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European Parliament Report

'Strongly believes there is room for constructive and principled engagement between the EU and Sri Lanka'

The Report of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Asia following their visit to Sri Lanka from 22-26 February 2011 for the 6th EP/Sri Lanka Inter-Parliamentary Meeting was tabled in Brussels last week. The report presented by the Chair of the Delegation Ms. Jean Lambert (Greens/UK), details the Delegation's interactions in Sri Lanka with the Hon. Speaker, senior Ministers, members of Parliament, Senior Officials, EU country diplomats and INGOs, as well as field visits to Jaffna and Vavuniya where they also inspected EU funded

projects. The 'conclusions' contained in the report, which comments on the aspects of development cooperation, devolution and reconciliation, practical steps suggested and Inter-Parliamentary cooperation, state that "the EP South Asia Delegation would like to underline that it strongly believes there is room for constructive and principled engagement between the EU and Sri Lanka - despite the disagreements of the past and the fact that, in some areas, differences in perceptions still subsist". It also "calls on

the diaspora to play a positive role in supporting this approach by working constructively with the elected Tamil leadership in Sri Lanka". (Full text of 'conclusions' are appended below) In comments before the South Asia Delegation following the visit, South Asia Delegation Chair Ms. Lambert noted that "In a nutshell the feeling of the EP Delegation was that this visit was productive and the EP Delegation heard about detailed plans of the Government to rebuild the North and felt that there certainly have been very positive moves".

She made a special reference to the Interim Recommendations of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission and said "these were generally judged as positive ones: the Delegation would therefore call for their swift implementation, and expects that the final report of the LLRC will be public". She also highlighted that the EP Delegation was especially encouraged by the creation in the Sri Lanka Parliament of a formal counterpart body in the form of an 'EU Parliamentary Friendship Association'. **CONT ON P2**

The channel 4 video is part of a politically motivated agenda against Sri Lanka - External Affairs Minister

(AsianTribune.com) - Sri Lanka's external affairs minister Prof. G L Peiris told reporters that the channel 4 video is part of a politically motivated agenda against Sri Lanka, following their failed separatist war.

Addressing the media in Colombo, he further said that the Sri Lankan government is not isolated in the

international arena following mounting pressure from the western bloc for accountability on alleged war crimes during the final stages of the battle with the LTTE.

Minister Peiris accused sections of the international community of attempting to scuttle Sri Lanka's post war recovery.

"Initially it was released when the European Commission was holding a meeting in Brussels to take a decision whether the GSP facility would be further extended to Sri Lanka for three years. If the meeting was scheduled for tomorrow, it was released on the previous day. The second instance was the release of the report on the day before he was to meet British Foreign Secretary William Hague in London.

The third instance was when President Rajapaksa was in the United Kingdom to deliver a speech at the Oxford Union." Minister said.

Recently, United Kingdom based channel 4 has broadcast footage of what they claimed as executions of civilians allegedly by the armed forces, but the Sri Lankan government has dismissed them as fake. He said that the Defense Ministry will investigate the controversial footage. The Sri Lankan Government dismissed the video saying that the disturbing images in the Channel 4 film aired without any guarantee of their authenticity have the potential to incite hatred amongst different communities in Sri Lanka, including future generations, and adversely affect the ongoing national reconciliation process. Minister Peiris also said that the President Mahinda Rajapaksa's recent visits to



Prof. G L Peiris

Russia strengthen the ties between the two nations and the government will implement a special programme to encourage more tourists from Russia.

The comments came after President Mahinda Rajapaksa's visit to Russia to attend the Petersburg Economic Forum.

The Minister added that the Chinese leader clarified to President Rajapaksa that under such circumstances, China vehemently opposed any external interference in Sri Lanka.

"The Spanish Prime Minister who has wide practical experience emphasized that not only allegations made against Sri Lanka should be rejected but made a positive evaluation and the Russian President said the Sri Lankan President and the citizens had unstinted support and cooperation of Russia." the minister further revealed.

Tickets available for Sanath's farewell

The final few tickets to see Sri Lankan legend Sanath Jayasuriya's last game of International cricket are now available. The man who helped Sri Lanka to their greatest ever victory before becoming the second highest run scorer in One Day International history has received a dramatic call up to the touring party and will bid farewell to cricket at the same ground as Sir Donald Bradman in 1948 and England's Andrew Flintoff in 2009. Tickets for the match are virtually sold

out but the last few seats have been released this week, giving Sri Lankan fans across the United Kingdom one last chance to see probably the greatest Sri Lankan cricketer in the

history of the game on his final appearance. To buy tickets for this match, please visit kiaoval.com or phone 0844 8479866.

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By Reggie Fernando
SL Seniors in New Zealand
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