

## **Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU)**

### **Briefing Paper 69**



## **Just Another *Carte Blanche*? EU GSP Plus Status and Human Rights in Pakistan**

**Siegfried O. Wolf**  
**20 June 2014**

## About the Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU)

The Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU) was established in March 2007 and relocated to Durham University on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. It serves as an independent portal and neutral platform for interdisciplinary research on all aspects of Pakistani security, dealing with Pakistan's impact on regional and global security, internal security issues within Pakistan, and the interplay of the two. PSRU provides information about, and critical analysis of, Pakistani security with particular emphasis on extremism/terrorism, nuclear weapons issues, and the internal stability and cohesion of the state. PSRU is intended as a resource for anyone interested in the security of Pakistan and provides:

- Briefing papers;
- Reports;
- Datasets;
- Consultancy;
- Academic, institutional and media links;
- An open space for those working for positive change in Pakistan and for those currently without a voice.

PSRU welcomes collaboration from individuals, groups and organisations, which share our broad objectives. Please contact us at [contact.psrudurham.ac.uk](mailto:contact.psrudurham.ac.uk) We encourage you to look at the website available through: [www.durham.ac.uk/psru/](http://www.durham.ac.uk/psru/)

### Other PSRU Publications

The following reports, papers, and briefings are freely available through the Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU):

- *Report Number 3. Terrorism and the Macro-economy: Evidence from Pakistan.*
- *Report Number 2. Civilian Control and Democratic Transition: Pakistan's Unequal Equation.*
- *Report Number 1. The Jihadi Terrain in Pakistan: An Introduction to the Sunni Jihadi Groups in Pakistan and Kashmir*
- *Briefings Numbers 1-68 including:*
- *Brief Number 60. Domestic Politics and Systemic Constraints in Pakistan's India Policy*
- *Brief Number 61. The Limited Military Utility of Pakistan's Battlefield Use of Nuclear Weapons in Response to Large Scale Indian Conventional Attack*
- *Brief Number 62. Getting Afghanistan Right*
- *Brief Number 63. Why Karachi is a Major Source of Instability in Pakistan?*
- *Brief Number 66. The Siachen Glacier and Independent Arbitration*
- *Brief Number 67. Illiberal Democrats and the Marginalisation of Religious Minorities in Pakistan*
- *Brief Number 68. Nawaz Sharif and the Crisis of Authority in Pakistan.*

All these papers are freely available from: [www.durham.ac.uk/psru/](http://www.durham.ac.uk/psru/)

**About the author:** Siegfried O.Wolf is Director of the South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) and Lecturer in International Relations and Comparative Politics in the South Asia Institute (SAI) at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. He may be contacted at: [swolf@sai.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:swolf@sai.uni-heidelberg.de)

***Abstract:** The EU is considering offering Pakistan a Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) in trade which could have huge implications for the economic well-being of Pakistan. However this deal is tied to a package of human rights, labour rights, good governance and environment commitments. In the past Pakistan has signed up to such commitments but has failed to implement them (most starkly perhaps in relation to women's rights and minority rights). This paper argues that the EU should seek to use the leverage of the GSP+ deal to ensure Pakistani compliance with, and implementation of, its obligations and should be willing to withdraw the deal if it does not. It cautions that the EU should not countenance a "carte blanche" in which Pakistan's ruling elite reaps the rewards of EU trade liberalisation without any corresponding commitment – beyond lip service - to improve rights, governance, and environmental protection*

## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

If one believes official statements, it seems that the European Union (EU) accomplished an evolution in its relations with Pakistan. There is no doubt that the cooperation between Europe and Pakistan in terms of economic and development assistance has expanded over the last decades. Realizing the re-emergence of the EU as a major economic actor as well as its own tremendous need for development and industrialization (cf. Lieven, 2002), Pakistan started looking towards Europe as partner. A first agreement that was made to set up relations between Islamabad and Brussels was signed in 1962, which was followed by the first comprehensive agreement in 1976 to further intensify trade and economic ties. Currently, the legal and political basis for the relations between Brussels and Islamabad is the 2004 Cooperation Agreement. Additionally, within the framework of the Lisbon treaty of 2009, the EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan was launched which was supposed to further widen and deepen the cooperation between Europe and the South Asian state. At least on paper, the endorsed agreement was adding to trade, economic cooperation and development, and also addressed the issues of regional security, counter terrorism, narco-trafficking, and organized crime. Another significant initial determinant of the 5-year plan was to strengthen the process of strengthening democratic institutions, civilian-administrative structures, and civil society. The signing of a memorandum of understanding on civilian capacity building for law enforcement in Pakistan in November 2010 has to be seen in this context. One of the outcomes of this document was the creation of the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and the support for provincial police forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Punjab (cf. Sultana, 2013, 41). Furthermore, a Strategic Dialogue was envisaged to offer political guidance within the EU-Pakistan relations. In addition to the various signed documents, the EU started also to build-up its physical presence in Pakistan in the form of an office by the European Commission in 1985. Already three years later, the office was upgraded to a fully-fledged EU Delegation in order to monitor trade and development cooperation. In 1992, the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO) opened an office in Islamabad too. Besides the Delegation there is also the EU-Pakistan Joint Commission which is complemented by a Foreign and Security Policy Dialogue at senior official level to give more depth to the existing collaboration. On top of

---

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and should not be understood as reflecting the views of the PSRU, DGSi, SGIA or Durham University.

that several regular meetings at the expert level are held to discuss urgent matters regarding international affairs, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and migration issues. However, the shaping of the European strategy with respect to Pakistan is not devoid of limitations and weaknesses. Apart from the intention to get more involved on the political and strategic dimensions, the decision makers did not go far beyond the economic paradigm which has traditionally defined the Pakistan-EU ties. Neither the Cold War nor the developments in the realm of security after “9/11” changed much in this respect. Subsequently, the EU became not only Pakistan’s most important trading partner. It is important to note that the EU’s activities in Pakistan should rather be seen in the context of economic aid and development assistance<sup>2</sup> than as part of the EU’s security framework or a sustainable political dialogue. Consequently, the EU interprets its relationship with Pakistan basically as a donor-recipient relationship (Abbasi, 2009, 3). Also the agreed EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, which was held for the first time on 5 June 2012, did not change much in operational terms besides recognizing each other’s strategic important.

However, basically one can state that besides the dominant focus and a slightly increasing space for dialogue on security in the EU-Pakistan relations, it is obvious that the European perspectives on Pakistan are still determined by ‘soft power elements’ as the basis of Europe’s long term strategy in this South Asian country (cf. Zajackowski/Wolf, 2014, 131). Until recently, to strengthen its ‘soft power’, the EU relied heavily on the instruments of economic and financial aid but also on tools to strengthen the country’s democratic process and socio-political fabric. Therefore, several attempts to get active in supporting the improvement of the functioning of Pakistan’s political institution were carried out. The latter initiatives found their expression by the deployment of election observer missions in order to strengthen the process of democratic transition.<sup>3</sup> But despite these ‘new interests’ in certain developments of Pakistan’s internal affairs one must state that bilateralism between Islamabad and Brussels is still dominated by a clear ‘economization’. A phenomenon, which is apparently at the expense of Europeans’ enthusiasm to take a closer, consequent look at Pakistan’s domestic affairs, especially regarding human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, women’s rights and the rights of religious minorities (cf. USDS, 2013a, 2013b).

Nevertheless, perhaps because of this relative political indifference on the part of the EU, Pakistan managed to extract several concessions that are beneficial for its economic relations with the EU, such as the earlier given concessionary access to the European markets (cf. Ali, 2013). This process recently reached a new peak when Pakistan was granted the GSP (Generalised Scheme of Preferences) Plus status by the EU.

Under this programme the beneficiary state is granted special trade preferences, namely tariff reductions to developing countries.<sup>4</sup> The agreement is unilateral, subsequently the EU does not require the beneficiary countries to grant tariff reductions or other benefits from their sides. Basically it provides for a flexible scheme of preferences according to the individual needs of the recognized countries.

---

<sup>2</sup> Most of the European Commission assistance, which was between 1971 and 2008 around 500 million, was spent on infrastructure and social programmes in Pakistan. Additional support was provided by individual aid schemes provided by Germany, France and the UK (cf. Islam, 2008, 3).

<sup>3</sup> The evaluation of the success of these missions lies outside the scope of this article but the usefulness regarding the achievement of the goal (strengthening the process democratic transition) and explanatory power of the results of this mission should be viewed through a sceptical prism.

<sup>4</sup> See for more details: European Commission, Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/index_en.htm)

Apart from the overall disastrous socio-economic conditions of Pakistan, some moderate improvements in several sectors, like constructions (mainly because of reconstruction measures after the 2005 earthquake or the 2010 and 2011 floods)<sup>5</sup>, were achieved. But the country's economy still suffers from endemic corruption, a weak administrative-institutional framework, and a lack of professionalism among its political leadership. Furthermore, the security situation is deteriorating, especially in the provinces of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and in the city of Karachi (cf. ILO, 2013b). In consequence, the country's miserable performance in socio-economic and human development is featured by slow growth, extensive power outages, excessive budget deficits, unpredictable and severe power load shedding continued, and draining foreign exchange reserves (cf. ADB, 2013, 105, 110-111). According to data available, more than 60 percent of the population is living on less than \$2 a day, while the economy is experiencing an inflation rate of 9,7 % per cent in 2012<sup>6</sup> (WDI, 2013; BTI, 2013). Therefore, it seems obvious that Pakistan is in need for the GSP Plus status. Among the protagonists, there are no doubts that the GSP Plus status will give a boost for the country's economy (cf. Dawn, 2013a), especially the textile and clothing sector would benefit from unrestricted access to the EU's single market (cf. ITC 2013, 3-4). Pakistani analysts have calculated that GSP Plus is expected to help Islamabad earn an additional USD 550-700 million per year with an increase in exports of USD 2 billion (Mirza, 2013; Daily Times, 2013). It is estimated that 20 percent of the country's exports would be allowed to enter the EU duty-free in and 70 percent would benefit from preferential rates (Gishkori/Rana, 2013). Furthermore, Islamabad considers the granting of GSP+ a matter of prestige, for it hopes that it will improve the country's tattered international standing. Pakistan's reputation suffered significantly from its image of being one of the world's greatest hubs for international terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, a source of all kinds of instability leading to the suppression of ethnic and religious minorities and tensed relations with its neighbours. Especially the persistently deteriorating human rights situation in the country (cf. USDS, 2013b, 1), enforced by religious fanaticism and certain state agencies acting with impunity, is a matter of severe concern that is shared by many Pakistan observers around the globe.

In order to achieve the GSP Plus Status, it is mandatory for Pakistan to ensure human rights protection and to examine ways of ensuring compliance with key human rights conventions. More concrete, Pakistan has to apply and prove following: First, that it has ratified a list of 27 conventions. In order to get GSP Plus, which has to be understood as a "special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance" (EC, 2008), one has to sign and ratify 16 international conventions on human rights and labour rights, and 11 conventions on good governance and the environment. Second, Pakistan must not demonstrate serious problems with the implementation of these conventions (cf. Ali, 2013). Third, that it has not formulated any reservations to those conventions. Furthermore, Pakistan has to commit to a serious of monitoring requirements. Here, Pakistan must provide comprehensive information concerning the required legislation and measures taken to implement them consequently.<sup>7</sup>

In several of these points Pakistan took some steps, at least on paper. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and UN Convention against

---

<sup>5</sup> See for more information: Islam (2008, 3); Asian Development Bank, Pakistan Floods 2010. Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment, [[http://gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr.org/files/publication/Pakistan\\_DNA.pdf](http://gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr.org/files/publication/Pakistan_DNA.pdf)].

<sup>6</sup> The ADB claims for 2012 even 12 per cent inflation (ADB, 2013, XXI).

<sup>7</sup> See for more details: European Commission, Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), [http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/generalised-scheme-of-preferences/index_en.htm).

Torture (UNCAT)<sup>8</sup>. Pakistan also withdrew the reservation on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as directed by the EU for acquiring GSP plus in 2014. However, one has to be aware that even though Islamabad has signed and ratified conventions, they have not been implemented. In some cases the government has lodged numerous reservations on human rights conventions, which must be still lifted (cf. Ali, 2013) and/or internalised in the mind-set of the political decision-makers. Furthermore, if one believes non-partisan human rights reports, pointing at the devastating facts on the ground, there is a tremendous gap between ‘expressed aspirations and concrete practice’ regarding the political will and the capacities of the national government. For example, besides the ratification of UNCAT, serious human rights issues still exist such as extrajudicial and targeted killings, forced disappearances, and torture, which affected thousands of citizens in nearly all parts of the country (cf. USDS, 2013b, 1; cf. AHRC, 2012, 3-6).<sup>9</sup> Therefore it seems that Pakistan sees itself confronted with a ‘a Herculean task’ to match the requirements for GSP Plus at the moment but also to maintain the GSP Plus standards persistently in a long term perspective .

Having this in mind, it is legitimate to raise several questions: Was it right to grant Pakistan the GSP Plus status in light of its human rights record and socio-economic turbulences? Especially given that the mandatory implementation of the 27 conventions does not appear to have taken place? What will the impact of receiving the GSP Plus Status have on minorities and marginalised groups and the issues concerning these groups? Will this be negative or positive? What can the EU do to ensure Pakistan’s compliance with the mandatory conventions? Should this trade agreement be used as a tool to direct Pakistan towards doing more for the protection of minority groups? How can this be achieved? What can minority groups do, using the GSP Plus status decision, to put them in a better position within society Pakistan? And last but not least, will the EU be as strict with Pakistan as it was with Sri Lanka as it withdrew the forerunner model of GSP Plus after not fulfilling any more respective mandatory requirements?

In spite of all criticism, on Thursday 5 November 2013 a significant step in the direction of granting GSP Plus status was made as the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament (INTA) voted against a resolution<sup>10</sup> of Southern European countries opposing the grant of the status to a batch of 10 newly-selected countries, including Pakistan (cf. Khan, 2013). In addition the final decision by the European Parliament on 12 December, 2013 was also in favour of granting Pakistan the GSP Plus status until 2017<sup>11</sup>.

For the time being, it seems that Pakistan’s diplomatic and lobby machinery was able to convince the most important decision-making circles within the EU of following things: First, they have the political will and the capacities to deal with the prerequisites for getting the GSP Plus Status. Second, to improve the weak coordination and cooperation between its own institutional structures in order to be able to carry out the entire GSP Plus programme. Third, the respective authorities were able to convince the originally ‘indifferent attitude’ of the private sector towards GSP Plus conditions. Apparently Pakistani companies are keen on receiving GSP Plus for Pakistan since it reduces competition from more advanced economies, for example through the additional tariff reductions. However, for several reasons the

---

<sup>8</sup> Both signed in April 2008 and ratified in June 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Only in 2012, more than 1300 cases of torture were reported and that the Army is reportedly running 52 detention centers (Sajjad, 2013; cf. AHRC, 2012, 5).

<sup>10</sup> See for more information regarding the resolution EP (2013).

<sup>11</sup> According to media reports, 406 members of the European Parliament expressed their support for granting Pakistan GSP Plus while 186 EU legislators voted against the [initiative status](#).

enthusiasm about it remains relatively moderate (cf. Riaz, 2013). The new obligations that arise from the GSP Plus Status, like the respect of labour rights as well as environmental protection, will create challenges for some Pakistani entrepreneurs. Here, it is important to note that large sections of the Pakistani industry have not been able to invest much in capacity building in the last years and some parts are inoperative due to gas and power shortages (cf. Dawn, 2013b; cf. ITC 2013).<sup>12</sup> By making their own cost-benefit analyses, they may still not be convinced that the expected additional profit from an increase in exports to the EU will have the potential to redeem the extra costs for respecting the international standards. This is gaining significance, since Pakistan has ratified 34 conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) but also here no remarkable and substantial efforts were made to ensure their implementation. For example, in March 2012 the Pakistan Parliament passed a new federal Industrial Relations Act (IRA)<sup>13</sup> which was supposed to address the conventions (and concerns) of ILO conventions. However, it IRA was only implemented in the Islamabad Capital Territory but not in the four provinces<sup>14</sup>, where the main economic centres are located. As a result, the bulk of the country's workforces are not covered by federal labour regulations of any kind but remain under provincial labour law which partly conflicts with international conventions (USDS 2013b, 54-55).<sup>15</sup> Another remarkable case is the National Plan of Action for Decent Work (NPADW 2010-2015)<sup>16</sup> which is supposed to plan several reform measures with the Decent Work Program of ILO (cf. ILO, 2013a). But their operationalization is far away from being satisfactory. Therefore it appears that the role of the federal government to ensure compliance with ILO conventions remains unclear (USDS, 2013b). This raises doubts about whether the country is able to meet international labour standards at all. At least for the moment it appears that 'enforcement of labour laws [has] remained weak, in large part due to lack of resources and political will' (USDS, 2013b, 56).

Fourth, it seems that the Pakistani government was also able to give an impression that the human rights situation in the country is improving. But as already indicated above, this does not reflect the realities on the ground. Religious and ethnic minority rights are often bluntly violated and the rights and interests of certain regions like Balochistan or Gilgit-Baltistan are treated with contempt. In brief, the human rights situation in Pakistan remains murky.

This is not a new phenomenon but rather a continuation of a trend which emerged over the last decades. Seen in this light, 2013 marks just another unfortunate highlight, despite the promising general elections last May. If one believes the international media, this event is supposed to be the long desired critical juncture able to break finally with the autocratic political patterns of the past.<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly, the first transfer of power between two civilian governments is a milestone in the country's chequered political history. The remarkable enthusiasm among the Pakistani people about casting one's vote is a promising indicator for a potential process of democratic transition in future. However, the human rights violations

---

<sup>12</sup> On top of this, several analysts argue that Pakistan will be not be able to use to a large extent GSP plus, since the country is not able to integrate 'non-traditional' sections of Pakistan economy in the export business (like seafood and agricultural products), either because of logistic reasons or poor hygienic conditions (cf. ITC 2013, 5, 10; Sajjad, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> The Gazette of Pakistan, March 14, 2012, [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1335934287\\_218.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1335934287_218.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Punjab's Industrial Relations Act (IRA) bans labour unions in companies with 50 or fewer employees. Or more in general at the provincial level, 'collective bargaining rights continued to exclude banking and financial sector workers, forestry workers, hospital workers, self-employed farmers, and persons employed in an administrative capacity or managerial capacity' (USDS, 2013b, 44).

<sup>16</sup> See for detailed information: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/pakistan2010-15.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> See for a more detailed elaboration on the General Elections 2013 in Pakistan Wolf (2013a; 2013b; 2013c).

continued unabatedly over the last months: Intimidation of and violence against communities of religious minorities and no serious efforts to combat them – it remains the norm rather than the exception. This finds its expression in an increase of attacks against religious minorities in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is important to note that Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Parsi (Zoroastrians), Ahmadiyya and Shia communities and numerous other religious<sup>18</sup> minorities are persecuted from two different directions: From one side by several state actors, especially from the omnipresent security agencies, namely the army, including paramilitary forces, intelligence forces and the police. But also from another side by non-state actors, foremost militant Islamic fundamentalists like the Taliban (cf. GHRD, 2012, 16; cf. AHRC, 2012, 12-22).

This can happen because of a multitude of reasons: To begin with, the current constitution and other laws officially restrict religious freedom (USDS, 2013a, 1; UKHO, 2013, 116-120). Most important in this context is that it seems that the government and its respective state agencies have the political will and the capacities to enforce many of these restrictions. This is a phenomenon which one can find only rudimentarily when it comes to the protection of religious minorities (cf. AI, 2012). Although the constitution (Article 20) guarantees “Freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions” and that “(a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion”; and “(b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions”.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, “adequate provisions shall be made for minorities to profess and practice their religious beliefs freely” the state prefers to put emphasis on other provisions of the constitution and laws which limit this right of religious freedom.<sup>20</sup> There is no doubt that within the country’s legal framework tends to prefer protecting the religious majority at the expense of the rights of the religious minorities. The most dramatic and prominent example thereof is the existence and application of the Blasphemy Laws. No other law has had as grave implications for religious minorities as have the blasphemy laws. (cf. Gishkori/Rana, 2013). Any state functionary or private person can file a complaint against any person under these laws. In almost all cases, no solid written proof is required, just the offensive remarks and a few witnesses are enough to get a conviction. Therefore, blasphemy laws have been repeatedly misused against religious minorities (cf. GHRD, 2002, 7-9; cf. AI, 2012), especially Christians and Hindus, by religious fanatics, especially in the last five years. Also the Ahmadiyya have to suffer from the misuse of laws (cf. Shaun/Valentine, 2009; 24-30; cf. Valentine, 2008). Here, Islamists are using the so called ‘anti-Ahmadiyya’ provisions of the penal code to justify abuses and discriminations. To catalyse the discriminatory effects Islamists and Islamist-friendly media spread their ideology of hate in derogatory reports against Ahmadiyya, Christians, Hindus, Jews, and other communities in major Urdu dailies.

Additionally, apart from the unfortunate domestic legal framework, the situations for the religious minorities are getting even more complicated when it comes to international human rights commitments. Much improvement is needed due to the inadequate implementation of the human rights treaties that the country had ratified. In this direction, several human rights organizations are complaining that the government of Pakistan failed in particular to implement “the recommendations made to ensure fair trials, punish cases of abuse by security forces, and ensure that victims have access to protection and redress” (AHRC, 2012). The

---

<sup>18</sup> Other religious communities are for example, Baha’i, Zikris, Ismailis (including Dawoodis, Khojas, Bohars), Medi Foundation, Jews. See for more detailed information Shaun/Valentine (2009).

<sup>19</sup> For Article 20, Constitution of Pakistan (Article 20) please consult: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part2.ch1.html>.

<sup>20</sup> See Constitution of Pakistan: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>; see also USDS (2013a).

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan is going even a step further by stating that “no progress was made at all in implementing treaties” (HRCP, 2013, 1).

It does not come as a surprise, that Pakistan’s executive as well as legislative have only limited interests in protecting the rights to religious freedom. But it is astonishing that also the country’s judiciary remains silent about the situation of non-Muslims in Pakistan. This lack of sufficient laws and political as well as judicial interests in protecting religious minorities is gaining particular importance if one looks at the pervasive instability, widespread corruption, and terrorist & counter-terrorist activities in the country and the frailty of the government to maintain law and order. The numerous attacks on certain religious communities, for example the Shias including the Hazaras, during the last elections or the recent bomb plots against Christian churches (cf. Boone, 2013) stem from a lack of rule of law and a failure of the government to provide adequate protection for prominent protagonists of religious freedom. Here, the strategy of the militant Islamists becomes crystal clear: to eliminate the religious minorities or to force them out of the country to create a homogenous Muslim [Sunni] society. In order to continue their activities ‘undisturbed’, the religious fundamentalists are not only directed at threatening and attacking state institutions but also at silencing political and religious tolerance in the country. This finds its expression in the fact that people willing to defend human rights are becoming the target of violent harassment and attacks in an increasing degree and are left without sufficient protection (cf. GHRD, 2012, 16; cf. AHRC, 2012, 6-7). The 2011 target killings of then Punjab Governor Salman Taseer and Federal Minister for Minorities Shahbaz Bhatti, both of whom spoke against blasphemy laws and interreligious dialogue, are two of the most prominent and traumatic examples thereof (cf. AHRC, 2012, 6).

Most significant in this context is that the state fails to investigate, arrest and prosecute perpetrators of violations and societal abuses. In contrast they enjoy impunity to a large extent and feel motivated to continue with attacks against religious minorities (cf. AHRC, 2012). In consequence, there is a tremendous increase in vigilantism and mob violence, especially against the Christians which are apparently the new target of terrorism in Pakistan (cf. Boone, 2013; cf. Gregory, 2008).

There is another major causality why the state remains so restive is the growing religious fundamentalism and militant extremism in the country (cf. AI, 2012). Pakistan did not make any significant move in overcoming the “pervasive religious intolerance that undermined the freedom of religious belief”. Furthermore, the reluctance of the government regarding the protection of religious minorities is creating an atmosphere in which religious intolerance can grow because it is either tolerated or ignored (cf. HRCP, 2012; 2011). Consequently, the government’s failure or delay in addressing religious hostility by societal actors fostered intolerance is paving the ground for even more religious extremism and acts of violence (cf. HRCP, 2012; 2011).

To sum up, there is without a doubt a need that the EU enhances its political dialogue and interaction with the Pakistani leadership beyond aid and development issues. Especially with these Pakistanis who got elected through free and fair polls. This might help to strengthen the civilians vis-à-vis to the top echelon of the country’s powerful army. In this context, it will also mark a significant counterpoint to the traditional US strategy of dealing with Pakistan mainly on military-to-military contacts and might open opportunities to influence political processes in Pakistan. However, the rapprochement between Pakistan and the EU should not be realized at all costs, especially not at the expense of the human rights and religious minorities, or the ignorance of the rapid grow of Islamic fundamentalism as well as the role of

the Pakistan's government<sup>21</sup> in these phenomena. Therefore, the GSP Plus Status must serve as an instrument to pressure Islamabad in working towards a change of unfortunate trajectories in order to build a functional democracy. This is not possible without the unconditional respect of human rights including women's rights, and the consequent eradication of religious extremism. Or in the words of the head of European Parliament subcommittee on Human Rights Ana Gomes, that Pakistan needs "decisive actions to combat all forms of discrimination" (Gishkori/Rana, 2013).

It is therefore important for the decision-makers in the EU to demonstrate the political will to implement the opportunities given by GSP Plus to them, foremost to use the option of withdrawal in case of no improvements. In other words, Brussels should not hesitate to take away the benefits of GSP Plus if Pakistan doesn't meet the requirements. The case of Sri Lanka,<sup>22</sup> which lost GSP Status (temporarily) after violations of its conventions, should serve as a reminder for Pakistan's elites that the EU is willing and able to react according to the recommendations of the strict monitoring mechanism of the implementation of GSP plus requirements.<sup>23</sup> Here, the EU must also take into account the likelihood that the 'non-economic motivation' of the new civilian government in intensifying cooperation is also much an outcome of the growing anti-American sentiments in Pakistan and less rooting in the convictions of European values. Furthermore on the European side, there is the inherent threat that GSP Plus will be interpreted just as a continuation of the economically determined EU-Pakistan relations. In consequence, issues like the improvement of human rights, labour conditions, environment protection, and situation of minorities will remain embedded in the appellative rhetoric of European politicians without any substantial political consequences. However, at the moment it seems that there are signs for change in this attitude of indifference. But this is most likely not because of a newly discovered severe interest in improving Pakistan's human rights and labour standards or socio-political conditions of disadvantaged communities. Rather, the growing emergence of security related issues seems to be the trigger for Europeans looking deeper at Pakistan's domestic issues as well as for the assessment of using the GSP Plus status as an instrument to achieve certain political goals; for example to support the EU in bringing stability to the region, especially in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas after the withdrawal of major parts of US/NATO combat troops from Afghanistan.

In addition, Islamabad has to realize that the granting of concessions and aid come hand in hand with responsibilities. The arguments that have persistently been made over the last decades – that changes need time, and the security of the state must deserve the primary attention (which absorbs or cause the bulk of the national resources) – cannot be used anymore as an excuse to not deliver the implementation of international commitments and domestic political-decision making. Therefore, the reiterated demands for more (unconditional) funds successfully addressed towards the international community by concurrent negligence of its own homework or performing basic duties (like paying taxes or energy bills), must come to an end. Otherwise, the establishment in Pakistan will interpret GSP Plus as just another 'carte blanche' for financial and economic benefits.

## **Bibliography:**

---

<sup>21</sup> At the national as well as provincial levels.

<sup>22</sup> The EU suspended Sri Lanka's GSP Plus Status for Sri Lanka after violations of the human rights conventions in the context of the armed confrontation with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leading to their military defeat.

<sup>23</sup> See European Commission, 15.2.2010, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=515>.

- Abbasi, Nadia M. (2009), *The EU and Democracy Building in Pakistan*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: Stockholm, 2009;  
[<http://www.idea.int/resources/analysis/loader.cfm?csmodule=security/getfile&pageid=37937>].
- ADB (2013), *Asian Development Outlook 2013 Update: Governance and Public Service Delivery*, Asian Development Bank (ADB), October 2013;  
[<http://www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-2013-update-governance-and-public-service-delivery?ref=countries/pakistan/publications>].
- AHRC (2012), *Pakistan: failure of the institutions related to the rule of law provides impunity to the perpetrators of violations human rights*, Asian Human Rights Commission, 2012;  
[<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-261-2012>].
- Ali, Sara (2013), *EU GSP plus scheme*, Daily Times, 12.1.2013;  
[[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\01\12\story\\_12-1-2013\\_pg3\\_5](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\01\12\story_12-1-2013_pg3_5)].
- AI, 2012, *Pakistan must do more to protect religious minorities*, Press Release, Amnesty International, 1.3.2012;  
[<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/pakistan-authorities-must-do-more-protect-religious-minorities-2012-03-01>].
- Azhar, Mobeen, *'Hell on Earth': Inside Quetta's Hazara community*, BBC, 1.5.2013;  
[<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22248500>].
- Boone, Jon (2013), *Pakistan church bomb: Christians mourn 85 killed in Peshawar suicide attack*, The Guardian, 24.9.2013;  
[<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/pakistan-church-bombings-christian-minority>].
- BTI (2012), *BTI 2012. Pakistan Country Report*, Bertelsmann Stiftung: Gütersloh, 2012;  
[<http://www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Pakistan.pdf>].
- Daily Times (2013), *GSP Plus status to boost export by about \$2bn*, Daily Times, 15.11.2013;  
[[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\11\15\story\\_15-11-2013\\_pg5\\_15](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013\11\15\story_15-11-2013_pg5_15)].
- Dawn (2013b), *Insufficient capacity: GSP Plus status for Pakistan*, 8.11.2013;  
[<http://dawn.com/news/1054915/insufficient-capacity-gsp-plus-status-for-pakistan>].
- Dawn (2013a), *Pakistan likely to get EU' GSP Plus status by end of year*, Dawn, 17.9.2013;  
[<http://dawn.com/news/1043401/pakistan-likely-to-get-eus-gsp-plus-status-by-end-of-year>].
- EC (2013), *The EU's new Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)*, European Commission, 22 Jul 2013;  
[[http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/september/tradoc\\_151705.%2013-07%20GSP%20InfoPack%20Update%20Final.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/september/tradoc_151705.%2013-07%20GSP%20InfoPack%20Update%20Final.pdf)].
- EC (2012), *Press Release: EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue*, European Commission (EC), IP/12/566, 5.6.2012;  
[[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-566\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-566_en.htm)].
- EC (2008), *Press Release, The EC Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+) 2009-2011*, European Commission (EC) - MEMO/08/777 - 09/12/2008, 9.12.2008;  
[[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-08-777\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-08-777_en.htm)].
- EP (2013), *Plenary sitting. Motion for a Resolution*, European Parliament, 27.9.2013;  
[[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/inta/re/1003/1003608/1003608en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/inta/re/1003/1003608/1003608en.pdf)].
- EUDP (2013), *European Union Delegation to Pakistan, Press Release: EU trade preferences (GSP+) for Pakistan passes test in the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade, but the final decision is still pending*, 7.11.2013,

- [[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/documents/press\\_corner/20131107\\_01\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/documents/press_corner/20131107_01_en.pdf)].
- GHRD (2012), Annual Human Rights Report 2012, Global Human Rights Defense (GHRD), 2012;  
[<http://www.ghrd.org/action-centre/reports/annual-reports/>].
- Gregory, Shaun R. The Christian Minority in Pakistan: Issues and Options, Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU), 17.8.2008.
- Gregory, Shaun R. and Simon R. Valentine (2009), Pakistan: The Situation of Religious Minorities, Writenet, independent analysis, May 2009;  
[<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4b01856e2.html>].
- Gishkori, Zahid and Shahbaz Rana (2008), Capital Punishment: EU cautions against lifting moratorium, The Express Tribune, 28.8.2013;  
[<http://tribune.com.pk/story/596285/capital-punishment-eu-cautions-against-lifting-moratorium/>].
- HRCP (2013), State of Human Rights in 2012, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Lahore, March 2013;  
[<http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/pdf/AR2012.pdf>].
- HRCP (2011), Perils of faith. Report of HRCP Working Group on Communities Vulnerable because of their Beliefs, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, December 2011;  
[<http://hrcp-web.org/publication/book/rerils-of-faith/>].
- HRCP (2011), Life at Risk. Report of HRCP Working Group on Communities Vulnerable because of their Beliefs, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, April 2011;  
[<http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/pdf/ff/5.pdf>].
- Khan, Mubarak Zeb (2013), Way opens for grant of GSP+, Dawn, 7.11.2013;  
[<http://dawn.com/news/1054691/way-opens-for-grant-of-gsp>].
- ILO (2013b), Pakistan Labour Market Update, International Labour Organization (ILO), Country Office for Pakistan, September 2013,  
[[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms\\_222834.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms_222834.pdf)]
- ILO (2013a), Country Program. Decent Work in Pakistan, International Labour Organization;  
[<http://www.ilo.org/islamabad/country/lang--en/index.htm>].
- Islam, Shada (2008), Building democracy and fighting extremism in Pakistan: a role for the EU, Policy Brief, European Policy Centre, April 2008;  
[<http://gees.org/documentos/Documen-02974.pdf>].
- Lieven, Anatol (2002), The Pressure on Pakistan, Foreign Affairs (January/February 2002), p-115.  
[<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57623/anatol-lieven/the-pressures-on-pakistan>].
- Mirza, Javed (2013), Government can earn \$700m through GSP Plus status: experts, The News International, 15.10.2013;  
[[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-208248-Government-can-earn-\\$700m-through-GSP-Plus-status-experts](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-3-208248-Government-can-earn-$700m-through-GSP-Plus-status-experts)].
- Riaz, Muhammad (2013), Pakistan unlikely to benefit from GSP Plus status, Business Recorder, 7.11.2013;  
[<http://www.towelassociation.com/news-clippings/Pakistan%20unlikely%20to%20benefit%20from%20GSP%20Plus%20status%20PTA.pdf>].
- Sajjad, Farrukh (2013), Eligibility for sustainable GSP Plus facility, Dawn, 28.10.2013,  
[<http://dawn.com/news/1052260/eligibility-for-sustainable-gsp-plus-facility>].

- ITC (2013), Enhancing Pakistan's Trading Benefits from the Proposed EU GSP Plus Scheme, International Trade Center (ITC), European Union Trade Related Technical Assistance (TRTA II) Programme, 2013;  
[[http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracen.org/Content/About\\_ITC/Press/Articles/GSP.pdf](http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracen.org/Content/About_ITC/Press/Articles/GSP.pdf)].
- UKHO (2013), Pakistan. Country of Origin Information (COI) Report, United Kingdom Home Office (UKHO), 9.8.2013;  
[<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/coi/pakistan/>].
- UNDP (2013), Human Development Report 2013, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2013;  
[<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2013/>].
- USDS (2013a), International Religious Freedom Report for 2012. Pakistan, United States Department of State (USDS), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2013,  
[<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>]
- USDS (2013b), Pakistan 2012. Human Rights Report. United States Department of State, Human Rights and Labor, 2013;  
[<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2012&dliid=204409#wrapper>].
- Valentine, Simon R. The Ahmadiyya Jama'at: A Persecuted Sect in Pakistan, Brief Number 35, Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU), 11.6.2008;  
[<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/psru/briefings/archive/Brief35.pdf9>].
- Wolf, Siegfried O. (2013c), General elections in Pakistan: Elections yes, democracy not yet!, *The Independent, Panorama*, Dhaka: Bangladesh, 24.5.2013, 14;  
[<http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/2853/>].
- Wolf, Siegfried O. (2013b), Will elections be enough for democracy in Pakistan?, *The Independent, Panorama*, Dhaka: Bangladesh, 10.5.2013, 14;  
[<http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/2854/1/SOW.PreElectionDemocracyPakistan.20131005.pdf>].
- Wolf, Siegfried O. (2013a), General Elections in Pakistan 2013 – Some Reflections, APSA Comment No. 5, Foundation for Applied Political Science of South Asia (APSA), Heidelberg, May 2013.  
[<http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/2801/>]
- WDI (2013), World Development Indicators 2013, The World Bank, 2013;  
[<http://data.worldbank.org/country/Pakistan>].
- Wolf, Siegfried O./Casaca, Paulo/Flanagan, Anne J. and Catia Rodriguez (Eds.) (2014), *The Merits of Regional Cooperation. The Case of South Asia*. Springer: Heidelberg, 2014.
- Zajackowski, Jakub and Siegfried O. Wolf, *EU-Pakistan Relations: European Perspectives at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, in Wolf, Siegfried O./Casaca, Paulo/Flanagan, Anne J. and Catia Rodriguez (Eds.) (2014), *The Merits of Regional Cooperation. The Case of South Asia*. Springer: Heidelberg, 2014, pp. 153.