



His Excellency Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India

European Union organised food and agriculture seminar in India on 10-11 October, 2019

ANI | Updated: **Oct 12, 2019 13:01 IST**

New Delhi [India] October 12 (ANI/NewsVoir): Food production and gastronomy in Europe are based on the combination of knowledge, skills, practices and traditions bringing together farming and methods of conserving, processing, cooking, sharing and eating food.

India and the European Union (EU) share similar values when it comes to 'food culture'. It is integral to the rich array of food production, tightly bound up with the unique farming practices resulting in distinct products.

In the EU, as in India, consumer protection comes first. A high level of health protection is the paramount objective of all EU laws in food and farming sectors. The EU has, therefore, harmonised its food safety and quality regulations throughout the Union under the concept 'from farm to fork'.

In order to better explain how the European Union guarantees that its food and beverage products are safe, authentic and of high quality, the European Union organized an EU Seminar on Food Standards, Farming Policy and Trade in Andaz Hotel, New Delhi on 10-11 October, 2019. The seminar brought together food and farming policy experts from the European Union, representatives of major EU food sectors (including dairy, meats, fruit and vegetables as well as wines and spirits), Indian government, research and academia and business representatives. The EU and India got an opportunity to share views and exchange best practices on policy and regulatory perspectives on harmonised food safety and quality model and sanitary and phytosanitary standards in the world that can ultimately benefit both farmers and consumers.

From the Indian side, Atul Chaturvedi, Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Dr Ashok Dalwai, Chairman of the Committee on Doubling of Farmers' Income (Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare) spoke at the seminar, while government officials and State agriculture departments representatives confirmed their presence.

On the EU side, the seminar was attended by H.E. Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India along with other EU experts and officials. Agriculture and Commercial representatives from different EU Member States were equally present. Among the topics discussed, this seminar deliberated on EU food and farming policy and food safety regime, consumer protection, geographical indications and other key issues. This was followed by dedicated, business-led sessions on dairy, meat, fruit and vegetables, wines and spirit drinks and olive oil.

The seminar also deliberated on 'How to boost EU-India trade in agri-food products'. Chaired by John Clarke, International Affairs Director from Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, the debate had distinguished Indian panellists including Prof Biswajit Dhar of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, representatives of the Forum of Indian Food Importers and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. This Open House provided an opportunity for both sides to discuss key EU policies in the agri-food sector, benefits and challenges of the Indian market especially to the European businesses.

The EU is India's largest trading partner. However, two-way agri-food trade can be greatly improved. The EU has a negative trade balance with India and sees opportunities for increasing exports to this vibrant and growing market. Overall, the value of EU imports in agri-food sector from India amounted to EUR3153 million in 2018 and continues to increase, creating a great opportunity to the Indian producers. In the same year, the EU exported to India agri-food products of the total value of just EUR849 million.