

EPCH Welcomes the Landmark India-EU Free Trade Agreement

Agreement to Prosper Exporters, Empower Artisans and Expand Horizons

New Delhi/NCR – 27th January 2026 – EPCH welcomes the signing of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (India-EU FTA) in New Delhi, calling it a landmark step in strengthening India's trade architecture with one of the world's largest and most quality-conscious consumer markets. The agreement enhances market access for Indian exports across the EU's 27 member states through a clear pathway for tariff reduction and a more facilitative trade environment. This is set to unlock new opportunities for India's handcrafted exports, including art metalware, woodcraft, textile-based handicrafts, fashion jewellery, lifestyle accessories and GI products across the EU market.

Welcoming the move, Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH, expressed sincere gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for advancing India's global trade leadership and export competitiveness. He described the signing of the India-EU FTA as a defining milestone for India's export ecosystem and a major opportunity for the handicrafts sector. With tariffs reducing to 0% upon entry into force, Indian handmade products are set to strengthen their presence across the EU. Highlighting the EU as a key market, Dr. Khanna noted that handicrafts exports to the EU stood at USD 864.28 million (Rs 7,309.72 crore) in FY 2024-25, accounting for over 20% of India's total handicrafts exports. He added that once the agreement is ratified and enforced, EPCH is optimistic of achieving around 10% CAGR over the next five years, driven by tariff advantages, higher volumes and deeper buyer engagement.

Echoing similar sentiments, Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General in the role of Chief Mentor, EPCH and Chairman, IEML, said that the India-EU FTA comes at a crucial time when Indian exporters are strengthening resilience through market diversification and deeper engagement with high-value destinations. He noted that the agreement provides a structured and predictable pathway to expand India's share in Europe by enhancing competitiveness through tariff rationalisation and systematically addressing non-tariff barriers, which often impose the greatest cost and compliance complexity on MSMEs in terms of time, documentation, testing and approvals.

Dr. Kumar further added that EPCH will intensify trade facilitation measures, including warehousing, fulfilment and showroom facilities in the EU, to enable just-in-time delivery and efficient last-



mile logistics. He also highlighted continued support for exporters through direct market access via Cash & Carry platforms and the integration of technology with traditional craftsmanship to help Indian handmade products reach European buyers faster and more efficiently.

Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH, said that the EU is a high-value market where buyers seek consistent quality, reliable fulfilment and compliance readiness. He noted that the India-EU FTA presents a significant opportunity that must be leveraged through stronger exporter preparedness in packaging, product presentation, delivery reliability and faster response cycles. With improved market access, he expressed confidence in deeper engagement from European retail, sourcing agents, e-commerce and institutional buyers, creating greater opportunities for Indian craft enterprises to scale responsibly.

Mr. Mehta further added that EPCH is also looking ahead to its participation in the EU's largest trade fair, Ambiente in Frankfurt, Germany, where over 500 Indian exporters across product categories, including more than 50 handicraft exporters, will showcase India's Incredible Handicrafts. He expressed hope that the signing of the agreement will further boost confidence among Indian exporters and European buyers and provide a strong impetus to this historic FTA.

Highlighting the importance of the FTA, Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Executive Director, EPCH said that at a time when tariff-related uncertainties are impacting trade flows, the agreement opens a vital opportunity for Indian handicraft exporters to accelerate market diversification and deepen their presence in the EU. He expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of India for its sustained efforts in signing this significant agreement. Mr. Rawat further added that EPCH will intensify support for the sector through focused capacity-building initiatives, design and product development assistance, and clear guidance on standards and documentation. This will enable exporters, especially MSMEs and first-time exporters to effectively leverage the FTA. He emphasised that the agreement can act as a strong multiplier for employment generation and improved livelihoods across craft clusters by expanding demand, reducing trade frictions and unlocking new buyer networks in the EU. ■

Fair President and Vice-Presidents nominated for 61st IHGF Delhi Fair Spring 2026

EPCH has announced the nomination of the President and Vice Presidents for its flagship event - the 61st edition of IHGF Delhi Fair - Spring 2026, to be held from 14th to 18th February 2026 at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida.

Mr. Mohit Chopra, representing M/s Chopra Musicals, Meerut, has been nominated as President of IHGF Delhi Fair Spring 2026. Mr. Gautam Nathany representing M/s Seet Kamal Int'l, Jaipur and Mr. Anand Jalan, M/s Shubham Trexim P Ltd., Kolkata, have been nominated as Vice-Presidents, Reception Committee IHGF Delhi Fair Spring 2026.

Commenting on the preparations for the upcoming fair, Mr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH, stated that the Council has already initiated extensive efforts to generate strong overseas buyer footfall. These initiatives include targeted social media campaigns, EDMs, outreach through Indian Overseas Missions, participation in overseas fairs, and direct engagement with exhibitors and international buying houses. He further informed that the Council has received a very positive response from overseas buyers, indicating strong international participation for the forthcoming edition.

The Chairman further informed that the 61st edition of IHGF Delhi Fair - Spring 2026 will have a special focus on the "Furniture Segment", aimed at showcasing India's growing capabilities in furniture design, manufacturing, and sustainable production to global buyers.

Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH, stated that IHGF Delhi Fair continues to evolve in line with global sourcing trends and buyer

President, IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2026



*Mr. Mohit Chopra,
M/s Chopra Musicals,
Meerut*

Vice Presidents, IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2026



*Mr. Gautam Nathany,
M/s Seet Kamal Int'l,
Jaipur*



*Mr. Anand Jalan,
M/s Shubham Trexim PLtd.,
Kolkata*

expectations. He emphasised that the 61st edition will offer enhanced product diversity, improved buyer-seller engagement, and greater emphasis on design-led, value-added products, thereby reinforcing IHGF Delhi Fair's position as a preferred global sourcing destination for home, lifestyle, handicrafts and furniture.

Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Executive Director, EPCH stated that IHGF Delhi Fair is among the world's largest sourcing platforms for home, lifestyle, fashion, furniture, and handicrafts, bringing together exporters, designers, artisans, and international buyers under one roof. He mentioned that EPCH is confident that under the leadership of Chairman-EPCH, IHGF Delhi Fair Reception Committee and members of Committee of Administration-EPCH with focused international outreach, the 61st IHGF Delhi Fair - Spring 2026 will further enhance India's position as a global sourcing destination. ■