

PRESS RELEASE

Visit of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Rome (6-8 December, 2019)

The Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Rome from 6-8 December, 2019 to attend the 5th edition of the Mediterranean Dialogues (MED), organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, in collaboration with the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI).

2. The Conference was inaugurated by the Foreign Minister of Italy, Mr. Luigi Di Maio and closed on December 7 with remarks by Prime Minister of Italy, Mr. Giuseppe Conte. Held over two days, the conference was attended by more than 40 world leaders including Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers, and nearly 1,000 entrepreneurs, academicians, representatives of major international organizations as well as scholars and experts from over 50 countries.

3. EAM addressed a Special Session on India at the MED Conference, highlighting India's interests in the Mediterranean and the Gulf region, as well as India's role in the changing global environment. He underscored India's growing engagement with the world, and specifically India's strong ties with the Mediterranean, which are reflected in our trade of about \$55 billion with the region, and presence of more than 450 Indian companies and over half a million people of Indian origin. He elaborated on the potential of further intensifying relations between India and the region.

4. EAM also met Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, on the margins of the MED Conference, and discussed opportunities for taking India-Italy cooperation forward. Later, EAM and the Italian Foreign Minister, Mr. Luigi Di Maio held a bilateral meeting during which they reviewed the whole gamut of bilateral relations, including regional and international issues of mutual interest. The meeting highlighted the shared desire of both countries to strengthen bilateral partnership and enhance cooperation in a number of areas including economic, commercial, scientific, cultural and people-to-people ties. EAM welcomed the proposal of Foreign Minister Di Maio to lead a business delegation to India in 2020. Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Manlio Di Stefano also called on EAM. He informed that Italy has identified India as a priority country and discussed ways of enhancing economic cooperation, particularly in the SME sector.

6. In addition, EAM met Senator Roberta Pinotti, President of the India-Italy Friendship Group in Parliament and later interacted with a wide cross-section of Italian Members of Parliament belonging to the Foreign Affairs Committee and the India-Italy Friendship Group. During their discussion, they agreed on the need for strengthening inter-parliamentary exchanges to promote mutual trust and understanding. EAM welcomed the interest of the MPs to visit India next year.

7. On the sidelines of the MED conference, EAM also held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of Israel, Israel Katz, Foreign Minister of Slovenia, Miroslav Cerar and Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan Kenji Wakamiya. He also had a productive meeting with Mr. Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economic & Financial Affairs, and discussed deepening India's strategic engagement with the EU.

8. During his visit, EAM also interacted with media and think-tanks.