



**Opening Remarks – Building Secure Cities for Economic Prosperity and Growth**  
**Colette Mathur**

Ladies and gentlemen, friends from India and abroad,

It is with great emotion that, on behalf of the EuroIndia Centre, I introduce, on this very special day, the meeting dedicated to building secure cities for economic prosperity and growth, in the prestigious, cherished and admired by all, Taj Mahal Hotel.

We shall always remember all those brave staff members who gave their lives to save their guests and all the innocent victims here at the Taj hotel and elsewhere in Mumbai, whose only crime was to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, who fell victims to this blind and ghastly terrorist attack.

Our thoughts are also with all their dear ones who find it so difficult to accept their absence and get over their sorrow.

We live in an extraordinary society dominated both by permanently innovating communication skills, discoveries and knowledge but also by growing acts of violence and terrorism inflicted by members of the very same society who refuse or are unable to communicate beyond themselves and to question their ideology promoting hatred.

They take us by surprise, anywhere in the world, at any time, hitting anyone without any mercy. They are programmed to kill.

My friend Subodh Kerkar, a Goan painter exhibiting his work in Mumbai these days, represents them as donkeys, obeying orders like robots instructed to kill.. But who are their masters? Do they have masters?

We have come together today to see how and to what extent such horrific acts can be avoided in the future through closer co-operation among democrats in the World fighting the same authoritarian forces of gloom.

We shall discuss cooperation, partnerships, information sharing at all levels, from governments to citizens. We shall discuss how, each of us, professionals, business leaders, media experts, academics or simple citizens can play a role in making our cities more secure.



Cities are the hearts of our countries. They generate and harbour knowledge, technology, culture and business excellence. They educate our young people and help us care for our children. They provide jobs to the jobless and hospitals for those injured or sick. They must perform all these missions, preparing our future but they need a secure environment as an absolute prerequisite.

EuroIndia Centre decided to join CII to hold a common meeting on this sad anniversary to send a strong message of European solidarity with our Indian brethren in pain and to try and bring the best of solutions that Europe and European cities in particular have developed in hindsight to avoid a repeat of similar terrorist attacks that occurred on their soil.

European and Indian democrats and humanists are fighting the same battle against the same evil. On this day of remembrance of all those innocent people who were killed, injured or simply terrified, we'd like to express a shared Euro-Indian will not to seek revenge but to join hands and exchange views, expertise and ideas, so that together in a constructive way we make Europe and India safer for their peace-loving citizens and create the conditions for their prosperity and well-being. This is why I invite you all to set a bold Euro-Indian co-operation agenda for the long run from the conclusions of the conference.

Let the example of courage demonstrated by all the Mumbaicars during one of their great city's most tragic moments be our source of inspiration and motivation for preparing together the conditions of a safer future for all.

I thank you all for being with us today and wish you very fruitful and constructive discussions.