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GSP Plus status, Country to continue availing tariff preferences: MoC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan would continue availing tariff preferences in GSP Plus, says the Ministry of Commerce (MoC). Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce and Industry Razzak Dawood took to Twitter on Friday and announced that, Pakistan would continue to enjoy tariff preference in EU under GSP plus.

The 3rd Biennial Assessment of GSP was published by the European Commission on 10th February, 2020. The ministry issued a statement saying that as per GSP Regulation, the Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) has to submit a report to the European Parliament and European Council on the performance of GSP Scheme and the status of compliance of GSP beneficiary countries on the 27 international conventions covered under the Regulation. On the economic front, Pakistan was a significant beneficiary of the benefits availed by 9 GSP Plus beneficiary countries. Besides Pakistan, other beneficiaries of GSP Plus include Armenia, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. Out of total export of 6.739 billion euro of Pakistan to EU in 2018, our exports worth 5.885 billion euro availed tariff concessions.

As far as implementation of 27 international conventions is concerned, the report appreciated Pakistan in taking positive steps in the areas of climate change, forestation under billion tree tsunami project, improved vigilance to combat illicit narcotics and wildlife trade, political and administrative reforms to integrate erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), social protection initiatives like Ehasas Programme, promotion of Inter Faith Harmony including opening of Kartarpur Corridor and legislation to ensure the rights of women, children and transgender.

The Report was discussed in the International Trade (INTA) Committee of the EU Parliament on 19th February, 2020 and in the GSP Working Party of the European Council on 26th February, 2020.

The European Commission and External Action Service recommended at both the forums to continue GSP Scheme and stated their monitoring priorities for the next biennial monitoring cycle, which are given in the report. There is a clear indication that the EU authorities are satisfied with the results of 3rd Biennial Assessment of GSP Plus and are focussed towards the next biennial monitoring cycle.

In view of the outcome of 3rd Biennial Review of GSP so far, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) would like to commend the efforts of all the Ministries and Departments of the Federal and Provincial Governments, including AJK and GB, who cooperated and formulated laws, developed policies and established institutions to implement the 27 conventions related to GSP Plus.

The MoC would also like to appreciate the contribution of the office of the Attorney General for Pakistan as Head of the Treaty Implementation Cell for coordinating and steering the process of the implementation of GSP-related conventions.

Pakistan would continue to engage with the European Commission under the GSP Regulation framework and cooperate in their monitoring efforts.

Pakistan is totally committed to implementing the 27 international conventions, which is our constitutional obligation and blends well with the people centric priorities of the Government. It is an ongoing process and Pakistan is slowly and surely heading towards the common objectives.

Since the grant of GSP Plus in 2014, Pakistan's exports to the European Union have enhanced from 4.538 billion euros in 2013 to 7.492 billion euros in 2019, registering an increase of 65%.

The main sectors that benefitted from GSP Plus have been textile and garments, which besides earning foreign exchange for the country, provided employment opportunities, especially for females.

The ministry of commerce in an official statement stated that on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, MOC takes this opportunity to convey the gratitude to European Union for providing this unilateral trade concession to Pakistan. MOC hopes that the business community will capitalize further on this trade enhancement opportunity.