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Indian Council of World Affairs

Sapru House, Barakhamba Road

New Delhi

Report

on

Twentieth Sapru House Lecture

by

H.E. Dr. Milan Brglez

Speaker of the Parliament of Slovenia

on

**"Slovenia's Decade in the European Union –
A Look Back and Opportunities for the Future"**

Sapru House, New Delhi

26 November, 2015

The Twentieth Sapru House lecture on “Slovenia’s Decade in the European Union - A Look Back and Opportunities for the Future” was delivered by Dr. Milan Brglez, Speaker of the Parliament, the Republic of Slovenia on 26 November 2015 at the Sapru House, New Delhi. The event was chaired by Ambassador Dinkar Khullar.



Shri Ajaneesh Kumar, DDG, ICWA delivering Welcoming Remarks.

In his welcome remarks, Shri Ajaneesh Kumar, Deputy Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), welcomed the speaker and delegates. He mentioned the current political and economic challenges faced by the European Union (EU), including persisting economic slowdown, the migrant crisis, etc. In his brief remarks,

he also stated about India’s relations with the EU, and noted that India is one of ten strategic partners of the EU. Ambassador Dinkar Khullar introduced the speaker. In his remarks, Ambassador Khullar stated India’s historical relations with Slovenia, when the country was part of Yugoslavia. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, Slovenia joined the EU in 2004. Slovenia has also held the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2008. Ambassador Khullar also talked about the current political and security problems in Europe, particularly security issues, economic crisis and migrant crisis.

In his address, Dr. Milan Brglez discussed the Slovenian perspective of the EU as well as current challenges for the EU and Slovenia. Analyzing the nature and evolution of the EU, he said that the EU is a supra-national institution or organization. The EU has its own organs. Theoretically, the international system is based on the Westphalia model - nation-state system. Dr. Brglez noted that the foundation of the



H.E. Dr. Milan Brglez delivering Twentieth Sapru House Lecture.

European integration was laid down on free movement of goods, capital, services and people. The EU model is moving beyond, consequently, the European integration process is further deepening and widening. After Slovenia joined the EU in 2004, there were two more enlargements of the EU- Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007 and Croatia became the member of the EU in 2013. The eastward expansion of the EU in 2004 was the largest enlargement. On the foreign and security of Slovenia, Dr. Brglez opined that the main objective of the Slovenian foreign policy to join the EU.

After joining the EU, Slovenia thought about what it can do inside the EU and what sort of values it can defend. Slovenia has assumed the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. Dr. Brglez noted that Slovenia is a small country, therefore, it is more dependent on the EU market and more vulnerable to changes in the world. However, he argued that small member states would play a more vital role in the common security and foreign policy of the EU. The evolution of common foreign and security policy of the EU is in the process. Slovenia is a state with no historical baggage. He argued that the nature and politics of the EU has been changing. He noted that EU has changed after the several enlargements. As the Central and Eastern European countries have joined the EU, they are now becoming more influential in the EU process and system.

Public opinion about the EU in Slovenia is positive. He noted that the Slovenian people are yet to develop a European identity. They trust more European institutions than the national institutions. Slovenia has adopted sustainable ways of development and promoting green economy. Dr. Brglez pointed out that knowledge and research and development is crucial and said that his country is spending more on research and development. He also mentioned that Euroscepticism has the limited influence in Slovenia. Eurosceptic parties won in the elections of European Parliament in 2014. There is need to develop more understanding about the EU. In the Q&A session, Dr. Brglez addressed a range of questions on Slovenian people's perception about former Yugoslav President Marshal Tito, economic crisis, migrant crisis, Syrian crisis, India-EU relations, Russia and Central-Eastern Europe. On India-EU relations, he said that India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Germany, France and the UK, and small

European countries' leaders are visiting India. He said that Slovenian people's perception about former Yugoslav President Marshal Tito is negative. He stated that Slovenian people have positive perception about the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). The EU is making efforts to find solution of the refugee crisis. He underlined that Turkey's role would be crucial in the dealing with migrant/refugee crisis in Europe. He mentioned that it would be difficult for the small member states of the EU to accommodate large number of migrants. On the economic crisis, he discussed about the recent economic growth trends in Europe, and said that the Greek crisis is not over.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Dinoj Kumar Upadhyay, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi.
