



**THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA  
TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**RECENT SRI LANKA – EU TALKS A USEFUL CONFIDENCE  
BUILDING MEASURE**

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha has said, the two rounds of talks between the European Union (EU) and the Sri Lanka delegation led by the Attorney General held in Brussels in March and May 2010 had served as a useful confidence building measure, in a relationship which had been affected largely on account of the differing perceptions over the years regards the ramifications of Sri Lanka's continued struggle with the LTTE.

Ambassador Aryasinha made this observation when he participated in a round table discussion titled "The EU's future relations with Sri Lanka: Trade and the GSP+ issue", hosted by the European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS) in Brussels on 10 June 2010.

He noted that during the two visits several important aspects of the relationship, including issues relating to the political developments, humanitarian aid, development assistance and counter terrorism had been reviewed with a wide range of interlocutors from the European Council and member states, the European Parliament, and the European Commission (EC). As regards the GSP+ issue, the discussions with the EC had focussed on Sri Lanka's recent actions and intentions, in particular relating to those areas highlighted by the October 2009 report of the EC. The Sri Lanka delegation had pointed out that with the end of the extraordinary situation of terror faced by Sri Lanka for almost three decades, there now followed a progressive return to normalcy accompanied by on-going efforts towards the further strengthening of good governance, while having regard to transitional law enforcement and security challenges. Detailing the many steps taken by the government in recent months in this direction without compromising Sri Lanka's national interest, he said the Attorney General had made clear that the roll back of the Emergency Regulations at this juncture is only the beginning of a process which will be continued as and when the ground conditions become conducive to further relaxation.

Ambassador Aryasinha hoped that the EU and its 27 member states would re-calibrate their relationship with Sri Lanka and engaged the country in a forward-looking manner be-fitting the present context, where the Government and the people of Sri Lanka were focused on reaping the peace dividend by forging national amity and prosperity. He said the continuance of the GSP+ benefits to Sri Lanka could serve as a useful catalyst in this process, optimizing the goodwill built through the recent high-level interactions and raising the relationship to a new level of understanding.

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