

Two protests in favor of the European Parliament less than a year after the EP-resolution to suspend GSP+ for Pakistan

There were two protests in favor of the European Parliament less than a year after the European Parliament's decision to suspend GSP+ for Pakistan.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, May 2, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday, April 28, Brussels was in chaos. No fewer than two demonstrations were planned for the morning regarding the European Union's trade relations with Pakistan. The activists believe that the European Commission is being too lenient in granting Pakistan preferential trade status, despite the fact that Pakistan is not a model of a nation that respects its citizens' human rights. The activists were successful in delivering their memorandum to Ursula von der Leyen and European Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis at the conclusion of the demonstration. Following an initial refusal by the European Commission's services, the memorandum was received by an employee of the European Commission's press service following telephone consultation.



1 year after the European Parliament passed a motion to review trade relations with Pakistan, there were 2 demonstrations in Brussels supporting this proposition. The demonstrators are asking the European commission to have more respect for the European parliament.

Andy Vermaut, co-founder on behalf of the fundamental rights movement Postversa and the International Alliance for the Defense of Rights and Liberties (AIDL) on Schuman explains: "Indeed. On Thursday, April 28, 2022, there was not only an important manifestation at the European Parliament in Brussels in Place Luxembourg organized by the European Association for the Defense of Minorities under the leadership of Director Manel Msalmi. This was just prior to an important conference in the European Parliament by Willy Fautré of Human Rights without Frontiers on the GSP+ Status of Pakistan and this in co-organization with investigative journalist Gary Cartwright of EUtoday.net Parallel to this conference there was a second authorized manifestation on the Schuman Square in Brussels in front of the European Commission and the External Action Service where we, together with several activists including Meena Qasimi, Jamil Maqsood, Sajid Hussain and Malik Bazi demanded more respect for the efforts of the European Parliament. For us, April 28, 2022 was important in this, as it was



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Andy Vermaut

precisely one year since the European Parliament made a resolution on Pakistan's preferential trade status with the European union."

Mutual cross-pollination

Andy Vermaut:"When the European Parliament was established, it was intended to send a statement to the whole globe. Democracy, which is not just a Western term, is a concept that we can polish, enhance, and expand collectively by collaborating with people of other views, perspectives, and ideologies to achieve unity in diversity. A model that Europe propagates around the globe, where

nations that strive to live by and uphold the same standards and values may profit from our unique model and from the moral leadership that it provides. Europe may sound fantastic on paper, but when it comes to respect amongst the institutions of the same European Union, we see that the European Commission ignores the European Parliament's large majority. Not only do we have the world's biggest parliament in Europe, we also have a jumble of centuries-old ideas and customs that we know originated in other civilizations; we refer to this as mutual cross-pollination. While democracy has been molded by Western thinking and practice in recent history, it has many essential qualities with the village assemblies that controlled the planet thousands of years ago."

Courage and heroism

Andy Vermaut:"Additionally, all persons have some characteristics. Every single one of us is born into a family and a community. Each of us has an inherent sense of good and evil, a natural moral sensibility, and a conscience. We all appreciate and respect courage and heroism. The kid has an innate desire to satisfy his parents, and the parent has an innate desire to protect his child. This, without a doubt, is what we refer to as human nature. What makes man human is universal and serves as a link between them. Together, we work to guarantee that basic rights - freedom of speech, religion, movement, association, and respect of the law - are not the exclusive property of a set of nations or the distinguishing feature of one culture over another. They are widely applicable. They are at the core of democracy, as they are in Europe, when combined with representative governance."

Overwhelming majority

Andy Vermaut:"Thursday 28 April 2022, we have organized a requested demonstration on the Schuman Square in Brussels, alongside the International Alliance for the Defense of Rights and Liberties (AIDL), Postversa asbl, the European Association for the Defence of Minorities, and UKPNP, in which we call on the European Commission to also respect the resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority in the European Parliament and to refrain from ignoring the European Parliament. Today, when I talk about Pakistan, my heart aches profusely. I observe a deterioration of basic rights and liberties, as well as a populace oppressed by a feudal society. A

year ago, the European Parliament voted an overwhelming majority motion calling for a review of Pakistan's GSP status, citing a "alarming" rise in the use of blasphemy accusations and an increase in online and offline assaults on journalists and civil society groups. Our European Parliament (EP) now has 705 members and represents over 450 million Europeans (including President). The European Parliament is expected to represent the peoples of the Union's 27 member states and, above all, to look out for the Union's overall interests. Our European Commission might be thought of as the EU's 'everyday administration.' The European Commission's members are referred to as 'Eurocommissioners'. Each Eurocommissioner is in charge of a single or more policy areas. Eurocommissioners are now 27 in number, one for each member state. They compose the College of European Commissioners collectively. Eurocommissioners are responsible for the European Union as a whole, not only for their home nation."

Sinister powers?

Andy Vermaut:"Despite the vast majority, both the External Action Service (our European Minister of Foreign Affairs) and the European Commission ignored the European Parliament's decision, thereby discrediting the European Parliament. Why is the European Commission disregarding a piece of work that was unanimously approved by the European Parliament? What sinister powers are at work here? That is why we were demonstrating outside Schuman's office, inquiring as to why the European Parliament is being neglected. We want adherence to the European Parliament's decision and wish to place the review of Pakistan's GSP+ status on the European Commission's agenda. With a rise in the number of blasphemy claims and assaults on journalists and civil society groups, the European Parliament has voted a resolution asking for a review of Pakistan's GSP+ status. Is the European Union a contributor to the continued poverty of developing economies? Could it be that low-income nations in a specific area are conducting a price war because they would lose all incentives if Pakistan is awarded GSP+ status despite its human rights violations? Is GSP+ only a negotiating instrument for the EU to get greater economic advantages at the price of workers' rights in countries such as Pakistan, where feudal institutions persist and favour landlords and owners? Since 1947, Pakistan's minority population has plummeted from 20% to fewer than 5% due to governmental coercion. How justified is the EU in retaining Pakistan's GSP+ status? Please, Ursula von der Leyen, promote democracy and fight for human rights; respect the European Parliament and refrain from abusing your authority; take a position for human rights and oppose GSP+ for Pakistan, says Andy Vermaut."

Resolution

Andy Vermaut explains a bit more about the conference in the European Parliament that was organized at exactly the same time as his support manifestation at the Schuman square in front of the European Commission:"Yes. As a result of Pakistan's human rights violations, the European Parliament (EP) held an informal hearing on April 28th to inquire about what the European Commission has done in response to the 28 April 2021 EP Resolution asking for Pakistan's GSP+ preferential trade status to be suspended. Only three MEPs had objected to the adoption of the resolution, which had been supported by 681 MEPs. "To immediately review Pakistan's eligibility for GSP+ status in light of current events and whether there is sufficient

reason to initiate a procedure for the temporary withdrawal" and "to report on this matter to the European Parliament as soon as possible," it was requesting the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Fulvio Martusciello, MEP, presided over the session (EPP group). [Director of Human Rights Without Frontiers, Willy Fautre](#) was a fantastic moderator of this event. I also want to thank Manel Msalmi for all her efforts to make this possible and Gary Cartwright who was our motivator for this conference and our manifestations in Brussels. [Gary Cartwright is an investigative journalist](#) and colleague of mine. He has been investigating the atrocities people face in Pakistan for years. I have learned a great deal about human rights in Pakistan from him. Willy Fautre is also a man after my own heart. For years, he has been standing on the barricades for religious freedom in Pakistan and fighting against the oppression that Christians and moderate Ahmadi Muslims have to endure there. The European Parliament should therefore be proud to have such people on their side, fighting for justice for the people of Pakistan. They are the real friends of Pakistan, because they dare to confront them with the truth. Manel Msalmi on the other hand has been fighting for years for the recognition of minorities in Pakistan. I think that the European Commission should also learn to really listen to these people. They have the best interests of the people of Pakistan and the European Union at heart. We want everyone there to fully enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms. That is our ultimate dream, because we all love Pakistan," concludes Andy Vermaut.

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