

## India - Malta Relations

India and Malta enjoy very friendly and cordial relations. India was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Malta in 1964 and in 1965 established diplomatic relations with it. India and Malta share a common heritage, being members of the Commonwealth. Use of English language is a common bond. Within the context of Commonwealth, Malta attaches high degree of importance to it, and had hosted the CHOGM Summit in November 2005. It again hosted the Summit in November 2015. On both the occasions, India was represented at senior political level. Minister of State (PK), Mrs Preneet Kaur, was the first foreign dignitary to visit Malta in April 2013, after the return of the Labour Government in Malta after a gap of almost 25 years.

An Assistant High Commission of India at Malta was opened in 1993. However, on grounds of economy, the Government of India closed down the Post in 2002 and appointed an Honorary Consul in Malta. However, the Indian Mission to Malta has again been re-opened since January this year, and is in the process being fully functional shortly. Malta opened its High Commission in Delhi in July 2007 and has appointed a resident High Commissioner. It also has Honorary Consuls in Mumbai and Chennai.

### **Bilateral Visits :**

India-Malta bilateral relations have been friendly, with a number of visits having been exchanged between the two sides. The high level visits have been as follows :

From the Indian side:

- President R. Venkataraman, visited Malta in 1990.
- In November 2005, Shri Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce & Industry, visited Malta as Head of Indian delegation to CHOGM.
- In July 2008 (27-30) Shri Chinmay R. Gharekhan, Special Envoy of Prime Minister, visited Malta for discussions regarding the nuclear deal with USA.
- Mrs. Preneet Kaur, MoS, External Affairs, visited Malta from 07-10 April, 2013 at the invitation of Foreign Minister of Malta. A 'Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement' was signed during the visit by her. She also called on the Prime Minister of Malta; Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for EU Affairs; Minister for Energy and Chancellor of University of Malta & Director of IMLI. She gave a talk on 'India's Foreign Policy Priorities in the 2st Century' at MEDAC.
- Shri Shashi Kant Sharma, Comptroller & Audit General of India attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> conference of the Commonwealth Auditors General Meeting on 24-27 March, 2014.
- Prof. K.V.Thomas, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, visited Malta to attend the Westminster Workshop: Effective, Independent and Transparent Public Accounts Committees for Robust Public Financial Oversight from 01-05 June, 2015.
- EAM attended the CHOGM Summit 2015 from November 25-29, 2015 as head of the delegation, and MoS(VKS) represented India at the Foreign Ministers' segment of CHOGM from November 5-26, 2015.

From the Maltese side, the visits to India were as follows :

- Prime Minister of Malta, Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, visited India, in 1989.
- Dr. Censu Tabone, President of Malta, visited India In January 1992.
- In March 2005, Dr. Michael Frendo, Foreign Minister of Malta, paid an official visit to India. He met EAM and the Commerce Minister. A Protocol for Foreign Office Consultations between the two countries, was signed during the visit.
- In December 2006, Vincent A. De Gaetano, Chief Justice of Malta, visited India to participate

in a Conference of Jurists in Lucknow, and had a one-to-one meeting with the then Chief Justice of India.

- In March 2007 (12-17) a five-member goodwill Parliamentary delegation headed by the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs, Jason Azzopardi, visited India at the invitation of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs of India. The delegation called on the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, MOS (AS), and MoS for Information Technology. It also had meetings with Chairmen of India's Committees on External Affairs and Information Technology. Mr. Godfrey Farrugia, MP, along with his wife, visited Vishakhapatnam, for Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Parliament and Media Law Conference held during 7-11 April, 2015.
- In March 2007 (23-24) Foreign Minister of Malta, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Steering Committee of Commonwealth Connects [on bridging the digital divide], visited India to take part in Commonwealth Connects 2007- e-Partnership Summit, held in New Delhi.
- In January 2010 (4-8) Louis Galea, Speaker of the Maltese Parliament, visited India for the Commonwealth Speakers meeting.
- In January 2010 (6-11) Dr. Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister of Malta, visited India. He met EAM and MOS (PK) and also delivered a talk at the Supreme Court Bar Association. During the trip he formally inaugurated the Maltese High Commission in New Delhi (established in 2007) and also the Honorary Consulate of Malta in Chennai.
- In November 2013 the Maltese Foreign Minister Dr. George Vella met EAM, Shri Salman Khurshid, on the sidelines of ASEM in New Delhi.
- In February 2015 (05-07) Mr. Leo Brincat, Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change, visited India to participate and address the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2015 organized by TERI in New Delhi.

### **Visit of Indian Ships**

#### *(i) Indian Survey Ship, INS Darshak*

The Indian survey ship INS Darshak paid a three day goodwill visit to Malta. The ship was under the command of Capt. Sulsri Sridhar Karnik. It was 86 metres long and had a complement of 200 officers and crew. The ship was opened for the public on 28 April.

#### *(ii) Indian Naval Ship INS Tarangini*

INS Tarangini visited Malta among other countries from February 26- March 1, 2007. The visit was prominently featured in the media and was a great success. The reception on board was amongst others attended by Foreign Minister of Malta and members of Maltese Indian community. In 2015, INS Tarangini visited Malta from 20-22 June and again on 6th October.

### **Cultural relations:**

The cultural relations between India and Malta have been old. A Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the both countries was signed in 1992. A Cultural Troupe comprising classical Dancer (Kuchipudi) Ms. Vyjayanthi Kashi and Violinist Ms. Anupriya Deotale, visited Malta in July 2008. "Days of India" were organized from 2-6th Oct., 2013 which included performance by a 10 member Indian folk dance troupe, film & food festival and an exhibition on Gandhi ji. Dr Anglu Farrugia, Speaker of Maltese Parliament inaugurated the celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. Also Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Economy among various other dignitaries attended the 'Gala dinner and Dance' performances. In June 2014, an Indian film festival was organized in Malta.

On June 21, 2015 High Commission of India celebrated 'International Day of Yoga' in Malta with a participation of Maltese nationals, in Malta in collaboration with India Tourism Office, Milan,

Italy, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi and Grand Hotel Excelsior, Malta. Another yoga session was held at the Valletta harbour at the visiting Indian Navy Sailing Ship INS Tarangini in which Yoga experts from Malta and ship crew participated. On June 22, 2015 Incredible India Tourism Road Show in collaboration with India Tourism Office, Milan, 'MAKE IN INDIA' presentation and a cultural presentation on famous Bollywood dance performance were also organized.

On June 21, 2016 High Commission again celebrated the second International Day of Yoga with the participation of Maltese nationals in collaboration with India Tourism Office, Milan, Italy, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The Yoga event was followed by Incredible India Tourism Show and a short cultural programme of Bollywood dance presented by three dancers from Italy. At the Third International Day of Yoga event organized in Malta, several Maltese people turned up for yoga, with few of them expressing appreciation on the Mission's website and facebook.

## Commonwealth

Malta is a member of Commonwealth. In connection with the XIX Commonwealth Games, the Queen's Baton Relay (QBR) on its routing through 70 nations and territories of the Commonwealth transited in Malta on 4-8 December, 2009. Baton was taken to different Maltese schools and wider publicity was arranged for this event. Malta participated in Commonwealth Games held in Delhi from 3-14 October.

## Bilateral Agreements

During the visit of Maltese President in 1992, two agreements, one on Cultural Cooperation and the other on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, were signed. A MoU in Power sector was signed in 1992 and under this BHEL representative in Libya visited Malta in November 2009 and made presentation on solar-energy projects and small thermal plants to the Ministry of Resources in Malta. A Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed during Smt. Preneet Kaur, the then Minister of State for External Affairs' visit to Malta in April, 2013. A MoU for Waiver of Visas for Holders of Diplomatic passports was signed in November 2013 during the visit of the Maltese Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. George Vella to New Delhi to attend the ASEM 2013. MOUs on Cooperation between Confederation of Indian Industry and Malta Chamber of Commerce entered into force on 8 April, 2014 for a period of 3 years.

## Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade between India and Malta stood at US \$ 159.60 mn in 2016-17. India's exports to Malta were of US \$ 137.23 mn in 2016-17 whereas imports from Malta were to the tune of US \$ 22.37 mn. The main items of India's exports to Malta are marine products, drugs, pharmaceutical & fine chemicals, inorganic/organic/agro chemicals, manufactures of metals, transport equipments, and other commodities. The main items of India's imports from Malta are pulp and waste paper, metal scraps, organic chemicals, medicinal & pharmaceutical products, electronic goods.

A high level business delegation from Malta visited India to explore business opportunities and attract investments into Malta in late November 2009. The delegation participated in business meetings/seminar organized by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII). Focus of the visiting delegation was cooperation in sectors like tourism, information & communication technology, health, maritime, financial services and film production. Malta Chamber of Commerce and CII also signed two MOUs on cooperation. Indian pharmaceutical company, Aurobindo Pharma which established its first European GMP certified facility in Malta in 2008 launched its products in the Maltese market in October 2010 and has since further expanded its operations and acquisitions. OVL sent a team to explore opportunities in hydrocarbon sector.

In April 2014, a high level CEOs delegation led by CII visited Malta at the invitation of Malta Enterprise to scout for business opportunities. Most of Indian businessmen were able to establish viable commercial contact. CII and Malta Enterprise also signed a MoU for cooperation with Malta Enterprise.

## **Areas of mutual interests**

Malta is focusing on six specific areas and has set targets to be achieved by 2015. The Maltese Prime Minister has suggested that India could be Malta's partner in the development of these identified areas.

- **Financial Services**: Malta is strong in the financial services sector and has one of the best financial infrastructure, expertise and investors-friendly tax system in Europe. Malta provides excellent location for Indian IT and Financial Services because of its strategic location and availability of skilled manpower. An Indian company I-flex, computerized the operations of Malta's Central Bank.
- **ICT**: Malta recognizes India's strength in Information and Communications Technology sector. Malta has opened a Smart city project in 2009 similar to the project being set up in Kerala. There could be synergy between these two projects. Maltese side has suggested the ' cloud' concept through which India, EU and North Africa could be virtually networked.
- **Tourism**: Although for Malta Europe, has been a favoured tourism destination, an increasing number of Maltese are going to other tourist destinations and there is potential to promote India as a tourism option in Malta, and vice versa.
- **Manufacturing**: The manufacturing sector especially pharmaceutical sector could be potential area for the cooperation as Maltese patent laws provide an advantage over other EU countries. The health care is another promising area for bilateral cooperation. An Indian company, Aurobindo Pharma has set up its plant in Malta in April 2009.
- **Education**: Malta has some of the oldest universities in the region including institutes for specialized training in areas such as maritime sector, diplomatic studies, management education etc. Universities/institutes of the two countries could consider cooperation.
- **Shipping**: Malta has one of the best free port facilities and shipping service sector in the region. Malta is strategically located in Mediterranean region for locating warehouses to re-ship Indian goods to North Africa and EU.

## **Indian Community**

Even though some Maltese-Indians trace their roots in Malta to 1890s, the Indian community has remained small and is no more than 400 strong about of 110 of them have Maltese nationality. They are mostly engaged in business of textiles, and food industry. There are also some Indian students studying in Malta. Malta has extended full cooperation during the evacuation of Indians from Libya in 2011 and again in August 2014.

For more information and latest updates please visit the websit <http://indianembassylibya.in> [a dedicated website for the High Commission of India, Malta, is in the process of being set up.]

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