



The EuroIndia Centre

**Speech by Michel Sabatier, Secretary General, on the 13th October 2011
to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Centre
at a gala dinner hosted by Leuven Mayor Louis Tobback
on the occasion of the 5th EuroIndia Summit**

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Centre is born in October 2001, exactly 10 years ago, when it was registered as a not-for-profit association at La Rochelle (France) with the sole objective of bringing Indians and Europeans together again for a shared future.

Indeed the idea of starting this Euro-Indian association stemmed from the realization by a few committed Euro-Indians at heart that the age-old relationship that Indians and Europeans have enjoyed for centuries, if not millennia, could not be taken for granted any longer at a critical juncture when India decided to reengage the World after a few decades of self-isolation.

After an Indian launch in 2003 in Delhi, we were blessed to be given our unique positioning of today, as the first institutional player to focus on rekindling the age-old close trading relationship that had benefited both Indian and European cities for so long, with the hope to retrieve the magic of the fabled "Route to the Indies", as it was called then.

Indeed, our founding Co-President, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the current Prime Minister of India, suggested in 2006 that we should support his newly launch Urban Renewal Mission by enabling Indian city managers to imbibe the best of practices that their European counterparts have developed after the 2nd World war under the same demographic, social and economic pressures that Indian cities are undergoing today, which are caused by the very success of India's economic reforms started twenty years ago.

We look forward to being able to foster hundreds of partnerships between cities, regions and states of India and Europe and their multiple stakeholders in the next 10 years that will jointly improve the lives of their citizens and bring Europeans and Indians closer together again.

On this fateful anniversary day, I would not like to pay a fitting tribute to those who gave their support to the project of a EuroIndia Centre at its very inception: first and foremost our first executive co-Presidents, late Mr. Raymond Barre, former French Prime Minister, and Dr. Manmohan Singh, visionary business leaders such as Jamshyd Godrej, Anand Mahindra, Naseer Munjee, PRS Oberoi, Deepak Parekh, Ratan Tata on the Indian side and Bertrand Collomb on the European side and last but not least Ashok Kar, my buddy in laying the foundations of the Centre.

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The *EuroIndia* Centre

Let us pray together that we shall all soon graduate from Indo-Europeans by culture and history to Euro-Indians by heart and shared vision. Let us wish long life to the EuroIndia Centre and to the Euro-Indian brotherhood that it advocates.

Mujhe asha hai ki hamari yojna bahut saphal hogi. Mujhe yah bhi asha hai ki hamare sath hamare shahar bhi bahut pragati karenge.

I am pleased to leave the floor to our current co-Presidents who have bravely taken over from Mr. Barre and Dr. Singh to turn the vision of our founding fathers into actual practice with a lot of hard work and dedication: Colette Mathur and Dr. Harjit Singh Anand.

Thank you.

Michel Sabatier