



ACTIVITY REPORT OF YEAR 2009

Presented at the 8th AGM on 20th of June 2010

By executive co-Presidents Colette Mathur and Harjit Singh Anand

Paris, the 20th of June 2010

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 and business, Tourism and Excellence in urban governance, the latter area remaining our main focus.

Indeed, the main strategic plank has been since 2006 to seize the opportunity of Indian cities' much needed modernization and bring European expertise into the mainstream of the 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.

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 led us to our climatic first *EuroIndia Summit* on European soil in Valladolid, Spain, from the 4th to the 6th of October, co-organised with CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), Valladolid city and Casa de la India, in collaboration with the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of Spain, the Spain-India Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce in Valladolid.

With the title *"Leveraging urban legacy for sustainable City development"*, and the subtitle *"Heritage tourism promotion: a key enabler"*, this first *EuroIndia City Summit* in Europe started on the 5th of October and offered a unique opportunity for representatives of a dozen of cities in Europe and States from India to have a first hand experience of the management models for sustainable development in European cities.

The Summit was attended by high level representatives of Valladolid, Santander, Ávila, Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga, Segovia, Halle (Germany), Leuven (Belgium), Paris, Geneva,



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Nysa (Poland) and La Rochelle from Europe and from India, Ahmedabad, Raipur, Lucknow, Jamshedpur, Mohali, Chandigarh, Delhi, Mumbai, Jammu and Hyderabad and/or their parent States of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Indian and European Industry was also represented, as well as several prestigious Spanish and European.

To maximize benefits for Indian Summit delegates, a special European tour was organized post Summit from 4 to 9 October to Madrid and Paris, where the delegation was invited to meet and interact in Madrid through the *Spain-India Foundation* and *Madrid Global* and in Paris through the *National Agency for Urban Renovation (A.N.R.U.)* and the *Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea (MEEDDM)* with local specialised public agencies and companies, urban designers and planners, companies and other urban stakeholders on the kind of suitable expertise that India could avail on.

Besides, delegates got an opportunity to visit in and around Valladolid in the region of Castilla y León, heritage sites and urban facilities and around Paris, pilot urban sites under renovation by A.N.R.U. and got an introduction to the path-breaking international research and development consultation on the “*Greater Paris*” project.

Finally a rich cultural programme took place in Valladolid during the Summit at the behest of Casa de la India, the Indian cultural Centre of Spain based in Valladolid: flower offering at Mahatma Gandhi’s statue to commemorate his birthday and the inauguration of an exhibition on Ahmedabad architectural heritage, in the framework of the vibrant partnership between the two cities that the Centre could bring about in two years for other cities to emulate.

As a direct result, the city of Leuven in Belgium and Nysa in Poland pledged to join the Centre as members. Halle Mayor offered at the Summit to host the next one, which was happily agreed after finalizing mutually acceptable financial terms.

Besides, the City of Valladolid has accepted our request to set up a Spanish desk of the Centre in Casa de la India in order to help us reap the benefits arising from the Summit.

We also decided to make sustainability a strategic focus of our endeavours in urban development, thus greening our KITE strategy. A note has been circulated among our would-be partners in the *Environmental Sustainability City Award* that we wish to launch at the next Halle Summit supported by a special fund. This award will be presented every year to one city and one associated company in India and Europe.

A National Conference on “Building Secure Cities for Economic Prosperity & Growth” was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai on 26-27 November 2009 organized in Partnership with CII to bring the best proven European expertise to India on the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on Mumbai.

The Centre contributed the expert testimonial of London, thanks to Bombay First and its President and our member Narinder Nayar, as well as two speeches by our two co-Presidents. It met with considerable success and brought our Centre in the limelight on a very sensitive subject in India in a show of solidarity with the democracy of India and its aggrieved citizens.

Last but not least, we’ve beefed up our information tools, be it our Website or our newsletter that is now issued on a quarterly basis. We need to get maximum inputs for both from our members to fulfil our motto “For our members by our members”.



The EuroIndia Centre

Membership: As on 31 December 2009, we had 50 valid members consisting of:

- Emeritus members: **9**
- Institutional members: **10**
 - Corporates: **5**
 - Civic: **3**
 - Academic: **2**
- Individual members: **29**
- Student members: **2**

20 are India-based, 30 Europe-based

It shows a loss from 59 at the end of the previous year that can be explained by our gradual shift toward city-level Euro-Indian exchanges which calls for a new breed of members, such as civic bodies, and a new approach to membership which should be made a prerequisite to availing of special operations organized by the Centre. In this respect, we are pleased to report that two more cities joined the Centre as members: Madrid through Promo Madrid and Leuven in Belgian Flanders.

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 weakened by a fund squeeze due to a loss in 2009. In spite of this loss, we are able to carry on and expand our activities, thanks to more parties coming forward offering philanthropic help, such our Spanish desk managed by Elke Van der Valk or Board members occasionally, and thanks to our system of conditional remuneration of Michel Sabatier, our Secretary General, and our newly appointed Secretary (India), Girish Bhagat.

We must repeat the success of our Valladolid Summit and Mumbai Conference with the June mission on Affordable Housing and the Halle Summit cum mission in October and on the occasion raise funding over and above their cost, if we want our beloved Centre to overcome its temporary financial squeeze. With your support, we shall succeed.

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

Colette Mathur
Co-President

Dr. Harjit Singh Anand
Co-President