

Czech businessmen ready for JVs with Pak counterparts

Czech Republic has huge business opportunities for potential Pakistani businessmen in Power, Textile, Pharmaceutical, Leather and Construction sectors and Czech businessmen are ready to initiate joint ventures with their Pakistani counterparts for the mutual benefit of both the countries. This was stated by Ambassador of Czech Republic Pavol Sepelak in Pakistan while speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Monday. LCCI President Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry, Senior Vice President Ejaz A Mumtaz, Vice President Faisal Iqbal Sheikh, Honorary Consul of Czech Republic Mr Kamal Monnoo and Third Secretary (Political and Commercial) Tomas DANHEL also spoke on the occasion. The Ambassador said that the Czech companies were already participating in the construction of two power plants in Balloki and Muridke while were also making investment for development in gas sector and in agriculture field a factory for bio-fertilizers was being constructed by Czech Republic “Pakistan already has good access to European markets and during Czech EU Presidency we outlined new comprehensive package of measures and incentives to gradually build up our trade relationship and boost and diversify further the exports of Pakistan. We are also exploring options available under EU preferential access schemes such as GSP+ and Free Trade Agreement. EU is actually running program of technical assistance called TRTA (Trade Related Technical Assistance) whose aim is to strengthen the export capacity of Pakistani companies.” He said that there is a need to work together in order to identify possible fields of cooperation and to provide proper information to business communities of both sides. He said a number of potential investors from Czech Republic are planning to visit Pakistan to have first-hand knowledge about the available business opportunities here. Speaking on the occasion, the LCCI President Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry said that the current level of trade between Pakistan and Czech Republic calls for more concrete steps on both sides and foremost among them is the exchange of information. He said that to cover up that information gap, it is necessary that Chambers of Commerce of both the countries are involved and delegations are organized on reciprocal basis besides arranging single country exhibitions. He said there is a huge potential of trade between Czech Republic and Pakistan provided aggressive marketing is done by both the countries. Frequent exchange of business delegations and holding of single country exhibitions can be instrumental in raising trade and investment between our two countries. He said Pakistan can supply products like surgical instruments, sports goods, fresh fruits & vegetables, carpets, handicrafts, rice, fish & its preparations, besides textiles and leather products. Pakistan’s strength lies in textiles. The investment made by Czech Republic in medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and textiles in Pakistan would not only cater to the demand of Pakistan and Czech Republic for such commodities but would cater to the demands of a much expanded market of Central Asian States, Gulf countries, and other regional countries and even EU and USA. These potentials need to be seriously studied and monitored by the Czech Delegation. The LCCI President said that Pakistan’s major exports to Czech Republic include leather and textile products but these exports

constitute a petty fraction of Czech's total imports of these commodities. For instance whereas Czech Republic's total imports of leather products from the world in 2005 amounted to \$ 176.1 million, Pakistan's share in these imports was only \$ 3.0 million i.e. 1.7 percent. Similarly textile imports from Pakistan accounted for only 2.1 percent of Czech Republic's total imports of textile products from the world. On the other hand Pakistan's major imports from Czech Republic include machinery, paper & paperboard and electrical & electronic equipment. These too are a very small segment of Pakistan's imports of these commodities. Czech Republic's share in the Pakistan's total imports of machinery, paper & paperboard and electrical & electronic machinery in 2005 was only 0.08, 1.0 and 0.12 percent respectively. Czech Government needs to know why the exports of their products to Pakistan is so little. Pakistan can supply products like surgical instruments, sports goods, fresh fruits & vegetables, carpets, handicrafts, rice, fish & its preparations, besides textiles and leather products. Pakistan's strength lies in textiles.

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