

EU envoy highlights key GSP Plus conventions

By Mehtab Haider

ISLAMABAD: Welcoming the move towards the granting of the generalised system of preferences (GSP) Plus status to Pakistan, the European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan Lars-Gunnar Wigemark said Thursday if the status is granted, then the country has to implement all the 27 international conventions on human rights, labour standards, environment and good governance.

Pakistan must implement the conventions – which are part of this system of special trade preferences – if the GSP Plus is conferred upon Pakistan by the end of this year," he said in a statement.

The Ambassador said that he welcomed that the GSP+ package had now passed an important test of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade.

If granted these trade preferences will have a very positive effect on Pakistan's trade with the European Union and create new opportunities for Pakistani companies as well as jobs for many locals, he added.

"We still need to wait if there will be a vote in the plenary session of the European parliament in December," he said.

A statement issued by the



European office said on 5 November 2013 the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament voted against a resolution objecting to the European Commission's delegated act on GSP Plus, proposing special trade preferences to ten applicant countries, including Pakistan.

Though the committee's vote could pave the way for the status, yet it is not decisive since there is still a possibility that a negative resolution might be presented before the European parliament's plenary

session to be held in the second week of December 2013.

At least 40 members of the European parliament must lodge a request for such a plenary session to take place.

Besides, the votes against the European Commission's proposal must be in an absolute majority i.e. 384 votes out of a total of 766 members of the European parliament.

The other countries awaiting the GSP+ include Armenia, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Mongolia, Paraguay, and Peru.

