



# The *Euro*India Centre

## **2004 ACTIVITY REPORT**

Paris, the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2005.

Dear Member,

For the second time, I have the pleasure and privilege to address the Annual General Meeting of our Centre. It so happens that I am doing it a few days after my compatriots have rejected the European constitutional treaty that I had strongly advocated.

To our European and Indian friends, I'd like to use this occasion to say a word of reassurance to those who may think that my cherished country has turned introvert and xenophobic. The pro-European feelings and openness of mind of most my compatriots remain.

This clear rejection may indeed mean that my compatriots want to have more say in the European integration process and expect Europe to help them overcome the pangs of globalisation that they suffer from in their daily life.

I remain optimistic that over the long run, Europe may emerge more democratic and therefore stronger, but in the short run my compatriots have taken the risk of stopping the political integration train on its tracks. Who knows when and how it will start rolling again.

Against this backdrop, the dream of bringing about a EuroIndian citizen may sound pure utopia. But let us look back for a moment at what Europe and India were after the end of the second world war.

Had they not found able dreamers among their political leaders, India and Europe would not have made such great strides toward unification, prosperity and democracy.

Modestly, I would like to dream that our bold attempt to create a truly EuroIndian institution, the first of its kind, is a step towards creating the Euro-Indian community that the World beckons for its stability and prosperity, based on shared history and vision, strong cultural affinities and strategic interests.

It gives me great pleasure to announce to you that this first institutional step is now on firm ground.

Indeed, after 3 years of tight rope walking, since its inception on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2001, the Centre has come of age. Swelling membership and growing activity are the two signs of this happy turnaround.

Let us not for that matter fall prey to self-congratulation and complacency: A lot more ground needs to be covered, before we can safely say that the Centre has fulfilled the tall ambition that it had set for itself of being the rallying point for those who feel EuroIndian at heart and who are keen to bring about a new and vibrant Euro-Indian Partnership.

I am particularly pleased that all members got together at this critical juncture for a collective exercise of introspection to decide what the strategy for expansion should be in the next 3 years, based on learnings from the first 3 foundation years. Vision2008 was born out of this healthy brainstorming exercise in February last and is now bearing its first fruits, thanks to the painstaking efforts of all members and of the Secretariat.

In hindsight, the year 2004 has been a transition year which has sought to build up the initial momentum further in terms of activity and enrolment of new members.

#### ENROLMENT OF MEMBERS:

At the last AGM in 2004 had 43 members. Today the Centre can count on 66 members with a healthy mix of 9 institutional members

and 57 individual members, 44 Europeans out of which 22 of Indian origin and 22 Indians.

As the enrolment pace has picked up momentum since *Vision 2008* came about, the set target of 100 members at the end of 2005 seems attainable, provided all members feel that it is their duty to exercise their privilege to co-opt like-minded persons for membership.

Some have already referred several valuable members and need to be complimented for the same, namely Anand Mahindra, Colette Mathur, Amal Mukhopadhyay, Wahid Saleh, P.K.Singh and Dominique Turcq.

I invite all members to emulate their selfless dedication. There is indeed no shortcut: if we want to fulfil our mission to serve members by members, we need to reach a critical mass of members to form a pool of quality EuroIndian skills. Driven by selfish Euro-Indian interest, members are thus expected to sustain the growth momentum of the Centre on its own merits.

200 members at the end\_of 2006 and 400 members at the end of 2007 have been set as targets in *Vision 2008*. Our success in achieving these realistic targets are in your hands.

#### ACTIVITIES:

Activities basically revolved around the need to keep the momentum growing, drawing on our initial spadework.

#### The EuroIndia Biotech Networking Initiative (April-December)

Early 2004, heavy spadework went into preparing a second bid for

EU funding of this strategic initiative, along with project leader Amsterdam Medical College, BioVision (Lyon) and ABLE (Bangalore). It was submitted in June and summarily rejected in December.

We however resumed our efforts at the invitation of our member, Mr Desmarescaux, who asked The Centre to try and mount an official Indian delegation to attend the World Life Sciences Forum–Biovision2005 in Lyon, France, on May 11-15. We failed to muster the minimum number required.

However, our fellow-member, Dr Morawala-Patell attended the Forum and met with BioVision officials They agreed to start working on a full-fledged Euro-India Workshop for BioVision2007.

#### Search for a permanent European establishment (April-December):

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, our Secretary General met the Lord Mayor of La Rochelle and offered him to set up the European headquarters of Centre in his city, provided he met the terms set in our standard application file.

Subsequent meetings took place with his collaborators for a thorough appraisal of the file, which was recently downscaled, following the adoption of *Vision 2008*.

I am pleased to report that on the eve of the AGM, the Secretary General met the Lord Mayor again to find out about his final decision. He stated in no uncertain terms his interest in keeping the European headquarters of The Centre in La Rochelle on our revised terms. However, he requested to wait for his official confirmation till he gets the formal sanction of his Municipal Board.

If confirmed, this decision should soon give us the kind of stable logistics and financial base that will facilitate the implementation of our expansion strategy, as set out in *Vision2008*.

#### The Brussels Meet of the Global Organization of Persons of Indian Origin (4 October)

The Centre was for the first time represented by a 9 member–strong delegation at an international event. It gave us an occasion

to make our Centre known to a critical constituency of Europeans of Indian Origin, to which so many of our active members belong. In the process, Sunil Prasad, Head of GOPIO Brussels, decided to join the Centre.

Would it not be a good idea to keep the momentum and repeat the exercise on the occasion of the next GOPIO meet scheduled to take place in Stuttgart on the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of July?

#### The EuroIndia Colloquium in Delhi (7 December).

Thanks to Colette Mathur, we could organize our second event after our public launch in the previous year, on the sidelines of *the India Economic Summit* organized by her for the *World Economic Forum*.

We highlighted 3 themes for workshop discussion: Cultural acquainting and training, outsourcing and IT.

The event met with mitigated success, cast as it was in the overbearing shadow of the hosting *India Economic Summit*. Clearly, it is time that The Centre comes in the limelight on its own merits. Hence the idea mooted by Anand Mahindra and Colette Mathur of staging our own EuroIndia Forum in Goa in 2006-7.

In such a forum civil societies would come together once a year, foster personal affinities and discuss cooperation avenues in the critical fields of business, academia, research and culture. When we are ready with the concept, I shall write to Dr Singh and seek his support.

The colloquium also helped us build on the momentum created by our participation in the official March 2004 *EU-India IT Forum* in Delhi and led to our first-ever EuroIndia ICT R&D Workshop that just successfully concluded in Copenhagen, in partnership with the *Copenhagen Business School*.

It also spurred awareness of the need for intercultural training for a better understanding between Indians and Europeans. This has emboldened the Centre to step in with its own offer of intercultural training provided by some of our members, namely Sanjiv Rao, Prajna Paramita, Ashok Kar and Michel Sabatier. Other members

interested either in imparting or receiving such training are invited to bring it to our notice.

Dear Member, 2004 has been an eventful watershed year. 2005 should see the our growth momentum pick up on a sound operating base, with more members, enhanced funding, suitable logistics, more events and basic services by members to members through an online member community management service, a newsletter, and an information portal to be put in place before year-end.

Already several members have volunteered to help in actual take-off of the Centre. That is not enough.!

Like all of us, you are hard pressed for time. However, now is the time for every member to contribute what he/she can at this critical juncture, be it member-cooption, ideas, contacts, funds, if not time.

I know I can count on your support,

Raymond Barre

President and Former French Prime Minister