

## **Report on the “Interactive Meeting on Investment and Trade Opportunities in Lithuania”**

World Trade Centre Mumbai in association with the All India Association of Industries (AIAI) organized an interactive meet on ‘Investment and Trade Opportunities in Lithuania’ at the board room on 28 April, 2015. The delegation consisted of **His Excellency Laimonas Talat-Kelpsa, the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr. Mantas Katinas, Managing Director of the Lithuania National Investment Agency, Ms Elina Chodzkaite, Senior Investment Advisor at Invest Lithuania and Mr. OP Lohia, Honorary Council in India for the Republic of Lithuania.** The main objective of this meet was to generate interest among the Indian companies to invest in the infrastructure sector of Lithuania and to identify potential importers for the Lithuanian goods and services.

While delivering the welcome address at the event, **Mr. YR Warekar, Executive Director, World Trade Centre Mumbai** introduced the activities of the centre and the role it plays in catalyzing India’s commercial relation with the rest of the world. He mentioned that India’s trade volume with Lithuania was a miniscule euro 160 million in 2013-14 and that there is huge opportunity for enhancing commercial relationship between both the countries.

**Delivering the keynote address, His Excellency Laimonas Talat-Kelpsa** said his country eagerly invites Indian businesses to set up operations in Lithuania. He said Lithuania has the required infrastructure to set up a business and these include excellent internet connectivity, uninterrupted power supply, among others. Talking about the stable policy regime, he said in the last 20 years, the national government has not changed any business legislation.

Laimonas mentioned that Lithuania has adequate availability of young and skilled manpower and about 96% of the population is bi-lingual who could understand both Russian and English. About half of India’s exports from Lithuania is laser and laser-related products and this shows how technically skilled the Lithuanians are, he remarked. He said the major industries in Lithuania are Information Technology, biotechnology and manufacturing.

**Mr. Mantas Katinas** said Lithuania was an ideal country for businesses in the European region as it is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the growth of per capita GDP among all EU economies, ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of the ease of starting business, ranked among the top five countries in the EU in terms of the share of young people in total population.

The country gets foreign direct investment mainly from the US, the UK and the northern countries of the Europe like Norway, Sweden. The major sectors that receive FDI in Lithuania are manufacturing, business services, IT, sales and marketing, he added. Major investors in the manufacturing sector of Lithuania are from Germany, Norway, Sweden, he informed.

He suggested Indian companies to explore business opportunities in the life science and biotechnology (including pharmaceutical) sector. He said the majority of the population in the EU is ageing and hence the demand for pharmaceutical products would increase.

He informed that the Lithuanian government provides tax holiday for the first six years and for the next ten years, it offers a tax rebate of 50% to manufacturing companies. Another advantage for

entrepreneurs is the cost competitiveness of the country. He mentioned that Vilnius, which is the capital city of Lithuania, is one of the five least expensive capital cities in the European Union.

The event encouraged the audience to discover commercial opportunities in the Baltic country.

Ms. Pallavi Singh, Senior Manager at Big Bazaar and a budding entrepreneur enquired the ambassador about the possibility of setting up a textile, jewellery, and handicraft business in that country. She also wanted to know the prospects of getting a residency in Lithuania in connection with the business. Dr Yadnya Pitale, Joint Director of Research at World Trade Centre Mumbai enquired about the prospects of setting up a solar equipment plant at Lithuania, which is an energy-deficit country and which imports oil and gas from Norway and Russia.

In the discussion that followed, the ambassador spoke of biogas plants working on urban waste to provide heating during the cold winter season in the country. Since this was an interesting example of waste management, Dr Pitale invited a project presentation in connection with the same for the forthcoming Global Economic Summit of the WTC Mumbai.

Ms. Debjani Chowdhury, advisor, World Trade Centre enquired about the details of the trade and economic relationship of Lithuania with other countries. Later, Mr. Sonavane of the World Trade Institute Mumbai sought information on the export potential of food grain and animal feed in Lithuania.

The meet ended with the vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Queenie Nair, Director at AIAI.