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News stories

European Union and State of Maharashtra intensify cooperation



City of Mumbai joins the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy | EU Ambassador visits Mumbai

Mumbai, 27 February 2020: The city of Mumbai today signed the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCOM) commitment, an international coalition of city leaders committed to raising the global ambition for climate action. The commitment was signed by Mr. Praveen Pardeshi, Municipal Commissioner of Greater Mumbai in the presence of Mr. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India.

Mumbai became the 16th Indian city to have joined the GCoM initiative, representing in total over 42 million Indian citizens. The EU financially supports the development of the Covenant of Mayors, including in India. Globally, more than 10,000 cities have committed to develop and implement

adaptation strategies under the Global Covenant of Mayors framework.

Climate Adaptation and Coastal Cities

United Nations estimates that nearly 70 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050, with high-density cities especially coastal areas at greatest risk from climate change. Nearly half of the world's population lives within 200 Kms of the coast and is expected to reach 75% by 2025. India has a long coastline of 7517 km. According to the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) climate change has the potential to increase flooding risks in cities in three ways: higher sea levels and storm surges; flooding due to heavier rainfall or rainfall that is more prolonged than in the past; and from changes that increase river flows – for instance through increased glacial melt.

Addressing this critical issue, a two day conference “**Climate Crisis: Action for Tropical Coastal Cities**” is being organized as part of the EU funded Strategic Partnership for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA) with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India in collaboration with Mumbai First. The conference is aimed at sharing of experiences between Indian and European coastal cities on climate change adaptation planning and implementation.

EU Ambassador Ugo Astuto addressed the two-day international conference in Mumbai on “**Climate Crisis: Action for Tropical Coastal Cities**”, organized by Mumbai First in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra and the EU. The conference was inaugurated by Shri Ajoy Mehta, Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra; Mr. Praveen Pardeshi, Municipal Commissioner of Greater Mumbai and Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Director, NEERI.

The conference over a course of two days will discuss a series of issues from urban flooding and risk management in coastal cities to the ecological impact that climate change is set to have on human health and marine life. It will also delve into issues addressing group-specific vulnerabilities of climate change such as the debilitating impact it can have on livelihoods of the urban poor, women and youth.

Significant climate change impacts are already reality in Europe and India. Elaborating on the need for global action on climate mitigation and adaptation, the EU Ambassador Astuto remarked, “Significant climate change impacts are a reality in Europe and India. More than 1700 cities in Europe have committed to enhancing their resilience; more than 26% of all EU cities and 40% of cities with more than 150000 inhabitants already have adopted adaptation plans.” “The European Union is working together with India in the area of both climate mitigation and adaptation. Cooperation on adaptation to climate change takes place in the context of the India EU Water Partnership, the Partnership for Smart and Sustainable Urban Development and in the context of the Global Covenant of Mayors. As the fight against climate change intensifies, we see this partnership strengthening.”

Visit to IIT Bombay

The Ambassador of the EU also visited the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) and exchanged views with the students and faculty on key issues that are facing humanity today, including climate change, environment and sustainable development. He also invited the students and faculty to avail of the scholarships and funding opportunities provided by EU-funded programmes for higher education and research in the EU. Organized as part of the “EU Day” outreach programme, it was attended by Mumbai-based representatives of EU Member States including those from Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Elaborating on the recently announced EU's Green Deal, Ambassador Astuto said: "It is a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, that is climate neutral by 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use."

The Ambassador also invited the students to maximize the benefits from opportunities provided by Erasmus+ programme for higher education in the EU. Till date 441 students from Maharashtra have benefitted from Erasmus scholarships of which 49 are from IIT Bombay. At the institutional level, 31 projects involving higher education institutions from Maharashtra have been funded under the Capacity Building for Higher Education component of the Erasmus programme since 2014, of which two involve IIT Bombay.

About GCoM: GCoM is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, built upon the commitment of over 10,000 cities and local governments. These cities hail from 6 continents and 138 countries. In total, they represent more than 800 million people. By 2030, Global Covenant cities and local governments could collectively reduce 2.3 billion tons of CO2 emissions per year. Up to now 15 Indian cities have joined GCOM, namely Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar, Gandhinagar, Gangtok, Gwalior, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Kochi, Nagpur, Panaji, Patna, Rajkot, Shimla, Surat, and Vadodara. Learn more at: www.globalcovenantofmayors.org (link is external)

About the European Union (EU): The EU, which consists of 27 countries, has the world's second largest economy and its third largest population, after China and India. Though richly diverse, the countries that 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. 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 global policies on sustainability.

EU-India relation: Over 55 years the EU and India have worked together to reduce poverty, prevent disasters, expand trade, secure global public goods, enhance security around the world and promote joint research in energy, health, agriculture and many other fields of mutual interest. More information at

EU and Maharashtra: Recently, the European Investment Bank, the EU bank, has signed a €600m (Rs 4,800 crore) loan agreement with Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation for the upcoming Pune Metro Rail project, which will create 900 new jobs and offer cleaner, safer, faster and affordable transport to around 600,000 people daily.

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