



## ACTIVITY REPORT OF YEAR 2008

Presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2009

By executive co-President Colette Mathur and Jamshyd Godrej

Paris, the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2009

Dear fellow-members,

In August 2008, we flagged off our new 3-year F.L.Y. A. K.I.T.E. strategy. You may recollect that it entails creating a congenial platform for enhancing Euro-Indian exchanges at city-level and Foster Links Yielding Assets in Knowledge, Investments, Tourism and Excellence for Cities.

The main strategic plank has been to seize the opportunity to take up the cause of the Indian cities' much needed modernization and bring European expertise and goodwill into the mainstream of the pan-Indian urban renewal process that was triggered in 2006 by the launch of the path-breaking *Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission* by our founding Co-President Emeritus and Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh, who suggested that we organize a Euro-Indian Forum on urban issues:

[Quote] *"This challenging mission [the N.U.R.M.] would be greatly facilitated if our cities could imbibe the wealth of experience and the state-of-the-art and know-how that European cities have developed over decades of being confronted to similar social and economic pressures.*  
[Unquote].

We followed his suggestion and successfully organized two EuroIndia Fora in Goa in February 2007 and April 2008 and two follow-up missions of Indian cities to Europe in November 2007 with Ahmedabad, Goa and Kolkata and October 2008 with Ahmedabad alone. We ventured beyond urban development as such with the first-time tourism promotion event that we organized with CII in Delhi in the wake of the last Goa Forum.

These novel initiatives generated recognition and goodwill from both India and Europe and led to three signed co-operation agreements between Ahmedabad and Halle (Germany), La Rochelle (France) and Valladolid (Spain) on Tourism Promotion, Vocational Training, Energy Saving and Heritage Conservation, with the establishment of a *Heritage Conservation Centre* in Ahmedabad.

These few successes have emboldened us to scale-up our services and activities in tune with the huge latent potential for Euro-Indian co-operation that exists at the city level, which is largely untapped and uncharted, thus leveraging the hard-earned asset of our recognition by the Government of India, the European Commission, European and Indian Cities, Regions, States, enterprises and institutions, such as *United Cities and Local Governments*, the *Council of European Municipalities and Regions*, the *Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions*, the *Assembly of European Regions* on the European side and on the Indian side, a special mention of our strategic partner the *Confederation of Indian Industry* that proved invaluable in our joint endeavours. A special mention too to the Municipality of Ahmedabad that played role of a proactive model city in reaping every possible benefit they could from their participation in our fora and missions.



## The EuroIndia Centre

UCLG's support to the Centre, with Elisabeth Gateau at the helm, ought to be singled out: They invited our Secretary General to their World Council in Istanbul and to the Congress of their European branch, CEMR, in Malmö, where he could invite the whole World of cities to take part in our budding Euro-Indian city-to-city dialogue and make up for the noteworthy absence of India and Indian cities.

To suit our new strategy, we devised a new business model which is to charge City-members an affordable membership fee of 2000 € per year (5000 € for a Region/State) giving access to a set of services and activities reserved for members. All Forum Partner Cities have been invited to join as members: Ahmedabad, Halle and Valladolid have accepted.

We contemplated that the break even point could be reached in two years, if the momentum our activity and membership could be sustained and our means drastically increased upfront with four novel tools:

- A *EuroIndia Web Portal* for 24/7 virtual exchanges and a *EuroIndia House* in India to bridge the physical and cultural gap and create a closer working relationship between civic stakeholders on both sides.
- A *EuroIndia Civic Fund* to make our services and activities accessible at cost to willing cities with few means.
- A *EuroIndia Market Study* of India's emerging urban infrastructure markets to encourage more corporate involvement in our endeavours by identifying new business opportunities.

We had anticipated that each of these projects would call for raising adequate funding through a mix of external public and corporate funding:

Public funding was expected to come from the *Government of India* which had shown a lot of goodwill and active support to our fora and missions. We therefore approached the *Ministry of Urban Development* to part-fund the Web portal and the *Ministry of Commerce and Industry* the Market Study.

We must admit that we utterly failed to convert their goodwill into an actual grant, the main reason appearing to be the lack of budgetary provision for ad-hoc financial support, let alone to a legally foreign registered entity.

Balance funding was expected mostly from companies on account of their corporate social responsibility, the new business opportunities in all *K.I.T.E.* domains arising from studies, events, missions and co-operative agreements between Cities, Regions and States and the pan-Indian and pan-European visibility offered to them by the Centre and its network.

Alas, the World financial crisis hit us and our supporting corporate members hard and unannounced. We were left with no option but to temporarily shelve the above projects and go for a self-funded revamping of our institutional Website. Our Secretariat led by Emeritus member Ashok Kar has done a remarkable job with excellent technical support from *Ekant Solutions* from Delhi. We invite you all to browse through it at [www.the-euroindia-centre.org](http://www.the-euroindia-centre.org).

Making virtue out of necessity, we decided to forge ahead and further our hard earned momentum with two self-supporting events in 2009 that would address a pressing and solvent demand in the *K.I.T.E.* areas and in the area of urban security:



## The EuroIndia Centre

- The first EuroIndia City Summit of Valladolid on 4-6 October 2009 to further build up the momentum of our fora and mission and bring it on European soil.

We should wholeheartedly thank the Mayor of Valladolid, his Excellency, León de la Riva for hosting the Summit, our Board member Guillermo Rodriguez, the Head of *Casa de la India* in Valladolid, the Indian Cultural Centre of Spain for providing his guidance and support and last but not least the *Confederation of Indian Industry*, our strategic partner, which provides strong Indian support.

- A National Conference on Urban Security at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai on 26-27 November 2009 to bring the best proven European expertise to India on the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on Mumbai in a show of European solidarity with India. It is co-organized by CII and the Centre with knowledge support coming from the *European Forum for Urban Safety* and the *Confederation of European Security Services*.

Besides, thanks to Deepak Parekh's goodwill, we are about to launch our first *EuroIndia Conference* with him as the guest speaker on the 16<sup>th</sup> June in Paris, with the support of the *HEC Business School Alumni Association* and the *Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry*.

This path-breaking event will be followed by a business breakfast meeting around Deepak Parekh on the 17<sup>th</sup> co-organized by *Paris-Europlace* and *Ernst & Young*.

We do hope that these events, if successful, will be repeated on a regular basis, thus giving a unique institutional stage for our valuable Indian members to voice the concerns and evolutions of India and of the Euro-Indian relationship.

Membership: As on 31 December 2008, we had 59 valid members consisting of:

- Emeritus members: 9
- Institutional members: 12
  - Corporates: 7
  - Civic: 3
  - Academic: 2
- Individual members: 33
- Student members: 5

It shows a healthy growth from 37 at the end of the previous year with:

- The enrolment of 3 new prestigious companies: *Reliance Industries*, *Bajaj Auto* and *I.C.I.C.I.*
- The first time appearance of academic institutions, namely the *Special School of Architecture of Paris* and the *La Rochelle School of tourism and business management*, and of 3 cities, namely Ahmedabad, Halle and Valladolid. This seems to vindicate our strategy to cover the KITE spectrum.

The Centre has been able to count on a very supportive Board, each member bringing skills, ideas or contacts to our common endeavour. We wish henceforth that we continue with this policy of electing to the Board only members who are willing to support the Centre to the hilt.

We'll need every member's support indeed, as the Centre is at a critical juncture: it is poised for a leap forward in terms of activity and international recognition, but at the same time it is



## The EuroIndia Centre

weakened by the funding crisis, which is shown by a loss of 20831 € in 2008 and a planned budget deficit of over 13000 € in 2009.

We must repeat success with our Valladolid Summit and Mumbai Conference and on the occasion raise funding over and above their cost, if we want our beloved Centre to overcome the financial squeeze. It was a risk to take that we took it in full conscience. With your support, we shall succeed.

We however ought to reflect seriously on how we could start a fee-paying activity that will leverage our capabilities, network and goodwill, in support of our members' projects. It may time therefore to take up again the EuroIndia House project and give a shape in 2010.

Thank you for your patient hearing. We are now pleased to submit the present activity report to your vetting and approval.

Colette Mathur  
Co-President

Jamshyd Godrej  
Co-President