EU Delegation has new responsibilities in the management of development cooperation

As of March 2011, the European Union (EU) Delegation to Nepal has become a fully independent operating EU Delegation in terms of development cooperation with the host country. Delegations operate within the framework and political guidelines set-up by Headquarters in Brussels. The role of the EU Delegations has significantly increased over the past years, as management responsibilities have been progressively transferred from Headquarters to EU Delegations.

The EU has been closely working with the Government of Nepal and other stakeholders for many years now and continues to strive to become a trusted partner in key areas of development cooperation. The delegation plays a key role in the implementation of the external assistance to Nepal and is responsible for identifying EU projects, assessing their feasibility, as well as implementing and evaluating their results.

The devolution of the EU Delegation to Nepal is part of a reform process aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU external assistance. The devolution of the Delegation will have positive effects on EU involvement in Nepal. Not only has it provided the Delegation with more autonomy and responsibility for EU assistance, but it has also improved its decision-making and operational efficiency.

While devolution is mainly about the management of external assistance, it will also lead the Delegation to taking on a more active role in presenting, explaining and implementing EU policies; analysing and reporting on the policies and developments in Nepal; and conducting negotiations in accordance with its given mandate.

The Delegation very much welcomes this opportunity to strengthen the EU-Nepal partnership and looks forward to working even more closely with its main development partners.

EU signs MoU for extending assistance worth €60 million to Nepal for Education, Peace Building and Economic Development

The economic recession evidently seen in many parts of the world came as a stark reality for Europe in the past year. Despite the economic downturn, the EU Member States have remained resilient in living up to their promises of aid disbursement to developing countries around the world. Nepal is fortunate to be one such country to receive a substantial amount of assistance from the European Union, which has emerged as the biggest contributor of humanitarian and development aid in the past years.

“The European Union has been keenly monitoring the recent developments in the peace and constitution writing processes. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a grant assistance of EUR 60 million (NPR nearly six billion) for the next three years (2011-2013) for Nepal amply reveals the European Union’s commitment to give continuity to its development cooperation initiatives with the Government of Nepal,” Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to Nepal said.

He expressed the hope that the EU assistance will be utilized to the full so as to assist Nepal’s progress in the key areas of education, peace building and economic capacity building.

Dr. Spachis made the remark following the signing of the MoU between the European Union and the Government of Nepal on 25 January, 2011. Mr. Dhananjaya Jha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed the MoU on behalf of the Nepal Government. The said amount is for the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) spanning across three years and covers the three major sectors – education, support to stability and peace building, trade and economic capacity building.

The European Union has been working in these areas of cooperation on the basis of a Country Strategy Paper (CSP) covering the period 2007-2013 and the MIP-2011-2013, both of which have been designed in close consultations with the Government of Nepal and the donor community.

The indicative financial envelope of EUR 60 million is about 33 per cent higher than the 2007-2010 programme. This increase, together with the concentration on a limited number of sectors, is an expression of the European Union’s commitment to maximize impact, in line with the Paris Declaration and the European consensus for Development cooperation. It is also a recognition by the European Union of the Government’s commitment for more aid harmonization and effectiveness.

The development partnership between the European Union and the Nepal Government is based on the EC-Nepal Cooperation Agreement of 1996. The development
assistance is provided under “Development Cooperation Agreement” which focuses on poverty eradication as the main objective.

The development programme has been designed to help Nepal achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They are oriented towards integrating Nepal’s economy into the world economy, the promotion of good governance and human rights and the strengthening of the relationship between the European Union and Nepal.

Both the CSP and the MIP are inspired by the “European Consensus on Development” and the Declaration on Aid Effectiveness adopted in Paris in 2005. The financial envelope can be adjusted in the course of identification and formulation of each annual action programme. In addition, Nepal may continue to benefit from funding available under periodic calls for proposals launched by the European Union under the thematic and regional programmes.

EU’s Renewable Energy Project – Head of Delegation Spachis launches solar PV installations in West Nepal

In the past, it took students and teachers in Jorayal, located in the hills of Doti district in West Nepal, a whole day to photocopy their documents; there simply was no electricity available in their village and they had to hitchhike to the nearby town.

However, with the launch of the EU funded Renewable Energy Project in Jorayal the situation has improved. “We no longer have to rush to the nearest town to get our question papers photocopied,” says a euphoric Sun Lai Thapa, headmaster of Ghanteshwor Higher Secondary School.

The installation of solar panels has made life much easier. The school was able to establish an IT lab with two computers, printers, photocopy and fax machines. In addition, the school has now organised computer classes for all 900 students.

The installation of the solar panels has facilitated a host of other activities for the community, ranging from operating audio and video systems to charging mobile phones. This in turn, has improved communication for all the villagers, says Nanda Raj Bhatta, Chairperson of the Community Energy Service Provider (CESP).

“The changes that have come about at the health post are equally inspiring. It now has round-the-clock mobile phone connection, vaccines are stored in a refrigerator, and solar power has also allowed us to provide better medical care during childbirth”, according to Naresh Chowdhary, manager of the health post.

Mr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Nepal hopes that the community will continue to successfully operate the solar installations.

“I will be all the more happy to see that the installations are going strong during my second visit to the village in a year or two,” Mr. Spachis said thanking the local community for their warm hospitality.

He actively interacted with all members of the community, including teachers, students, health post staff, and took stock of how the EU initiative has helped to make a difference.

Earlier that day Mr. Spachis formally inaugurated the solar installations at Jorayal in Laxminagar VDC (Village Development Committee) of Doti district. The solar PV systems have been installed in Ghanteshwor Higher Secondary School (1920 Wp), Laxminagar Sub-health Post (640 Wp), and Joyaral Community Entertainment Centre (240 Wp). They have been installed and handed over to the village-based local entity called ‘Jorayal Saving and Credit Cooperatives (JSCC)’. The JSCC has recently been transformed into the Community Energy Service Provider (CESP). The CESP has been entrusted with the responsibility of operating and managing all of these systems installed ensuring their sustainability.

Two senior EU Member State diplomats and a senior official from the UN accompanied Mr. Spachis to Jorayal as a show of solidarity to the EU development initiatives undertaken in the far-flung villages of Nepal. Those in the team were Morten JESPERSEN, Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jean ROMNICHIANU, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of France, and Ms. Gillian MELLOSP, Country Representative, UNICEF.

In total, the EU has provided grant assistance of EUR 15 million to the Government of Nepal to install solar PV equipment in 21 districts. The main objective of the project is to put in place a renewable energy infrastructure for social services and income generation activities in the rural areas. The programme selected those districts that will be unable to gain access to the electric grid in the next 5 years and are not suitable for micro/mini-hydro power generation projects. Although initially funded in accordance with the Nepal-EU Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006 (completion date 2008), political instability and conflict caused the completion of the project to be delayed. The operational phase of the solar project will end in August 2011.

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Solar hot water systems expected to promote tourism industry in Jomsom

Mr. Luis Navarro, Head of Operations, EU Delegation to Nepal and Mrs. Meena Khanal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, jointly inaugurated the EU-funded Community Solar Hot Water Shower Centre in Jomsom. The programme was held on 14 March 2011, with the day being celebrated as “Tourism Day”. Jomsom is situated at an altitude of 2,800 meters and in spite of its extreme cold weather conditions throughout the year, the region has a lot of potential for tourism. The inauguration was further attended by the Chief District Administration Officer, Ministry of Local Development, the Deputy Superintendent of Police, representatives of various political parties, the Coordinator of the Mustang Tourism Committee, representatives of community groups, local contractors and tourists.

The Jomsom Mother’s Group, Ama Samuha, has invested NPR 1,300,000 to construct the eight-room shower centre - four rooms for men and four rooms for women. The group raised the funds through a combination of bank loans and individual contributions, including personal savings from group members.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the system, the Centre charges NPR 100 to tourists wishing to take a hot shower, and NPR 15 and 30 respectively to students and members of local communities. The community is expected to revise the service charge upon installation of energy meters to reflect the amount of hot water used per shower. The generated revenue is expected to cover all operational and maintenance costs, with any surplus income to be used to repay bank loans and finance additional solar hot water system investments for other areas of Jomsom.

Mr. Navarro praised the work of the Jomsom Mother’s Group. He expressed confidence that the active participation of local women will inspire other women’s group in the Mustang District to do the same. The community initiative should help promote more tourism to the region and increase economic opportunities for women, helping them to become more self-reliant.

Mrs. Khanal thanked the EU for its support to improve the living conditions of people in the rural areas of Nepal and she particularly praised the achievements of the women’s group. The success of this project, she said, clearly shows that women can take their futures in their own hands and she hoped it would encourage other women to participate in community activities.

Mr. Chandra Bahadur Thakali, Coordinator of the Mustang Tourism Committee, emphasised that the climate of Mustang remains cold throughout the year. As such, hot water shower facilities for tourists travelling to the Jomsom region would certainly help extend their stay. At the moment, he said, local communities mainly depend on fuel wood to meet their energy demands, which contributes to further deforestation in the region. The solar hot water system would therefore not only provide additional facilities to tourists and an extra source of income for communities, but also prevent further environmental degradation.

The Chairperson of the Mother’s Group, Mrs. Min Kumari Sherchan, thanked the EU, the Government of Nepal and all the people in the community for helping to realise the construction of the community shower centre. She further expressed her commitment to the successful operation and maintenance of the centre and shared her plans for extending the shower facilities to a growing number of people in the region.

The inauguration of the hot water system in Jomsom was preceded by the annual review meeting of the overall Renewable Energy Project in Pokhara the day before.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Meena Khanal, attended by Mr. Luis Navarro, Dr. Narayan Prasad Chaulagain, Executive Director, Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, as well as representatives of other government agencies, journalists, community organisations from Mustang, Myagdi, Gorakha and Dhading districts, contractors and project staff.

The meeting reviewed the ongoing installation of 971 solar PV systems (107 agro-grinding systems; 30 water pumping systems; 796 systems providing electricity to schools, health posts and communication centres; 14 hot water systems and 24 solar dryers) to provide various energy services to the rural communities, in particular communities that lack grid access and micro hydro potential. Furthermore, the discussion highlighted the need to speed up the installation process and addressed the preparation of action plans to conduct monitoring and commissioning testing of the installed solar PV systems.

Mrs. Meena Khanal assured that the Ministry of Environment is prepared to provide additional support to ensure the successful and timely completion of the project.

Mr. Luis Navarro expressed satisfaction with the overall level of progress made and offered additional assistance from the Delegation to speed up the implementation of field activities. He further highlighted the importance of mobilising local communities around the project, especially women whose living conditions are undermined by the absence of minimum energy service facilities in rural areas.

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Nepal's earthquake risk creates Disaster Risk Reduction alliances at high-level symposium

The European Union’s Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has, through its partners, been promoting grassroots level community based disaster preparedness in Nepal over the last eight years. ECHO, with its wealth of experience dealing with disasters worldwide, will play an advisory role in the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium. The European Union as a whole is strongly committed to the global Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) agenda and its objectives.

In February 2011, Nepal’s Ministry of Home Affairs, in partnership with the United Nations and United States Government, hosted a high-level symposium on DRR. As part of a wider strategy to strengthen the ongoing risk reduction efforts in the country and consolidate the role of the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium, the purpose of the symposium was to raise awareness on Nepal’s vulnerability to a catastrophic earthquake; demonstrate the commitment of the Government of Nepal and the international community to disaster risk reduction and to review lessons learned from recent disasters to inform policy and planning in Nepal.

The Symposium focused on detailed discussions around three major themes: saving lives - preparedness and response to a major earthquake; mainstreaming disaster risk reduction from local to national level; and engineering a safer future- building codes, roads, bridges, schools and hospitals.

Opened by the Prime Minister of Nepal, the symposium garnered international support from high-level visitors and organisations experienced in Haiti, Pakistan, New Zealand and other recent disasters.

In his opening statement, the Prime Minister noted that “Natural disasters cannot be allowed to hold back Nepal’s development, or to put its children and citizens at risk. Making sure that development investments are risk resilient and that public and private infrastructure is safe and built to last is a priority for the government. Addressing risk successfully is a challenge my Government is determined to address.”

The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. Margareta Wahlström who addressed the gathering said, “By acting now, we can help make sure that we don’t lose a generation of development gains in Nepal to a single disaster event. We know how to move ahead. We can close the gaps; we can make our schools and hospitals safe. Last year in Haiti, 250,000 people lost their lives in just 49 seconds due to the earthquake. This cannot be allowed to happen in Kathmandu.”

Also speaking at the opening, Ms. Maria Otero, the United States Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs, encouraged participants and policymakers to “Move from thinking of the millions of dollars to be lost following a disaster to thinking about how we can effectively use resources now to invest in and protect the future we all want for Nepal. Such a shift of mindset requires collaboration and innovative thinking for game-changing solutions. And it requires a commitment from everyone to focus on the long-term in the midst of short-term demands.”

Calling for “a new paradigm for disaster risk reduction in this country,” Ms. Otero also highlighted the need to “mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction measures throughout the government’s engagement; take a “whole-of-government” approach to integrate capabilities and maximize impact; use “smart” investments to leverage scarce resources; and engage regional stakeholders for effective planning, mitigation, and response.”

Ms. Wahlström added that “The new government has an unprecedented opportunity to harness the support of its friends around the world to reduce the risk of human and infrastructural calamity in the event of an earthquake. The commitment of key parts of Government to act on this issue and to draft new legislation on Disaster Risk Management is encouraging. But the legislation needs to be passed and the government’s strategy implemented. The commitment of the Government, donors and participating organizations to the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) is unprecedented. Disaster risk reduction needs to become not an add-on activity but an integral part of the way we approach development investment in Nepal.”

Others in the Symposium line-up included Brigadier General Broadmadow, Deputy Commander of the US Marine Forces Pacific; Mr. Robert Parker, Mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand – currently facing their own disasters; General Nadeem (Ret’d), Pakistan Army – coordinated the response to the recent floods; the European Union’s Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); UK’s Department for International Development (DFID); as well as Government and private resource persons. Over 400 participants took part in the first morning, and about 300 on the second day for the working groups.


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Since 2009 the European Union has been providing budget support to the education sector in Nepal. To date €16m has been disbursed to support the implementation of the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009/10 to 2014/15).

The reform is targeted to achieve significant improvements in basic education indicators, including enrolment, repetition, survival, and literacy rates and teacher qualifications among others. SSRP is a sector plan covering, among others, Early Childhood Education and Development, Basic and Secondary Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training, Teacher Professional Development and Capacity Development.

On the national scale, a notable progress against the reform targets and components has particularly been achieved with regards to access and gender parity in basic education. For example, the Department of Education (DOE) reported an increase in the net enrolment ratio at the basic level from 83.2% in 2009 to 86% in 2010. Moreover, internal efficiency at the primary level has been improving, with decreasing repetition rates and an increase in transition rates to higher grades.

Through collaboration and partnership with NGOs, local authorities and other stakeholders, the ownership of SSRP has been increasing locally and at the district level. In addition to committing sector budget support funding of €26m to SSRP, in early 2010 the EU awarded grant funding of €3.5m to four non-state actors. All four organisations will tackle caste discrimination and aim to increase access and inclusion, particularly for girls, children with disabilities and Dalits.


Naulo Ghumti Nepal (NGN) has been implementing the project ‘Enhancing the capacity of school aiming to provide quality educational opportunities for all with a focus on poor and marginalised communities in Western Terai districts’ since January 2010. The overall objective of the project is to create a positive learning environment through joint efforts of concerned stakeholders aiming to increase school enrolment, reduce drop-out rate and enhance proactive participation of all students in learning activities with special focus on vulnerable, marginalized and minority groups. The project is being implemented in Arghakhanchi, Gorkha and Lamjung, and covers 90 schools. For more information about Naulo Ghumti Nepal visit http://www.ngn.org.np. Contact person: Mr. Ram Prasad Gyawali, Program Director.

Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) launched the project ‘Access to education for vulnerable and marginalised groups in Karnali’ with special focus on 3-14-year-old children, particularly girls, Dalits, ethnic groups, differently able, orphans, HIV/AIDS and conflict affected, and ultra poor of communities who lack access to quality education up to grade five. The overall objective of the project is to promote access to and quality education in five districts of the Karnali zone, Humla, Mug, Dolpa, Kalikot and Jumla, contributing to ensure education for all—especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups, social inclusion and child protection. For more information about KIRDARC visit http://www.kirdarc.org. Contact person: Mr. Rajaram Shrestha, Education Theme Leader.

Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN) has been awarded a grant for the project “Education for vulnerable and marginalized children in Nepal”, currently implemented in Dolakha, Ramechhap and Sindulpalchowk. The overall objective of the project is to contribute towards achieving the goal of inclusive education in order to close the ‘access gap’ of most vulnerable communities, with the target groups being under-privileged school-aged children mostly representing Tamang, Dalit and other ethnic families, and children of marginalized and vulnerable populations. For more information about RRN visit http://www.rrn.org.np/. Contact person: Mr. Ratna Karki, Program Director.

In February, in partnership with the four NGOs, the Delegation organized an Experience-Sharing Workshop to provide the four organisations and their partners with an opportunity to share experiences and best practices (an overview of the event has been published on the RRN website). One year into implementation, significant progress in the field has been reported by the four organisations. In the initial phase, education stakeholders such as DEO, local NGOs, teachers and local communities, have been informed about the projects and encouraged to engage collectively to improve the quality of education in their area. Peer Educators have conducted door-to-door motivation campaigns, district-level orientation workshops have been held, out of school children have been identified and assigned to learning centres. Teacher orientation programmes on child rights, anti-discrimination and disability have also been held in several districts.

Following these and other education campaigns, till date 230 vulnerable children in four districts have been provided with educational materials. Enrolment campaigns have successfully been conducted in three districts. 51 children registered back in school. 1200 children in three districts received scholarships. 338 children in three districts have been identified as disabled and provided with assistive devices. 15 Early Childhood Development Centres have been launched. Improved educational facilities and materials have been provided to a total of 35 schools and centres. What is more, School Management Committee members have since been reported to conduct an increased number of school visits in the areas under project implementation, and their close collaboration with DEOs has been an encouraging factor in promoting projects’ impacts throughout the districts.

The positive start made by the EU-partnering organisations and success stories from the field are proof of the NGOs’ praiseworthy commitment. Although there is still a long way to go to ensure that all the school-aged children of Nepal have equitable access to quality education, but these projects are contributing to Government of Nepal’s efforts, through SSRP, to achieving the EFA goals and positive results are already showing!

Magda Wierzbicka is a Trainee in the Education Programme of the Development Cooperation Section of the EU Delegation. She can be contacted at magdalena.wierzbicka@eeas.europa.eu
Life at the EU Delegation

Head of the European Union Delegation to Nepal (third from far right) joins his colleagues from EU Member States for a photo opportunity in front of the solar panels installed in Jorayal, Doti district.

Joint European Union/World Food Programme ‘Cash for Assets Projects’ in Mid-Western Nepal (copyright: James Giambroni, WFP)

Gérard van Driessche, Head of Finance & Contracts Section, joins colleagues for a photo at the ‘Information Day’ organised for 25 project partners in February 2011. The partners signed new contracts to run projects under European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Non-State Actors (NSA) and Investing in People.

Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, European Union Delegation to Nepal, with Dhananjaya Jha, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a financial assistance of EUR 80 million to be given to the Nepal Government for the next three years (2011-2013).

Members of the EU Delegation and the project staff, including Chairman of the Jomsom Mother’s Group and the contractor, visiting one of the solar hot water installations in Jomsom.

United Nations World Food Programme beneficiaries in Mid-Western Nepal (copyright: James Giambroni, WFP).

A community in Ramghat, Surkhet district, previously suffering from lack of access to drinking water, now enjoys clean and sufficient drinking water from the water tank built with EU support.

Community and stakeholders in Bayalsa, Achham district, sharing experiences of the project focused on Conflict Affected Children and Families.
EU Delegation organizes 'Information Day' for project partners

The Delegation of the European Union to Nepal organised an ‘Information Day’ for the recently signed project partners working primarily in the areas of human rights, democracy, health, education and governance.

A total of 45 participants representing 25 project partners who signed fresh contracts and were awarded an assistance worth EUR 15 million took part in the programme. Partners included district based and national level Nepalese NGOs, INGOs and UN-Women.

The said allotment covers areas such as vocational training, good governance, promotion of democracy and human rights, solid waste management, issue related to migration and tourism promotion under different thematic budget lines.

The thematic budget lines come under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) including Non-State Actors in Development (NSA), Migration and Asylum, Investing in people etc. of the European Commission.

The projects to be run by the 25 partners fall under three broad categories: EIDHR, Non-State Actors (NSA) and Investing in People. These sectors have been receiving top priority in Nepal with the Non-State Actors actively working with the European Union to achieve the goals related to preservation and promotion of human rights and democracy, promotion of vocational skills in backward and marginalized communities and preservation of language and culture of indigenous communities and also contributing to improve Health situation and the policies.

“The European Union joins hands with its partners to bring about substantive changes in the quality of life of the Nepalese people through projects encompassing a broad spectrum of activities related to skill development, preservation of human rights, conservation of the environment and protection of language and culture of the indigenous groups,” Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to Nepal said in reference to the ‘Information Day’.

Recalling the recent voice echoed by Europeans to honour the EU commitment to increase aid to 0.7% of gross national income by 2015, Dr. Spachis said the existing aid along with any possible increases in the near future are aimed at assisting developing countries like Nepal to achieve the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have set global targets for reducing poverty by 2015.

Project partners were provided information on different contractual obligations, various aspects of project management and visibility, along with an introduction to tools on financial and technical reporting, accounts and record. The need to maintain transparency, accountability and complementarities were further highlighted during the information session. Project partners were also asked to focus on the impact of each individual project and its overall contribution to policies and programmes in their fields of operation.

The EU Delegation in Nepal organises a similar event every year after new projects are contracted. The Delegation is currently preparing the launch of a new call for proposals that will support projects under the EIDHR and NSA instruments; the details will be available on the Website of the EU Delegation to Nepal.

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ECHO support of 200,000 EUR to refugee camps caught in blaze

Two camps hosting Bhutanese refugees in Goldhap and Sanischare were hit by accidental fires on 22 March, 2011. These two dramatic events left in total 3,790 refugees homeless and about 52 injured. Immediate assistance was provided by the UN agencies and NGOs present in the camps and the refugees could be sheltered in schools and other public buildings.

Following an appeal from UNHCR, ECHO (European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection) has agreed a 200,000.00€ grant for the provision of emergency shelter and non food items in a first phase. As a second phase, the grant will be used to rebuild permanent shelters for the refugees and to ensure adequate preparedness in the refugees’ camps in order to avoid similar catastrophes to repeat in future.

Deadline for the submission of proposals is 27 May 2011, 16:00 hours Nepal time. For potential applicants the EU Delegation will also hold information sessions on this call for proposal. Details of the programme along with the details of the registration process for the sessions will be available online at: [eas.europa.eu/delegations/nepal](http://eas.europa.eu/delegations/nepal). Please note that registration is open to all interested and potential applicants; however, the interested applicants should register in advance.

Published by Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal

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