



PRESS RELEASE

Subject: European Union Military Committee Chairman holds meetings with Pakistan's military and political leadership

Islamabad, 8 November 2019: Gen. Claudio Graziano, paid his first official visit to Pakistan from 5 to 7 November as Chairman of European Union Military Committee (EUMC), on the invitation by Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

In Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Graziano discussed with military and political leadership about subjects of common interest in the field of security and defence, as well as opportunities for potential future military interactions between the EU and Pakistan.

Gen. Hayat, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, (Chief of Army Staff), Adm. Zafar Mahmood Abbassi (Chief of Naval Staff) and Air Marshall Aasim Zaheer (Vice Chief of Air Staff) confirmed the will to build up on the current relationship with the EU, at different military levels.

"We considered the possibility of more engagement between our staffs, a prospective for support by Islamabad to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Operation Atalanta, or the participation of Pakistan personnel to some courses offered by the European Security and Defence College", said Graziano.

Pakistan encouraged the EU to profit from the training on counter terrorism, offered in Islamabad.

Gen. Graziano was also honoured to meet with Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and with Mr. Waleed Iqbal, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Defence of the Senate. In a constantly changing world and security scenario, said Pakistani authorities, Islamabad looks at the EU as a potential facilitator for reconciliation processes in the region, and the EU's engagement for a peaceful Afghanistan is very welcomed.

During the discussions, all parties agreed that the bilateral Strategic Engagement Plan, recently signed by EU and Pakistan, represents a solid framework for sustained and closer collaboration, which needs now to be followed by practical implementation. During his stay, Chairman of the EUMC delivered lectures on the role of the EU in the global security arena at NDU-ISSRA (National Defence University – Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis) and the ISSI (Institute for Strategic Studies Islamabad), among the country's most esteemed think tanks. Both presentations showed evident interest by the qualified, high-level attendance on the progresses and the potentiality of the Global Strategy, as proposed by the European Union.

In the different engagements in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Gen. Graziano was accompanied by the newly appointed EU Ambassador to Pakistan, Mrs Androulla Kaminara, who also organized meetings involving ambassadors and defence attachés of member states of the European Union and notable local authorities.

Current relationship between the EU and Pakistan builds on the mentioned Strategic Engagement Plan, in which both sides reaffirmed their determination to further strengthen the long-term, forward looking and broad based partnership.

Prominent strands in the dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Pakistan will remain peace, development, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights, migration as well as trade and investment.

Additionally, the Strategic Engagement Plan will allow for cooperation in new areas such as energy and climate change, education, culture, science and technology, among others, all on the bases of the principles of the UN Charter, international norms and law, principles of mutual respect and trust, as well as common interest.

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