

01.06.2007

Indian Foreign Minister in Berlin for Troika talks



On Thursday (31 May), the EU Foreign Ministers Troika met a delegation from India in Berlin for consultations. India had already participated in the 8th ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting in Hamburg at the start of the week.

The Indian delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, and that of the EU by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The Troika also featured representatives from the European Commission and the EU Council Secretariat. The subsequent Portuguese Council Presidency was represented by the Foreign Minister, Luís Amado.

The talks in the Federal Foreign Office focused not only on bilateral EU-India relations but also on topical regional, international and global issues. India and the EU have been engaged in a strategic partnership since 2004. In 2005, a Joint Action Plan was agreed upon within the framework of this partnership, and cooperation between India and the EU was comprehensively expanded. Particular importance is attached to research and development, areas crucial to our future. Furthermore, negotiations on a free-trade agreement are to commence before the end of Germany's EU Presidency. Climate and environmental issues were among the main themes discussed in Berlin. Another key issue was energy security. Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier told journalists after the meeting that Europe's position on technological partnership with the Subcontinent would influence India's position at the forthcoming UN climate negotiations on the Indonesian island of Bali. The negotiations there are intended to prepare a follow-up agreement to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The ASEM states unanimously called for a global and comprehensive follow-up agreement of this kind in Hamburg at the start of the week. Frank-Walter Steinmeier once more emphasized that, in the view of the ASEM partners, the negotiations should, if possible, be concluded by 2009 in order to ensure that a follow-up regime is in place before the Kyoto Protocol expires.

International issues discussed included Afghanistan, Iran and the Middle East peace process. The Minister made it clear that shared responsibility for international and global issues is also "recognized in India". Foreign Minister Mukherjee added: "Together we can make a difference". The next EU-India summit, scheduled to take place during the Portuguese Presidency, was thus awaited with great anticipation.