

Media Seminars in Bangalore and Hyderabad

EU-India Cooperation in Environment and Development

Media seminars and project visits in two southern cities lead to a better understanding of the EU's environment and sustainable livelihoods programmes in India.

In this issue

4 European Parliament Elections

6 Renewable Energy in Ladakh

7 EU-India Civil Society Cooperation

8 Message to Our Readers



The Delegation of the European Commission organised a Media Seminar in Bangalore on *The EU, Energy and Climate Change* on June 2 and 3, 2009. The programme comprised a series of presentations by experts followed by discussions with participants on the first day. The second day was devoted to a visit to an EU-supported project in Karnataka, giving the local media a flavour of the EU's development policy in action.

The Head of the Delegation Ambassador Danièle Smadja spoke on the multi-dimensional and evolving nature of the European Union; and gave an overview of relations between the EU and India. This was followed by presentations from experts on climate change and energy from both partners. Among the speakers were

- Dr. Juergen Bischoff, Director, Indo-German Environment Programme
- Dr. Anumita Roychowdhury, Associate Director, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi

- Mr. Emani Kumar, Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia
- Ms. Anuradha Bhavnani, Advisor, Shell Foundation India
- Mr. K P Nyati, Former Principal Advisor Environment, CII
- Mr. Dietrich Kebschull, Director, European Business and Technology Centre
- Mr. Robert Donkers, Minister-Counsellor

Speakers were knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects. While Ms. Roychowdhury, Mr. Kumar, Ms. Bhavnani, Mr. Nyati and Mr. Kebschull spoke about the Indian situation and the response of Indo-European initiatives, Mr. Donkers, and Mr. Bischoff cited examples of policy and practice from the European countries.

Ms. Roychowdhury made a compelling case for public transport, saying that environmental problems could only be tackled if resource allocation was more rational. Mr. Kumar presented two of



Media Seminars

The EU is providing support to a project which aims at improved working conditions for garment workers, cotton farmers and handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.



Day 2 of the seminar comprised a visit to the *Improved livelihoods for Cotton Farmers, Weavers and Garment makers in South India* project. The project aims at sustainable livelihoods for 8000 poor cotton farmers and their families; 1000 handloom weaver families and 10,000 garment workers, in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Implemented by Oxfam GB through 8 local partners including CIVIDEP (Civil Initiatives for Development and Peace) – it strengthens sustainable community institutions such as the Women Garment Workers’ Front or ‘Munnade’ and the Garment and Textile Workers’ Union (GATWU), in order to bring about sustained improvements in labour standards and living conditions. Other actions under the project target cotton farmers and handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh.

There was lively interaction between the media and the women workers represented by Ms. Ratnamma, General Secretary, ‘Munnade’ and Ms. Rukmini, General Secretary, Garment and Textile Workers’ Union (GATWU) concerning minimum wages, facilities provided by factories for women employees at the workplace, working hours, working conditions, Provident Fund, leave including maternity benefits, overtime, and harassment. This discussion was followed by a documentary produced by CIVIDEP, titled ‘Above the Din of Sewing Machines’, which was about the conditions of garment workers, and the myriad problems that they face in their daily lives.

The project visit ended with the visitors being taken for a walk through localities where ‘Munnade’ members are actively engaged in organising workers. ■

ICLEI’s projects with European collaboration. The first, called *EcoBudget*, focussed on the participatory development of environmental management systems for local governments, allowing municipalities to assess their situation, assign priority to various needs, plan actions to improve environmental conditions in the short and medium term, and monitor progress with

the help of quantitative targets. This project – supported by the Asia Pro Eco programme of the European Union – involved a unique partnership between the Italian city of Bologna and Guntur city in Andhra Pradesh. The second project deals with local renewable model communities, for which ICLEI has signed an MoU with the German Federal Ministry for



Media Seminar in Hyderabad

Another seminar, dedicated to the theme "Energy and Climate Change" chaired by Minister-Counsellor Mr. Robert Donkers, was held in Hyderabad on 18 June, gathering 22 journalists, from both the print and electronic media. Speakers included Mr. Vishal Garg, Associate Professor, Head, Centre for IT in Building Science, International Institute of Information Technology, Mr. Ajay Desai, Regional Sector Manager, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Sandeep Garg, Energy Economist, Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Government of India, Ms. Preeti Malhotra, Director, The Climate Group, and Mrs. Anne Marchal, Head of Development Co-operation at the Delegation of the European Commission. A presentation on EU environment policies was made by Mr. Donkers, giving journalists access to information on EU policies and commitments in terms of environment protection. Indian speakers spoke about the response of government and industry and were questioned on matters as diverse as the Bureau of Energy Efficiency's labelling for appliances, as well as options for the design of "green buildings".



EU development interventions were featured through a visit on the next day: journalists were taken to several locations where *Save the Children* and its local partner *Mahita* implement a project in the field of primary education, a focus area of intervention for the EU both in its cooperation with the Government and with NGOs. A resource centre and a school supported by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) were visited in a deprived area of the city. Through support of the EU sponsored project, children had access to better education aids such as computer-based lessons in chemistry including demonstrations of chemical reactions in the class room, successfully strengthening the learning gained at the SSA school. Meeting with active children's clubs and their members gave an opportunity to the journalists to interact with the project beneficiaries, interview them, and be filmed as well! A group of young adolescent girls have developed videos to raise awareness in the community of the need to send children to school to ensure a better livelihood in the future, avoid early marriage, and fight against child labour. ■

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Economic Co-operation & Development. Ms. Bhavnani's presentation focussed on 'Fighting Air Pollution' through enterprise-based approaches to the reduction of greenhouse gases. As examples, Ms. Bhavnani highlighted two of Shell Foundation's core projects - 'Breathing Space' on efficient cookstoves, and 'Embarq' on sustainable transport - presently being implemented in Pune and Indore. Mr. Keschull presented the objectives and plan for the European Business and Technology Centre, an EU-funded initiative in India.

Dr. Bischoff on the other hand dealt with air pollution & urban environment issues in the EU itself, and compared the responses of the cities of Hamburg in Germany and Copenhagen in Denmark vis-à-vis environmental issues and solutions. Mr. Donkers who has been involved in developing EU legislation in several environmental fields including chemicals, gave an overview of European policy in the areas of sustainable development and climate change. ■



European
Parliament
Elections

EU Citizens Vote in 27 Member States

After Elections, a New Parliament for Europe

The seventh round of elections brings 736 members to the European Parliament, whose role in decision-making has grown in the last three decades with each revision of the original treaties.

The 2009 elections to the European Parliament took place from the 4–7 June 2009, in each of the 27 Member States of the European Union. More than 375 million EU citizens were eligible to vote for 736 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), for a five-year period, making this the biggest electoral exercise after the Indian parliamentary elections just before.

The European Parliament represents the citizens of the Member States at EU level. It is the only European institution to be directly

elected – a procedure established in June 1979 – and the only multinational parliament in the world to be voted through universal suffrage. This seventh round of European elections coincides with the 30th anniversary of the first European elections held by universal suffrage. Successive revisions of the Treaties have given the EP increased power, and it has moved from a mere consultative role in 1958 to co-decision with representatives of national governments on the majority of EU legislation.

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The European Parliament: a Wide Range of Powers at the Service of the European Citizen

In a wide range of policy areas, the European Parliament has equal decision-making power with the Council of Ministers from the 27 EU governments. In the areas of environment policy, transport, consumer protection, illegal immigration and all matters regulating the internal market, the European Parliament has the power to accept, amend or reject proposals from the European Commission for European legislation. Even in areas such as agriculture or foreign policy, where its powers are limited, its debates and resolutions often influence the agenda at EU level. Parliament also has wide budgetary powers and exercises democratic control over all the European institutions.

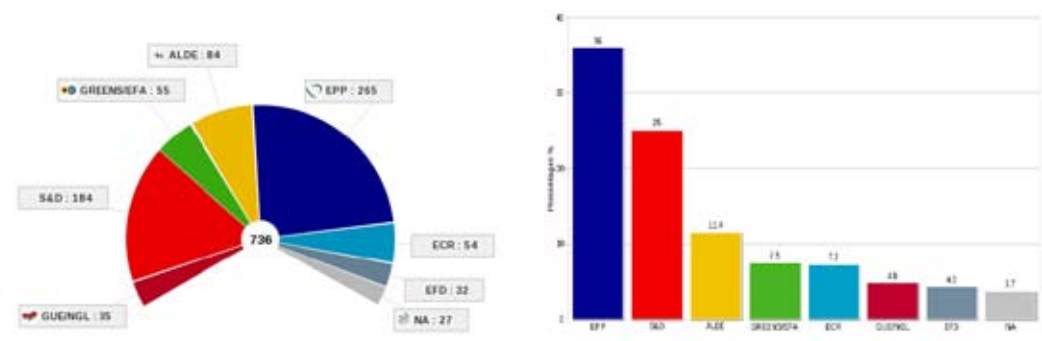
On some questions (e.g. taxation, industrial policy, agricultural policy, or new eurozone members) the European Parliament gives only an advisory opinion; but the Parliament's amendments often influence the final outcome of discussions.

Some international agreements require the 'green light' of Parliament, who cannot modify the text, but can reject it. This is called assent procedure and it applies to the accession of new Member States and the conclusion of association agreements with non-EU countries.

Outside the legislative arena, although EU Member States take the ultimate decisions on foreign, security and defence issues, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers regularly inform the European Parliament; and MEPs push for action by taking part in political and public debate. Parliament also adopts "own-initiative" reports which may call on the European Commission to bring forward legislation in a specific area, or indicate, ahead of a concrete proposal, how legislation should be drafted.

The European Parliament is, together with the Council of Ministers, responsible for establishing the annual budget of the Union. It has the last word on more than half of the EU

Election results (June 2009): the new Parliament



- EPP : Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
- S&D : Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- ALDE : Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
- GREENS/ EFA : Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- ECR : European Conservatives and Reformists Group
- GUE/ NGL : Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
- EFD : Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group
- NA : Non-attached

Mr. Jerzy Busek of Poland has since been elected the President of the Parliament. In his inaugural speech, on the 14th of July, he made the following remarks –

The Members of the European Parliament have decided to confer this great responsibility on a representative of a Central and Eastern European country. Many years ago, I used to dream of becoming a member of the Sejm when Poland became free once again. I now hold the office of President of the European Parliament, which is something I could never have dreamed of back in those days, which shows how our continent of Europe has changed. I see my election as a signal to our countries - to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria. I also see it as a tribute to the millions of citizens of our countries who refused to give in to a hateful system. I see myself as a representative of all of those countries.

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– Jerzy Busek

The political groups

MEPs are grouped according to their political alliance and not their nationality. Each political group was composed, till recently, of a minimum of 20 elected members from at least six Member States (a fifth of all EU countries). However, after the 2009 elections all this has changed. The European Parliament recently decided to raise the minimum to 25 MEPs representing at least seven Member States. ■

budget and has a strong say on spending in the fields of social and regional funds, energy, research, transport, development aid, the environment, education and culture. Parliament is responsible for monitoring the Union's expenditure on a permanent basis, and decides whether to grant discharge to (or clear the accounts of) all EU institutions for the implementation of the budget.

Every European citizen has the right to petition Parliament to ask for problems to be remedied in areas within the sphere of activity of the European Union.

Looking ahead

The Treaty of Lisbon foresees the powers of the European Parliament enhanced. Co-decision is extended to include areas such as agriculture, fisheries, legal migration, space and sport. The Parliament's budgetary powers are extended to all Union expenditure, thus including agriculture. Parliament also has more powers over the appointment of the President of the Commission. ■



*Renewable Energy
in Ladakh*

The improved greenhouse designed by GERES and built mainly from locally available materials, allows heat from the sun to be trapped during the day and released slowly at night, making it possible to grow spinach, garlic, coriander, onions, lettuce and strawberries in the winter.



Ashden Award for EU Development Project

Renewable Energy for Nutrition

An innovative project in Ladakh wins the Ashden International Award for Improved Nutrition in 2009

The French NGO Groupe Energies Renouvelables, Environnement et Solidarités, or GERES, in cooperation with local NGOs, has built 586 greenhouses in Ladakh to provide an estimated 50,000 poor people with fresh vegetables throughout the winter. This project, funded by the European Union, was given the Ashden Award for improved nutrition by the Prince of Wales at a ceremony on 11 June 2009.

The Ladakh plateau has over 300 days of sunshine in a year, but due to its altitude of 3500 metres, night-time temperatures can fall to -25 degrees Celsius, making it impossible to grow vegetables in the open. The improved greenhouse designed by GERES and built mainly from locally available materials, allows heat from the sun to be trapped during the day and released slowly at night, making it possible to grow spinach, garlic, coriander, onions, lettuce and strawberries in the winter, and extend the growing season for tomatoes, cucumber and grapes from summer to autumn. Since the tending of these crops is mainly done by women, it is they who earn the money from selling their surplus in the market.

The domestic greenhouse costs approximately 30,000 rupees to make, and the owner provides three quarters of the cost in terms of labour and locally available materials for the walls and frames. Working with the Ladakh Environmental Health Organisation (LEHO), Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDEG), and the Leh Nutrition Project (LNP), GERES provides the transparent cover on the south

facing side, the vents and the door, which represent about 25% of the total cost. The cover is made from heavy duty polythene which has been stabilised to prevent harmful ultraviolet radiation. The walls are heavy and have a double layer, with a cavity between them which is filled with straw or sawdust as insulation. This design prevents rapid cooling at night.

The output from the greenhouses in operation has been estimated at about 300 tons per year of extra vegetables. Economic benefits from the project are also significant: the average family makes 8,250 rupees a year from the sale of vegetables, allowing it to pay for its investment in construction in two to four years, depending on the quantity of free material used. For consumers, on the other hand, market prices of winter vegetables have come down typically from Rs. 60/kg to around Rs. 35-40/kg. Since the vegetables would otherwise have been transported by truck and air from the plains, the project has contributed the additional ecological benefit of saving 460 tons of carbon dioxide per year.

The replicability of this initiative has grown steadily over the years. Around 3,000–6,000 more greenhouses can be built in Ladakh alone, and the design is available freely for all to use. Around 221 masons and 15 carpenters have been trained in construction. The local NGOs participating in the project are taking over the responsibility for supervision and management. Funding for an extension of the programme is likely to come from the National Rural Health Mission as well as from the French NGO Solidarités and the voluntary carbon credit trading organisation Myclimate.org. Other countries – among them China, Afghanistan and Tajikistan – have also shown interest in building greenhouses of the same kind. ■



EU-India Civil Society Cooperation

National Conference Suggests Improvements in Prevention of Torture Bill

Participants at a National Conference supported by the European Union welcome the Government's initiative on prevention of torture.

A two day National Consultation as part of the project 'National Campaign for Prevention of Torture in India', funded by the European Union, was organised by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) in New Delhi on 24–25 June 2009. The conference was inaugurated by Ms. Anne Marchal, Head of Development Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Commission to India, and had the participation of human rights organisations and legal experts.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in its Annual Reports recorded custodial deaths of 16,855 persons or an average of 1204 persons per year during 1994–2008. These included 2,207 deaths in police custody and 14,629 deaths in judicial custody. These custodial deaths represent only a fraction of the incidence of torture in India. Further, torture that does not result in custodial death is not recorded.

In this context, the participants at the National Conference welcomed the Prevention of Torture Bill, 2008 as drafted by the Government of India to ratify the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), and welcomed the opportunity presented by the National Conference to have detailed consultations on the draft bill and make specific recommendations to the Government of India on making the bill a more effective instrument in addressing torture in India.

While the purpose of the conference was to study the draft bill of the government and make suitable recommendations, it was also recognised that relating the recommendations to legal amendments that are currently underway in the country, such as the 2008 amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), would make



the Torture Bill more effective and more in conformity with other legislations.

Some of the recommendations from the Conference are as follows:

- Expansion of 'Definition of Torture' to conform to the obligations of the UNCAT.
- Advancement of punishment to more than 10 years.
- Withdrawal of limitations for taking cognizance, in compliance with the CrPC.
- Ensure that it complies with the UNCAT requirement that 'no exceptional circumstances whatsoever..... may be invoked as a justification of torture', such that prior sanction from government for prosecution of public servants is no longer required.

The ACHR has also recommended specific text for compliance with UNCAT Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15. The full document with the recommendations can be accessed at the link: www.achrweb.org.

The recommendations to the Torture Bill are being presented by ACHR to the Parliamentarians of both houses, and the Ministry of External Affairs – the nodal ministry for drafting the bill. ■

Relating the recommendations to legal amendments that are currently underway in the country, such as the 2008 amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), would make the Torture Bill more effective



Message to Our Readers

We Want to Hear From You

Dear Reader,

In order to be more environment friendly, it is planned to reduce the number of print copies of the EU-India Update from the next issue onwards. We encourage you to opt for the e-version of the newsletter. To verify your address and facilitate the change over, please send the following details by post to Sandhya Popli, Press and Information, 65 Golf Links, New Delhi 110003 or e-mail us at: Delegation-India-Press@ec.europa.eu.

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EU-India Calendar of Events – 2009

Date	Event	Place
September 2009	EU-India Economic Sub Commission	Brussels
3-6 September	European Commissioner for Trade and European Commissioner for Agriculture visit India	New Delhi
16-18 September	Bilateral Discussions on EU-India Civil Aviation Co-operation	New Delhi
21-25 September	Seminar on Social Sector Programmes in Decentralised Context	Kathmandu
23 & 30 September, 7 October	Information Events on the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Programme	New Delhi
24 September	EU-India Trade and Development Workshop	New Delhi
24-25 September	Meeting: FP7 project Rising pan-European and International Awareness on Biometrics and Security Ethics (RISE)	
October	4th EU-India Environment Forum on Ship Dismantling	
8-9 October	EU-India Forum on Effective Multilateralism	New Delhi
30 October	EU-India Macroeconomic Dialogue	New Delhi
12-16 October	Indian Journalists visit Europe	Brussels
3-6 November	EU-India S&T Cooperation Days, organised by the FP7 Projects EUINEC, New Indigo and Bio Circle	New Delhi
6 November	EU-India Summit	New Delhi