



PRESS RELEASE

European Parliament Delegation to Sri Lanka *15-19 July 2013*

Led by Ms Jean Lambert, the European Parliament (EP) has just concluded its 7th Interparliamentary Delegation mission to Sri Lanka.

From 15 to 19 July 2013, the EP Delegation visited Sri Lanka. Ms. Lambert expressed her appreciation for the constructive meetings in Colombo with Foreign Minister Peiris, Minister of National Languages & Social Integration Nanayakkara, Minister of Resettlement Weerakoon, and Minister of Environment & Renewable Energy Premajayanth, and said she was looking forward to the forthcoming meeting with the Minister of Economic Development, Mr. Basil Rajapaksa.

The EP Delegation also held an Interparliamentary meeting with Deputy Speaker Mr. Weerakkody and Members of the EU-Sri Lankan Parliamentary Friendship Group and met with leaders of a number of political parties, as well as with civil society representatives.

The EP Delegation also travelled to the Northern and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka. In Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi, they met with local people whose lives had been affected by the conflict and who benefitted from EU-supported projects aiming at helping them rebuild their lives. In and around Nuwara Eliya, the European Parliamentarians visited a tea plantation to discuss the challenges faced by the tea industry and its workers. The Delegation also held a meeting with tea estate community members in the framework of their EU-supported Community Development Forum.

In a spirit of constructive engagement, the EP Delegation discussed prospects for the development of relations between Sri Lanka and the European Union. Concerning post-war policy, Ms. Lambert welcomed the important progress made on reconstruction and rehabilitation; as far as accountability and reconciliation were concerned, she expressed her hope that the LLRC recommendations would be carried out fully and that the September elections to the Northern Provincial Council would take place in a civilian environment, free from any type of pressure or intimidation. The success of these elections should be an important step on the process of bringing together and empowering, in the same democratic framework, all Sri Lankan citizens who have been separated by three decades of conflict.

The delegation was composed of 6 Members of the European Parliament:

Ms. Jean LAMBERT (Greens/EFA, United Kingdom), is the Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia. The other members of the visiting Delegation are: Mr. Thomas MANN (EPP, Germany), Mr. Salvador SEDO I ALABART (EPP, Spain), Mr. Horst SCHNELLHARDT (EPP, Germany), Mr. Niccolo RINALDI (ALDE, Italy) and Mr. Nirj DEVA (ECR, United Kingdom).

Colombo, 19 July 2013

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