



The EuroIndia Centre

ACTIVITY REPORT OF YEAR 2007

Presented at the AGM on 3rd of April 2008

By executive co-President Colette Mathur and Jamshyd Godrej

Goa, the 3rd of April 2008

Dear fellow-members,

Two exceptional events, one sad, one happy, mark the opening of the 6th Assembly General.

The sad one is the passing away this year of our dear Founding President, former Prime Minister of France, Raymond Barre. He was a man of strong convictions, impeccable integrity and a great mind of our time. He created the Centre, together with Dr Manmohan Singh, at a time when India was regaining self confidence, had started reaping the fruits of bold economic reforms and was witnessing the fantastic rebirth of her dynamic and creative entrepreneurs. It was indeed important for Europe to wake up to this new situation and to renew its old friendship with India. The two great “fathers” of the Centre, sharing the same vision, created our Association with the imperative to be the best advocate and a frontline actor of this great mission.

I would request you all to observe one minute of silence to honour the memory of Mr Raymond Barre to whom we would like to dedicate the Forum this year.

The happy event, of which we can be proud, is that for the first time we hold our Assembly General in India.

Back to our report, bearing in mind the vision of the founders, i.e. to be a congenial Euro-Indian platform to facilitate networking among diverse stakeholders – government, business, scientists, academics, artists and civil society – around themes of strategic importance and shared interest to both sides, **we have decisively moved forward in this direction with a clear action agenda.**

After long deliberations on the strategic blueprint of *Vision 2008* and upon the advice of Dr Manmohan Singh, in 2006 we indeed decided to organize a major event dedicated to urban development and co-operation.



Hailing this decision, Dr Manmohan Singh, Co-Founder of the Centre and Prime Minister of India, sent us a message of support which said: “Our government is sincerely committed to the goal of making our cities more humane and more modern. The JNNURM is committed to these twin goals of improving the quality of urban life for all our citizens, especially the homeless and poor living in slums”.

He added: “This challenging mission [the JNNURM] would be greatly facilitated if our cities could imbibe the vast experience and the state-of-the-art technologies and know-how that European cities have developed over decades of being confronted to similar social and economic pressures”.

It so happens that European cities are indeed since long used to exchanging their best practices with foreign counterparts in a friendly give and take. It is just that Indian cities are yet to wake up to this opportunity which is knocking at their doors. The Forum could act as the missing bridge.

Cities are also the New Frontier of India’s opening up to the world. Economic reforms initiated in 1991 from Delhi hit the business world first and gradually percolated down to states and only later to cities, which are now bearing the brunt of India’s economic success and of increasing urbanization.

Most of them are not yet able to deliver in terms of physical and human infrastructure, hence the path-breaking JNNURM initiated by Dr Manmohan Singh three years ago which has shaken Indian cities out of slumber and prodded them into what is turning out to be a massive urban renovation programme akin to what European cities witnessed after the second World war.

Against this favorable backdrop, I am pleased to report that the first EuroIndia Forum in Goa which took place in February 2007 on the theme of:

Urban India 2020: investing in the future of Indian cities

Leveraging European expertise for their renewal

proved to be a great success, ending with a standing ovation.

Such a success has given us a clear lead in exploring this new urban frontier that we now ought to maintain at all costs. We are indeed well poised to ride the bulging wave of urban renewal and open new avenues for Euro-Indian co-operation involving all city stake-holders, cities, regions, States, enterprises , research and academic institutions, NGO’s and civil societies, provided we keep the budding momentum going with a confirmed success with the second Forum.

Thereafter, we shall “simply” need to evolve a sustainable economic model and the right strategy to deliver over the long run and satisfy high pent-up expectations. We shall seek your input when we embark on collective brainstorming at the end of the second EuroIndia Forum.

Among the achievements of the year 2007 till date, I wish to highlight the following:

- Our working relationship with our Associate Forum Partner, the Confederation of Indian Industry, has grown in intensity, quality and shared enthusiasm. I would like to thank particularly Mr Ajay Khanna, Deputy-Director General, who has been extremely helpful and committed to our shared objectives. He has now left CII and we wish him all success in his new assignment. We are fortunate to have, as his successors, several committed and talented CII colleagues
- We have deepened our relationship and entered into partnership with several Indian ministries: the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Urban Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.
- We’ve managed to involve the European Commission in Brussels in our Forum: Indeed Ronald Hall, Director of International Relations, Directorate General for Regional Policy, is attending the Forum. The same is happening with several European Embassies that our Secretary General visited in connection with the Forum.
- We have hopefully created enduring working links with several highly respected institutions such as United Cities and Local Governments based in Barcelona, Unesco, European New Town Platform, the Association of European Regions on the European side, etc.
- The list of our corporate Forum partners and members reads like the who’s who of Europe and India. Their enthusiastic support has helped us fund the two Fora.
- We’ve enlisted as Forum partners eight cities from Europe and seven from India. All of them have been visited by the Secretary General and his team creating a precious capital of goodwill for the Centre that augurs well when it comes to involving them in follow-up actions.
- A very important concrete outcome of our last year’s Forum was the first-ever official visit of two Indian cities and one Indian State,

Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Goa, last October to three European cities, Frankfurt, La Rochelle and Lyon. Indian visitors were extremely well received by their counterparts. They were treated with elaborate and exhaustive desk presentations and site visits: water treatment plants, a waste management centre, renovated historical city-centres. We are now expecting more such follow-up missions after the second Forum to deepen and broaden the interaction at the working level of city administrations and pave the way for establishing the Centre as a multi-faceted exchange platform for city stakeholders using fora, missions, a dedicated Website...

- We have created a high-level Euro-Indian think tank of members specialized in urban issues to help shape and run the programme of our Fora.
- Our website has been improved to incorporate Forum details and has been made more interactive. This is only the first step before a major revamp after the second Forum to turn it into a live exchange platform for our members to carry on the Forum dialogue.
- We have launched a monthly Newsletter which is being sent to about 1500 select targets. I hope that you enjoyed reading the first 6 issues. Soon, we'll ask you to share your opinion and suggestions to improve its quality and relevance to promoting Euro-India co-operation and the Centre's activities and members.

I'd like to mention however that this Newsletter will make a mark for itself in a sustainable way only if it serves the purpose of our members and entice readers to apply for membership. This will be achieved only if members take upon themselves to write original proprietary content for the Centre to make it a letter "for the members by the members". We urge you to come forward and contribute content, new readers and financial support through sponsoring.

- Last but not least, we've got renewed support from the City of La Rochelle which provided us with prestigious and fully furnished premises for our European headquarters in the old clock tower which is a landmark of the city at no cost. Both the city and the district council of Charente-Maritime have also provided a cash subsidy that takes care of our day to day overheads including the hiring of an administrative assistant.

- On the cultural front, we have been very active too:
 - We commissioned an exhibition of 40 paintings representing the first ever dialogue on the Internet between a European artist, Luc Joly from Geneva and an Indian artist, Subodh Kerkar from Goa, which was unveiled at the first EuroIndia Forum. It was then exhibited in Geneva on the occasion of the Media Sud India Festival. These paintings will soon be put up for sale for the benefit of the artists and the Centre.
 - On the occasion of the inauguration of our new premises in La Rochelle on the 9th of June at the time of the AGM, we had a rich cultural programme: We opened an Indian modern art exhibition in our new premises of the clock tower, we staged a short play enacting an episode of trade between La Rochelle and the East Indies and organized a private sitar recital by maestro Narendra Bataju in the music hall of the 18th century mansion of a merchant.
- On the academic front, we shall table several promising projects with various partners at Forum, namely:
 - A Euro-Indian vocational training school in urban crafts, promoted by Co-President, Colette Mathur.
 - A Euro-Indian Exchange Programme in Sustainable Built Environment for young professionals, with Architecture & Development, an association presided over by member Ludovic Jonard.
 - A Euro-Indian Urban Heritage Restoration Centre, proposed by the Ahmedabad Municipality, a Forum Partner city.
 - An Euro-Indian Academic Exchange Programme, proposed by members Rahul Peter Das and Carmen Brandt.
 - We are also working on a possible European contribution to the Habitat Planning and Governance Institute project, supported by member Deepak Parekh.

We are all here to participate in the second EuroIndia Forum and I am happy to report that it will be attended by about 150 city delegates, business leaders, experts, architects, media and NGO's from Europe and India.

Urban india 2020: The New Frontier
Creating efficient and sustainable cities
Building Euro-Indian partnerships

The programme conceived with our think tank and partners, covers many of the burning issues faced by cities. All sessions are solution-oriented and will lead to concrete proposals for action.

This second Forum has been prepared with the support of the following institutions:

Associate partner: The Confederation of Indian Industry

Institutional partners: Ministry of Urban Development of India, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India, the Ministry of Urban Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation and the European Commission

Partner cities: Ahmedabad, Halle, Indore, La Rochelle, London, Ludhiana, Pune, Valladolid

Strategic partners: ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries

Forum Partners: Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing, India Brand Equity Foundation, De Purty Pictet Turetini & Cie, Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces, Veolia Environment, V.S. Dempo & Co

Official carrier: Kingfisher Airlines

Knowledge partner: IL&FS

We'd like to extend our sincere thanks to them for making the Forum possible. Some like Reliance, ICICI, Dempo have even decided to become members of the Centre.

We would not like to forget some of our individual members who joined us recently and contributed their share of our urban-focused endeavours: the members of our in-house think-tank, in particular Isabelle Milbert and OP Mathur as its heads and individual members such as Guillermo Rodrigues and RP Das who managed to convince their respective cities of residence, Valladolid and Halle to accept to play Forum partners.



The *Euro*India Centre

This influx of new members with an urban interest and sharing our Euro-Indian values has more than substituted for those members who left us in 2007. We definitely need to keep on building the momentum of membership in the wake of the increasing appeal of our Forum.

We are now here together to make a resounding success of the 2008 EuroIndia Forum and to clear a decisive milestone towards a hopefully glorious future. Be it to make the Forum a success or to co-opt new members, we count on your renewed personal support and involvement.

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