

GoSL reaction to the GSP+ Report of the European Commission

The European Commission (EC) on Monday 19 October 2009 handed over to the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) its report on Sri Lanka's implementation of 3 of the 27 UN Conventions relevant to its GSP+ benefits that were of concern to the EC.

The Note from the Directorate General for Trade of the European Commission forwarding the EC Report to the Mission of Sri Lanka in Brussels stated "the Commission will now decide whether to propose a temporary withdrawal of the special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance provided for under Council Regulation (EC) No. 732/2008". The Note goes on to add "if the Government of Sri Lanka wishes to make any representations on this matter or specifically in relation to the Commission Report in annex, it is kindly requested to bring these to the Commission's attention no later than 6 November 2009 ...".

It would be recalled that the GSP+ "investigation" on Sri Lanka by the EC was launched a year ago, at a time the GoSL was on the verge of ending 30 years of terrorism in Sri Lanka. The GoSL did not participate in the process of the GSP+ "investigation" and refused a request for "experts" to visit Sri Lanka as a matter of principle, as it was felt inappropriate for Sri Lanka as a sovereign state to participate in such a process and to be unnecessary given the numerous on-going processes both between the GoSL and the UN system, as well as between the GoSL and the EU.

While not cooperating with the process of "investigation", the GoSL continued to engage with the EC on the issues of mutual interest through existing diplomatic channels, a fact acknowledged in the EC Report. The GoSL for its part will continue to engage with the European Institutions, in-keeping with the spirit of transparency and mutual respect that is appropriate to the historic and long standing relationship between Europe and Sri Lanka.

The GoSL will therefore closely study the EC report.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Colombo

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