



Indo-European Water Forum Discusses Major EU-India Partnership in Water Sector

23-24 November 2015, New Delhi

Experts and officials from India and the European Union met in the **first Indo-European Water Forum** jointly organized by the Indian Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, the National Water Mission, the EU Delegation to India, and the Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission, to discuss water management in the EU and India.

Topics addressed included river basin management planning, water allocation among and within states, balancing different sectors' needs (e.g. for drinking purposes, agricultural irrigation, industrial uses, ecological aspects), water scarcity and drought, wastewater treatment, and business opportunities offered by the water sector.

The EU has **more than four decades of experience** in working with its 28 Member States to address common challenges in a coordinated matter, while respecting the principle that action should be taken at the lowest governance level possible. India is discussing draft framework legislation on water, having to deal with the effects of climate change in terms of more frequent extreme events (floods and droughts), and actively pursuing the cleaning up of the Ganga.

Against this backdrop, participants agreed that the establishment of a **Water Partnership** between the EU and India should be considered. Such a Partnership would bring together representatives of relevant stakeholders, including interested EU Member States and Indian States, European and Indian institutions, businesses and civil society to bring forward common actions for improving water management in India, notably as a contribution to the **Clean Ganga** flagship initiative.

In concluding the Forum, the **Director-General for Environment of the European Commission**, Mr Daniel Calleja Crespo, said that *"The Forum has paved the way for initiating a policy dialogue on water between India and the European Union. The European Union is ready to share its experience and lessons learnt in applying its legislation on water across its 28 diverse Member States. European water policy has made it possible to develop a vibrant water sector that includes more than 9,000 Small and Medium Enterprises, and provides almost 500,000 jobs. Tackling water challenges is therefore much more than a response to an environmental imperative: it is also a building block for green and blue growth and will help our economies become more resource efficient"*.

The **Ambassador of the European Union**, H.E. Tomasz Kozlowski, emphasised that *"We are convinced that we can learn a lot from each other: in the European Union, the framework laws are being established at the European level, while the implementation is done by each Member State in the way that best suit their individual situation. This model is also very suitable for India. As European Union we are in the unique position that we can bring together all the 28 European Member States, all of which have their own key strengths, competencies and technologies. We are convinced that a partnership which brings together Indian actors from the national, state and local level, as well as business, civil society and financial institutions with European actors from all levels could make for a very rich cooperation for our mutual benefit"*.

As a follow-up to the Forum, contacts will continue to explore a way forward for the possible establishment of a **EU-India Water Partnership**, while continuing working on the **Clean Ganga** flagship initiative.

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 which 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.

EU-India relations

Over 50 years the EU and India have worked together to reduce poverty, prevent disasters, expand trade, and promote joint research in energy, health, agriculture and many other fields of mutual interest. More information at: <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india>

For press enquiries:

Poonam Kapila-Poonam.kapila@eeas.europa.eu 9910822339