



EU Ambassador presents Letters of Credence to His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Thimphu, 3 February 2016: H.E. Tomasz Kozlowski presented his Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union to Bhutan to His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, at an official ceremony held today.

On this occasion Ambassador Kozlowski said, *"It is an honour for me to represent the European Union in Bhutan, one of the EU's important partners."* Both countries have a long history of close cooperation, with the first EU-Bhutan development programme starting in 1982. Until 2013, the EU had contributed more than €90 mn. including €14 mn. for the period 2007-2013. In 2014, the EU tripled its engagement to €42 mn. for the period 2014 to 2020 with the adoption of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP). *"The relationship between the two sides has deepened over the years and we are keen to continue supporting Bhutan on the various challenges faced by the country in areas such as poverty reduction, food and nutrition security and sustainable development. We also remain committed to democratization in Bhutan through support to the Government and Civil Society. The EU fully supports the modernization agenda of Bhutan in line with its 11th Five-year plan,"* the Ambassador added.

Civil Society and Local Authorities & Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry have been identified as the two focal areas of cooperation till 2020. Climate change is another priority area in EU-Bhutan cooperation, with emphasis on tackling its impact on sustainable development. The EU is currently funding the Global Climate Change Alliance Programme through budget support of €4.4 mn. This cooperation will continue as reiterated during the COP21 in Paris. *"My priority over the next years will be to strengthen these programmes and to support Bhutan in its objective to become donor independent by 2020,"* said the Ambassador.

Tomasz Kozlowski concurrently holds the position of EU Ambassador to India. Prior to this posting, he served as the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Korea (2011 - 2015).

Since 2004, he has been working for the European Union in Brussels as Head for Asia at the Office of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and later as Principal Adviser for Asia and Latin America at the European Commission.

Before joining the EU, he was a member of the Polish Diplomatic Service. He was posted at the Polish Embassies in Indonesia and Malaysia. He served as Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan (concurrently accredited to Afghanistan) in 2001 – 2003 and as Director General for Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw in 2003 – 2004.

He also worked for the United Nations in Cambodia (1993) and South Africa (1994).

Other areas of EU – Bhutan cooperation

The European Investment Bank and the Kingdom of Bhutan signed a Framework Agreement in 2014 under which the Bank can finance capital investments in the country mainly related to climate change mitigation and adaptation or the development of sustainable economic infrastructure.

Bhutan's Royal University also takes part in the global student and researcher exchange programme funded by the EU, Erasmus Mundus. Through Erasmus Mundus, over 142 students from Bhutan have been given the opportunity to study at European Universities in the last 10 years. They have been hosted at universities in 16 of the 27 Member States of the European Union.

There are many other EU thematic and regional programmes successfully running in Bhutan such as the sustainable consumption programmes under SWITCH Asia; Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalaya (a 5-year programme focused on climate change adaptation in eight Himalayan countries); capacity building for disaster risk management and risk reduction; as well as health programmes (particularly on avian flu).

In June 2015, the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Mr. Yonchhen Tshering Tobgay had visited Brussels at the invitation of the President of the European Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker to participate in the European Development Days. This was the first-ever visit of a Bhutanese PM to the EU.

About the European Union (EU):

The EU, which consists of 28 countries, has the world's largest economy and its third largest population, after China and India. Though richly diverse, the countries that make up the EU (its 'Member States') are all committed to the same basic values: peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They have set up common institutions so that decisions on matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level. By creating a frontier-free single market and a single currency (the euro) which has been adopted by 19 Member States, the EU has given a significant boost to trade and employment. It is also at the forefront of policies on sustainability.

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