PRESS RELEASE

European Union GSP+ mission arrives to assess progress in implementation of international conventions

Islamabad, 22 June 2022: A European Union monitoring mission comprising officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission’s Directorates-General for Trade and for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, arrived in Pakistan on 22 June. The mission will make an assessment of the effective implementation of 27 international conventions Pakistan is signatory to.

The GSP+ (Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus) provides wide-ranging tariff preferences for imports to the EU from vulnerable developing countries to support poverty eradication, sustainable development and their participation in the global economy as well as reinforce good governance. Eligible countries like Pakistan can export goods to the EU market at zero duties for 66% of tariff lines. This preferential status is conditional on GSP+ countries demonstrating tangible progress on the implementation of 27 international conventions on human and labour rights, environmental protection, climate change and good governance.

As stated by Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade Valdis Dombrovskis in 2021 “For five decades, the EU GSP has supported vulnerable countries to grow in a sustainable manner by giving them preferential access to the EU market. This has helped beneficiary countries to diversify their economies and create jobs. It has also galvanised beneficiary countries into improving human and labour rights, the environment and good governance”.

As underlined by High Representative/Vice President Josep Borrell Fontelles “The GSP scheme is all about the EU’s and Pakistan’s joint commitment to sustainable development.”

GSP+ has been very beneficial for Pakistani business increasing their exports to the EU market by 65% since the country joined GSP+ in 2014. The European Single Market, with over 440 million consumers, is Pakistan’s most important destination. Pakistan exports worth EUR 5.4 billion (approx. PKR 1.2 trillion), namely garments, bedlinen, terry towels, hosiery, leather, sports and surgical goods.

During the mission, meetings with the government, the UN Country Team, International Labour Organization (ILO), business and civil society representatives as well as other stakeholders will take place. The findings of the mission will be part of the next GSP report, which is due to be presented to the European Parliament and the Council towards end of 2022.

The European Union continuously monitors the implementation of relevant 27 international conventions drawing inter alia on the reports and information by the UN and other international agencies that are custodian of the respective convention. The EU regularly sends monitoring missions to assess the situation on the ground and to subsequently reflect its evaluation in the publicly available report to the European Parliament and to the EU Member States in the Council. So far, three biennial reviews have been concluded in 2016, 2018 and 2020, respectively.
Apart from Pakistan, the EU currently unilaterally grants GSP+ tariff concessions to Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan. The current GSP framework is coming to an end in December 2023. Legislative process on its successor for 2024-2033 is ongoing.

To find out further details on EU’s GSP+ programme:

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