

Press Release



Pakistan-EU Relations:

A Gateway to Economic and Strategic Opportunities for Pakistan

Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organized a one-day conference on “Pakistan’s Relations with European Union (EU)” on March 5th, 2015. H.E Mr. Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, Ambassador to the European Union Delegation to Pakistan was the Chief Guest of the conference. Mr. Wigemark highlighted various aspects of the Pak-EU relations. He emphasized that in order to become formal strategic partners, both Pakistan and EU needed to be more open. He also said that there was a lacuna of research and scholarship in the EU on Pakistan and vice versa, minor number of researchers worked on EU in Pakistan which needed to be enhanced. He highlighted that Pak-EU relations had been evolving gradually and continuously. In the context of enhancing trade volume between Pakistan and EU, he said that there was a need to diversify the exportable products from Pakistan to EU. Talking about the irritants of Pak-EU relations, he pointed out illegal migration which was an issue needed to be addressed.

Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Ambassador Munawar Saeed Bhatti while talking about the Pakistan-EU Strategic Relations said that Pakistan was not in the list of strategic partners of EU while India was their strategic partner which should be addressed by Pakistan. EU was one of the largest trading partners and donors of Pakistan in this context Pakistan needed to utilize its strategic importance to enhance its trade volume with the EU.

Prof. Dr. Naheed Zia Khan, Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Fatima Jinnah University, Rawalpindi while talking about the economic perspective of Pakistan-EU relations

said that Pakistan should avail that opportunity of "Generalised Scheme of Preferences" (GSP) plus which allowed developing country exporters to pay less or no duties on their exports to the EU. Dr. Naheed Zia also said that Pakistan should have good idea of its capacity of exportable surplus, too in order to enhance the trade volume with the EU. She also said that our industry should be working on innovation and competition. Dr. Naheed also emphasized on the need of fixing the problem of bad governance in Pakistan.

Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal of Quaid-e-Azam University said that Pakistan-NATO relations were crucial as NATO had become important entity at international level. Pakistan should not take NATO as an independent international actor as it was driven by the US policies. However, Pakistan should work on the areas mentioned by the NATO for cooperation for better development and strategic relations with the NATO countries.

Dr. Kamal Monno, Member, Board of Governors, IPRI, an industrialist and economist spoke about the private sector of Pakistan and EU. He said that aims and objectives of EU and Pakistan were aligned and Pakistan should not let this relationship slip. Dr. Monno also said that Pakistan industry should give importance to value additions and also needed to be aware of the happenings within the EU markets. Pakistan should address concerns of the EU, so that relationship continued and got strengthened, he said.

President IPRI, Ambassador Sohail Amin said that nature of growing relationships between states and also between states and entities was of incremental nature. He also emphasized on the importance of Pakistan's access to GSP trade. He said that GSP plus status granted to Pakistan would boost trade in the country. He also thanked the Chief Guest, panellists and participants for attending the conference.