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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF MALDIVES



European Union

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SIXTH MALDIVES – EU POLICY DIALOGUE

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The Maldives and the European Union (EU) held their sixth annual Policy Dialogue on 23 November 2022 in the Maldives. This was the first in-person Policy Dialogue held since the COVID-19 pandemic, with some Member States participating virtually in a hybrid format.

The discussions were constructive and focused on several thematic areas including democracy, governance, strengthening of the justice sector, security cooperation, trade, tourism, investment, finance, economic cooperation, and environment and climate change.

The Maldives, the EU and Member States highlighted the growing momentum in the relations between the two sides and recalled the successful discussions of the recent Third Maldives – EU Senior Officials meeting held in October 2022. The Maldives also shared its recent policy priorities and highlighted the significant progress the Maldives has achieved in consolidating democracy and ensuring good governance. The EU and Member States reiterated their commitment to continue supporting the Maldives in its efforts to advance accountability and strengthen the justice sector of the Maldives.

On the climate front, Maldives expressed appreciation to the EU and the Member States for their commitment to enhancing cooperation in the areas of environmental protection, mitigation and adaptation. The Maldives also commended the EU for their commitment to increase climate financing towards adaptation measures and expressed appreciation for their efforts at the recent COP27, to increase the availability of climate financing especially to Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Maldives, the EU and Member States also emphasized the significance of furthering security cooperation especially in counterterrorism. The Maldives briefed on the progress it has made in implementing the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and addressed security vulnerabilities and priority areas including maritime safety and security, formulation of strategies and developing capacity of intelligence agencies. The Maldives expressed gratitude for the continuous assistance especially through initiatives such as the CRIMARIO-IORIS programme of the EU. Reaffirming its support to the Maldives in this area, the EU also launched its new EUR 2 million counter-terrorism project in the Maldives on the margins of the dialogue, focused on criminal justice, law enforcement, maritime security and prison management. Acknowledging the significant growth in the tourist arrivals from Europe, the Maldives reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the safety and security of its people and European tourists visiting the Maldives.

The EU commended the strong economic recovery achieved by the Maldives especially following the impact of the pandemic. The Maldives highlighted potential investment opportunities for European businesses in the Maldives and expressed interest to promote and strengthen business ties with EU and the Member States through initiatives such as the Second Maldives – EU Business Roundtable. The Maldives also reiterated its interest for the EU to

consider granting duty free access for its fisheries products. The Maldives also reiterated its request to obtain Visa free travel for its citizens to EU member states and welcomed more EU Member States to join the Visa Facilitation Service Centre established in the Maldives in March 2020. Italy announced the re-opening of VFS Italy during the Policy Dialogue.

The Maldives delegation was led by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdulla Shahid and included Minister of Defense, Uza. Mariya Ahmed Didi, Minister of Home Affairs, Sheikh Imran Abdulla, Minister of Finance, Ibrahim Ameer, Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Aminath Shauna, Secretary, Foreign Relations at the President's Office, Ibrahim Hood, Commissioner of Police Mohamed Hameed, Deputy Attorney General, Uza. Khadeeja Shabeen and Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Riyaz Mansoor.

The EU Heads of Missions were led by Ambassador of the European Union to the Maldives, Denis Chaibi and included Ambassador of the Republic of Italy, Rita Mannella, Ambassador of the Republic of Austria, Katharina Wieser, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Holger Seubert, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bonnie Horbach, Ambassador-designate of the Kingdom of Spain, José María Ridaó Domínguez, Ambassador-designate of the Kingdom of Sweden, Jan Thesleff, Ambassador-designate of the Slovak Republic, Robert Maxian, Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Romania, Victor Chiujdea, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of France, Aurélien Maillet, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, Irma Šinkovec, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Czech Republic, Kateřina Petersen, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Bulgaria, Kamen Koutsarov, Counsellor at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark, Martin Egknud Petersen, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in India, Diana Mickevičienė and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland, Tito Gronow.

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