export diversity

Says first assessment of fulfilling conditions for GSP Plus currently under way

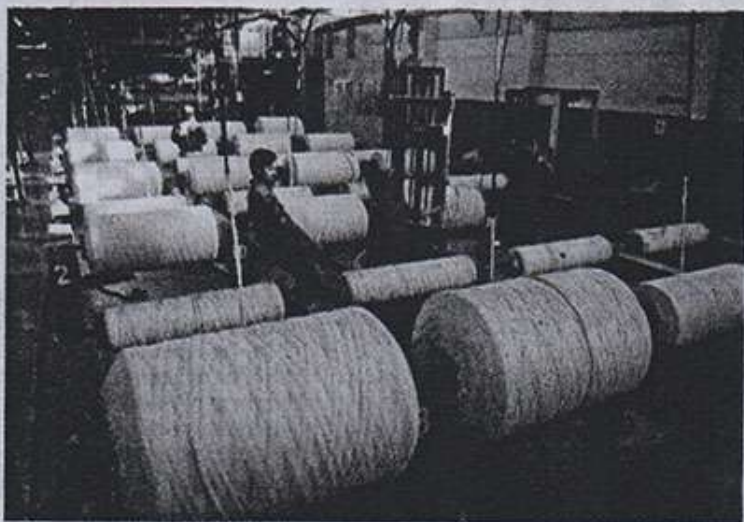
OUR CORRESPONDENT  
KARACHI

The acting ambassador of the European Union (EU), Stefano Gatto, has said Pakistan's business community must diversify its exports to Europe in the post-GSP Plus scenario.

Pakistan's exports mostly consist of textiles and leather goods currently, but efforts should be made to diversify the export range in order to fully benefit from the EU's GSP Plus scheme, he said while speaking to office bearers of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

"Pakistan needs to focus on strengthening its capacity in order to effectively compete in the international markets," he said.

Gatto stated Pakistan's exports to the EU have been gradually improving after the grant of the GSP Plus status for 10 years commencing from January 1, 2014. However, he added that the 28-nation European bloc will



**FULL USE:** Pakistan's exports mostly consist of textiles but efforts should be made to diversify the export range in order to fully benefit from the EU's GSP Plus scheme. PHOTO: FILE

assess whether Pakistan is fulfilling the conditions required to get duty-free access to European markets after every two years.

The first assessment has begun and is currently under way, he said, noting that it will be officially reported in

January next year.

Commenting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said the corridor can bring economic prosperity, as Pakistan will be able to play the role of a bridge among the Central Asian Republics (CARs).

Terming the lifting of the moratorium on death penalty and the establishment of military courts two serious issues, the EU acting ambassador said these could be called negative steps. "We want to see strengthening of civilian courts rather than giving the role to military courts," he said.

While welcoming the EU ambassador, KCCI Senior Vice President Muhammad Ibrahim Kasumi stressed the need for improving the perception about Pakistan particularly in the EU countries. He said the security situation in Karachi has improved significantly due to the ongoing operation against criminal elements.

He also underscored the need to export traditional and non-traditional goods to the EU markets in order to fully benefit from the GSP Plus Scheme.

Commenting on Indo-Pak trade, Kasumi said the business communities of Pakistan and India want to enhance trade and have no problems in dealing with each other. However, the lingering issues are mostly political in nature that can only be resolved through a diplomatic dialogue, he added.



## **HR commission chief wants international treaties implemented**

Kalbe Ali July 02, 2015

—

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) retired Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan warned the federal and provincial government departments on Wednesday not to hinder the implementation of the international treaties on human rights that Pakistan has signed.

His warning came in the background of criticism at home and abroad of the government's treatment of human rights issues at a discussion on the role of NCHR in protecting those rights in Pakistan. Particularly, the European Union was unhappy over the government lifting the moratorium on execution of death row convicts, raising fears it might reconsider the GSP Plus export incentive it had granted to Pakistan.

"We have signed 27 conventions that await implementation and seven of them relate to human rights," said the retired judge. Human rights are the basic principles of Islam but are still denied in the country.

Those who consider the HR issues an international agenda must understand that those working for improved standards of human rights, which include the rights of women, children, labour and other groups, were not the enemies of the state, he added.

Article continues after ad

"The basic principle of all religions is granting rights to all segments of the society, bringing social justice," he said.

"It needs to be understood that if there are rights but are not implemented then it means there are no rights."

"We are faithful to the state but we are opposed to rouse elements that are bent upon dismantling the pillars of the state," he said.

"The rights issue was the basis of the establishment of Pakistan. Our founding father Muhammad Ali Jinnah felt that the rights of Muslims would not be protected under the system that existed in united India."

Wednesday's session was organised by the Democracy Reporting International (DRI). EU's GSP Plus status for Pakistan is linked to human rights standards in the country.



Stefano Gatto, acting head of the EU delegation in Pakistan, told the session that though aimed at improving the economic conditions of the country, “it is considered the GSP import concession will eventually help improve the availability of rights to the general public”.

“The EU has had concerns over lifting of moratorium on death penalty but there is an argument that it was needed in wake of ongoing war on terror,” he added.

At the same time he pointed out that many countries in Europe fought lengthy wars against terror but authorities remained within the ambit of law.

“Here in Pakistan the main concerns over death penalty are issues related to fairness of the trial, following of basic principles as age of the accused and access to justice system etc,” the EU representative said.

He recalled that the EU has always stressed that Pakistan needed to improve its track record in this regard.

Retired Justice Majida Rizvi, who is the first chairperson of Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), lamented that like the National Commission on Status of Women, the SHRC has been rendered toothless.

“We have been given only two unskilled lower staff and the secretary of SHRC is an employee of the provincial government who has never showed up at the SHRC office,” she said.

“But this has not stopped me from exercising my powers and several cases related to jail inmates have been taken up,” she said.

Orphan girls are found in prisons on charges fabricated by relatives to gain their property, while many prisoners were suffering from hepatitis because of seedy conditions in the prisons.

“The SHRC is weak and the government has not given any salary or facilities to me for one and a half year,” she said.

“But we are strong and together with the civil society the SHRC has grown and will continue to fight for human rights in the province,” she said.

Other speakers demanded that the remaining provinces too should establish human rights commission as most of the HR related functions have been devolved after the 18th Amendment.

*Published in Dawn, July 2nd, 2015*

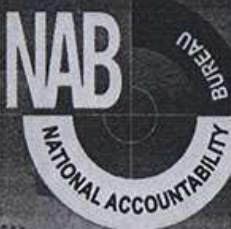
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## DEFENCE ISSUES

**Pakistan, Russia discuss regional security**

RAWALPINDI A top Russian defence ministry official Vice Admiral Volozhinskiy Andrey Olgertovich called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Rashad Mahmood on Thursday. Both the dignitaries discussed matters related to security challenges. Vice Admiral Volozhinskiy is heading a Russian Armed Forces delegation to hold first Pakistan-Russia Staff Talks at the Joint Staff Headquarters. AP



## PERFORMANCE REVIEW

**NAB Balochistan recovers Rs401m in 2015**

QUETTA The National Accountability Bureau Balochistan office has recovered Rs401.3 million from January 2015 to date. NAB Balochistan DG Tariq Mehmood Malik said this while briefing NAB Chairman Qamar Zaman Chaudhry on his visit to review the performance of different wings of the bureau. Malik said that ever since its inception, NAB Balochistan has recovered Rs4.6 billion. OUR CORRESPONDENT

## International affairs

# EU for bar on executions

Says global conventions should be followed for duty-free market access

OUR CORRESPONDENT  
ISLAMABAD

The European Union (EU) has urged Pakistan to reinstate the moratorium on death penalty, saying effective implementation of international conventions is mandatory for the country to seek duty-free access of its goods to the European markets.

In a statement issued by the EU headquarters in Brussels on Thursday, the 28-nation bloc voiced concerns over the growing number of executions in Pakistan.

At least 150 people have been executed in Pakistan since December 2014, when

the government lifted its moratorium on executions in place since 2008. "This represents a major step backwards in Pakistan's record on human rights," the EU statement read.

Referring to the recent execution of Aftab Bahadur, who was said to be a minor when he was sentenced to death in 1992, the EU regretted that the convict's alleged juvenile status at the time of the crime and torture while in custody to extract a confession was not given due consideration.

The statement also referred to another such case, saying the Supreme Court has dis-

## FACILITATION

## 20%

of Pakistani exports enter the EU market at zero tariff under the GSP-plus status

missed the latest petition of Shafiq Hussain, who again faces execution and who may also have been a juvenile when he was convicted. Torture was also alleged in this case.

The EU also reminded

Pakistan of its obligations under domestic and international laws to prohibit the death sentence for crimes committed by people under 18 years of age. "Effective implementation of international conventions is a requirement under the EU's GSP+ regulation," the statement recalled. "We call on Pakistan to reinstate the moratorium and to fully respect all its international obligations."

The EU opposes capital punishment in all cases and has consistently called for its universal abolition. Last month, acting EU Ambassador to Pakistan Stefano Gatto, in

an interview with *The Express Tribune*, cautioned that lifting of the death penalty moratorium could be taken as a negative step although it might not be directly linked with the GSP-plus status.

When asked whether these issues could affect Pakistan's GSP-plus status, he replied: "It is difficult to argue that the restoration of death penalty or more executions is a step in the right direction in the EU."

The GSP-plus status allows almost 20% of Pakistani exports to enter the EU market at zero tariff and 70% exports at preferential rates.

## CRIPPLING DISEASE

**New polio case detected in SWA**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR A new case of polio was reported from South Waziristan Agency (SWA) on Thursday, taking the number of cases reported in the country this year to 25.

According to officials of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa health department, the National Institute of Health in Islamabad confirmed that Rasool Badshah, the two-year-old son of South Waziristan resident Badi Zaman, had been infected by polio. The child, who hails from the Ziarat Zai village in the Sarwakai tehsil of South Waziristan, had not received any dose of the oral polio vaccine, they said.

Of this year's 25 polio cases, eight have been reported from Fata.





# EU research support for Pakistani scientists explained

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Pakistani scientists could benefit from the Horizon 2020 programme under which funds of 300 million to 400m euros are available for research assistance, said acting EU ambassador to Pakistan Stefano Gatto at a seminar held at Karachi University (KU) on Wednesday.

The programme aimed at creating awareness of Horizon 2020 was jointly organised by a European Union delegation to Pakistan, Pakistan Science Foundation and the KU.

The biggest EU research and innovation programme ever with nearly 80 billion euros of funding available over seven years (2014-2020), Horizon 2020 is a financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness.

In his speech, Mr Gatto underlined the need for research and said it's the key to progress and development. "Science and technology have no borders. Pakistan is a rapidly growing nation and we want to make it more vibrant in the field of sci-

ence and research," he said while acknowledging the services of Pakistani scientists and appreciating the research work being done at the KU.

He also spoke about the role of the EU in detail and said that it was a strong and diversified political institution.

The European Union counselor on scientific affairs, based in New Delhi, Denis Dambois, spoke through a video link, highlighting the importance of innovative research for developing nations.

"Europe is a highly diversified region that has the largest number of researchers in the world. The seven-year programme of Horizon 2020 is open for all researchers from any country," he said.

The European Union, he said, was working in collaboration with Pakistan and 402 Pakistani students, 10 scholars, had received grants.

Earlier welcoming the guests, vice chancellor of the KU Prof Mohammad Qaiser commended the EU for offering assistance to Pakistani researchers and said that it would provide many opportunities to explore new avenues.

Prof M. Ashraf of Pakistan Science Foundation talked about the aims of the organisation and said the basic purpose

of the PSF, set up in 1973, was to promote and popularise science.

Later, Mr Gatto spoke to a select gathering at the university's Area Study Centre for Europe. During his speech, he traced the history of the EU-Pakistan relations as far back as 1962 and recalled that it was his fourth assignment as EU ambassador.

He regretted that despite getting the award of GSP (Generalised Scheme of Preference) plus status, Pakistan had done little to meet the standards of quality assurance on the supply side.

Mr Gatto stressed the need for concerted efforts to take advantage of the trade concessions offered by the EU and said that there was a greater room for partnership with Pakistan.

The EU, he said, expected better performance on the fronts of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

"Human rights doesn't mean lifting the moratorium on death penalty but rather protecting human rights and labour rights with special focus on child labour, eliminating it in its all forms," he said, adding that Pakistan must try to create conditions favouring freedom of expression.



# Envoy says EU not in favour of Pakistan executions

Stefano Gatto says lifting of moratorium not linked with GSP-plus status for Pakistan

✪ KAMRAN YOUSAF

ISLAMABAD

It has been almost one and half year since Pakistani products were given duty-free access to European markets under the Generalised System of Preference, known as 'GSP Plus' status. In return for the concession, Pakistan promised to implement 27 international conventions related to human rights, good governance and labour and environmental standards.

The status was approved for 10 years but after every two years the 28-nation European bloc will assess whether Pakistan is fulfilling the conditions required to get duty-free access to European markets. The first assessment is a few months away but restoration of the death penalty and establishment of military courts may hamper Pakistan's efforts to continue enjoying this concession.

EU Ambassador in Islamabad Stefano Gatto cautioned on Sunday that lifting of the six-year moratorium on capital punishment as well as establishment of military courts could be taken as negative steps, although both these issues may not be directly linked with the GSP-plus status.

"It is difficult to argue that the restoration of the death penalty or more executions is a step in the right direction in the EU," Gatto said in an exclusive interview with *The Express Tribune*. He was asked whether these issues could affect Pakistan's GSP-plus status.

"If you are a bit cynical and you look from outside, you would say that we gave GSP plus to Pakistan to improve human rights standards and what they did now they have military courts and they have the death penalty back," Gatto added.

Pakistan lifted the moratorium on the death penalty soon after the December massacre at the military-run school in Peshawar that killed over 140 people, mostly children.



“We want to see strengthening of civilian courts in the civilian system rather than giving the role to military courts as there are less chances of transparency

EU Ambassador **Stefano Gatto**

In a series of new measures under the National Action Plan, parliament also approved a new legislation giving powers to the military to set up special courts to try hardcore terrorists.

But Ambassador Gatto said the EU had doubts over the military courts. "We want to see strengthening of civilian courts in the civilian system rather than giving the role to military courts as there are less chances of transparency," he emphasized. Asked about the EU assessment so far about Pakistan meeting the conditions for GSP plus status, the envoy said it was too early to draw any conclusion.

He said the EU was not expecting Pakistan to implement the 27 conventions overnight. "It can never be the case in Pakistan or elsewhere."

"We don't look at numbers, but we look at trends. We look at some positive steps because the idea behind is we favour you a market access to our markets as a stimulus to improve the human rights situation."



# EU team reviews progress on social standards

## Visits APTMA office, discusses benefits of GSP facility

● OUR CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE

In a follow-up to the grant of Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Plus status to Pakistan, a delegation of the European Commission visited the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (Aptma) office.

The delegation reviewed the benefits of the facility and the progress made so far on the application of social standards related to labour and environmental laws.

European Commission Trade Office Director General Marc Vanheukelen led the team along with European Union Acting Ambassador Stefano Gatto.

Aptma Punjab Chairman Sheikh Muhammad Akbar welcomed the delegation and stated that textile exports had started showing improvement

in the EU market due to the GSP Plus facility.

"Exports of apparel products recorded an increase of 24% in volumes and 30% in value from January to December 2014," he said.

However, he pointed out that the growth pattern was not commensurate with the potential of the industry due to productivity constraints, particularly the energy shortages.

"Both the industry and the government are working on various solutions for the availability of energy at regionally competitive tariffs," he added.

Akbar said Aptma in collaboration with CIZ had undertaken a number of initiatives concerning energy conservation, use of renewable energy, water conservation, material flow management and implementation of social standards in the Punjab-based garment industry.

Vanheukelen appreciated the efforts aimed at comply-

The commission will present a report on the status of ratification of relevant conventions to the European Parliament and the European Council

ing with the standards and explained that in January 2016, and every two years after that, the commission would present a report on the status of ratification of relevant conventions to the European Parliament and the European Council.

"The main focus is on implementation of human rights including labour rights, child labour, women rights, gender balances, OHAS standards and unionisation," he said.

The director said a change was being witnessed in Pakistan, things were now getting better and legislations were taking place with a sense of willingness.