

**Press Release**

**Meeting of Hon'ble Chief Minister with Delegation of European Union Ambassadors to India**

A Delegation of Ambassadors from the European Union met the Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru O.Panneerselvam in the Secretariat today, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The Hon'ble Chief Minister recalled the historic ties between Europe and Tamil Nadu and stated that the economic and political experiments in the EU hold lessons for large and diverse countries like India. Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that as his Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had said, Tamil Nadu believes that it is strong States that make a strong Union.

Hon'ble Chief Minister mentioned that Tamil Nadu is one of Top Three industrialised states in India but wants to go further for which the respected Leader Puratchi Thalavi AMMA, had unveiled the "Vision Tamil Nadu 2023".

Hon'ble Chief Minister recalled that Tamil Nadu offers a number of competitive advantages for investors and highlighted that Tamil Nadu's biggest asset is rich human resource endowment. The abundance of skilled human resource and harmonious and peaceful industrial relations make Tamil Nadu a preferred investment destination. Labour standards compliance levels and wage levels are generally higher in Tamil Nadu. The Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that the Government of Tamil Nadu seeks to further enhance the skill level and productivity of Tamil Nadu's work force and that Europe offers some very good models in skill development which Tamil Nadu is keen to learn from.

The immense potential for cooperation with EU both in traditional areas like Engineering and Agro-processing and in emerging areas like

Information Technology, Biotechnology, and Renewable Energy were discussed.

-2-

The Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that Tamil Nadu's strength is the excellent social infrastructure and that in all of India, Tamil Nadu perhaps comes closest to the European model of a welfare State.

The significant work done in Tamil Nadu in the area of environmental regulation was highlighted including the on-line, interactive monitoring system for emissions of large industrial units and adoption zero-liquid-discharge for water intensive industries.

The European Union Ambassador to India Mr Joao Cravinho mentioned that the main reason for the visit to Tamil Nadu was to understand the tremendous diversity of India and in particular since Tamil Nadu is an important State both in terms of size of population and the economy. He highlighted that the EU is the largest trading partner for India and the largest source of investment. The discussions centred on the kind of Central Government support available for the Tamil Nadu Vision 2023, the status of implementation of Goods and Services Tax and Tamil Nadu's views on the matter, the major challenges facing Tamil Nadu including provision of infrastructure including power and water, rapid urbanization and the need for skill development.

The EU Ambassador mentioned that the European Investment Bank was now authorized to work in India and would be interested in lending particularly for green infrastructure projects including renewable energy and smart grids. The EU Ambassadors were also very enthusiastic about the Global Investors' Meet as an opportunity for many European businesses to invest further in Tamil Nadu.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister invited the European Union Ambassadors to attend the Global Investors Meet to be held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2015 along with a big business delegation from the EU.

The Ambassador of European Union was accompanied by Mr. Miloslav Stasek, Ambassador Embassy of the Czech Republic, Mr. Jorge Roza de Oliveira, Ambassador Embassy of Portugal, Mr. Vihar Lubi, Ambassador Embassy of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Zigmund Bertok, Ambassador, Embassy of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Petko Doykov, Ambassador, Embassy of Bulgaria, Mr. Tomasz Lukaszuk, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Sam, Schreiner, Ambassador, Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr. Aivars Groza, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Latvia and Mrs. Anne Marchal, Head of Political Section Delegation of the European Union. Thiru K.Gnanadesikan, I.A.S., Chief Secretary to Government, Tmt. Sheela Balakrishnan, I.A.S. (Retd.) Adviser to Government, Thiru K.Ramanujam, I.P.S.,(Retd.) Adviser to Government, Thiru C.V.Shankar, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary, Industries Department, Thiru K.Shanmugam, I.A.S., Principal Secretary to Government, Finance Department and Thiru S.Krishnan, I.A.S, Principal Secretary to Government, Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Department were present.

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Issued by: DIPR, Secretariat, Chennai-9.

Dated : 8.12.2014