



**THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA  
TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION  
27, RUE JULES LEJEUNE, 1050 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

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## **Pradeep Ratnayake and Ensemble perform at the European Parliament**

Sri Lankan sitar virtuoso Pradeep Ratnayake and ensemble performed at the European Parliament in Brussels last week to an audience which included MEPs, Parliamentary staff and officials from European Institutions and EU member states. This performance considered as the first by a Sri Lankan artist in the European Parliament, was held at the Yehudi Menuhin Auditorium in the presence of Dr. Libor Rouček, Vice-President of the European Parliament. The event was hosted by the Sri Lanka Embassy in Brussels in collaboration with MEP Nirj Deva and the Friends of Sri Lanka group of the European Parliament.

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha observed that those present in the audience in one way or another engages with Sri Lanka on a regular basis, and that this was appreciated. Particularly as Sri Lanka charted its course with renewed vigour in a post conflict context and was seeking to make rapid strides in bringing reconciliation and economic prosperity to its people, Sri Lanka looked forward to their continued support.

Vice-President, Dr. Rouček appreciated Pradeep and ensemble who were in Brussels to perform at the Palais des Beaux Arts (BOZAR) in connection with the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM summit, also agreeing to perform at the European Parliament. Dr. Rouček said Pradeep's work "represents a perfect example for today, a mix of old and new, tradition and modernity, influences from different cultures. It also represents what globalization should be. That means keeping to the roots but also enriching those roots and enriching them sometimes with foreign influences."

MEP Nirj Deva said "it is very unusual for us to have such a well known artist, Sitar player from Sri Lanka perform in this Parliament, and I think it is only fitting that we give him our closest attention."

The hour long concert by Pradeep and ensemble which began with a classical raga, moved onto an exhibition of his talents at fusion, featuring Sri Lankan drums, South Indian Ghatam and the western base guitar.

The concert was followed by an opportunity for the participants to taste tea from different regions of Sri Lanka. A Sri Lankan spices, travel and tourism display was also held at the European Parliament associated with this event.

Embassy of Sri Lanka  
Brussels

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