

The EuroIndia Forum 2008: Goa

The EuroIndia Forum 2008 Brings Together Indian and European Cities to Cooperate in the Urban Domain



M. Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India addressing the Opening Plenary. Sitting on the dais are (L-R) R P Pal, Secretary, Urban Development, Government of Goa, Dr. Harjit S. Anand, Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, Ronald Hall, Director, Directorate General for Regional Policy, European Commission, Colette Mathur, Co-President, The EuroIndia Centre and Jamshyd Godrej, Co-President, The EuroIndia Centre, Chairman & Managing Director, Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing, Mumbai

The EuroIndia Forum 2008, organized by the EuroIndia Centre and the Confederation of Indian Industry on 3 - 5 April in Goa, concluded with the Feedback Session in Delhi on 7th April amidst great synergies and concrete proposals of co-operation between cities in India and Europe.

The Forum witnessed the signing of MoU between City of Ahmedabad and the City of La Rochelle, France to cooperate in the field of heritage conservation and energy saving.

The City of Halle, Germany, offered to host up to 15 management students of Ahmedabad and Indore as interns in companies & institutes for up to six months and round tables on city planning and went on to invite the City of Indore to exhibit their expertise in the area of public transport.

The City of Valladolid proposed to host an exhibition of Ahmedabad experience in heritage conservation. Valladolid was also invited by Ahmedabad and Indore to do the same. Valladolid offered to develop a close cooperation with Pune in the automotive sector.



Dr. Harjit S. Anand, Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India



M. Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India



Ajay Shankar, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India

The idea of the Forum was first mooted by the EuroIndia Centre, in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in 2006 with the active support of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Since then the Forum has gained tremendous momentum and emerged as a powerful platform to promote city-to-city bilateral cooperation between India & Europe. The overall objective of the Forum is to facilitate exchange of ideas, expertise, technology, investment and build over all cooperation between India and Europe to make cities centre of excellence and engine of economic growth on a sustainable basis.

This year EuroIndia Forum in Goa was jointly inaugurated by Dr. Harjit S Anand, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Mr. M Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development and Mr. Ronald Hall, Director of International Relations, European Commission, Brussels and addressed by several prominent personalities from both

sides, including the Lord Mayor of Halle, Germany, the Mayor of Valladolid, Spain, the Deputy Mayor of La Rochelle, France, the Municipal Commissioner of Indore and the Mayor and Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad.

Mr. M Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, in his address, emphasized on empowering cities to function more effectively & efficiently. Cities have ideas and development plans, the need of the hour is to build capacity to convert these ideas into concrete projects, he added.

He further pointed out that funds allocated by the Government alone would not be able to meet the growing demands of urban infrastructure. Increasingly cities will have to find alternative sources of investments. With credit rating, the cities are better equipped today to rope in the private sector and garner resources from other avenues.

Dr. Harjit S Anand, Secretary, Ministry of Urban Housing &

Poverty Alleviation opined that Indian and European cities have enormous scope to join hands in specific areas such as City & Regional Planning, Architecture, Social Cohesiveness, Tourism, Education, R&D and Technology.

While the contribution of cities to the GDP has grown progressively from 45% a decade and half ago to 62% now, how to mainstream deprived sections of the society continue to pose a challenge, Dr. Anand pointed out.

Shortage of housing is another huge challenge for Indian cities. More than 50% of the population is expected to reside in cities in India by 2040. Under JNNURM approx. 1 million units are under construction, he informed.

Concluding his address, Dr. Anand cited Chandigarh as the finest example of cooperation between Europe and India. Chandigarh was designed by the French Architect Le Corbusier, who once said "space, light and order are thing that men need as much as they need bread and



Dagmar Szabados,
Lord Mayor of Halle, Germany



Jamshyd Godrej, Co-President, The EuroIndia
Centre, Chairman & Managing Director,
Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Co Ltd., Mumbai



Francisco Javier Leon de la Riva, Mayor,
City of Valladolid, Spain

place to sleep". Indian cities are committed to create space, light and order and European cities could be a strong partner, he said.

Mr. Ronald Hall, Director of International Relations, European Commission, Brussels presented the 4 pronged Urban Agenda of EU. The objective is to promote cities as motors of regional development, foster internal cohesion inside urban areas by concentrating on deprived urban districts, polycentric development, improve in the interface between urban and rural areas.

For the year 2007-13, the EU has earmarked 350 billion Euros for development strategies for cities and the region. 80% of the funds will be spent on the least developed regions. Historically EU has followed the principle of decentralized implementation. States, regions and city authorities decide on projects whereas EU injects a sense of priority through its Community Initiative Capital programme. The main objective is to promote an integrated approach, he further elaborated.

Emphasizing on the importance of exchange of ideas and cross-learning, he informed that the EU has set up Urban Network known as URBACT – an exchange network for cities to learn from each others experiences and best practices. URBACT also encourages city managers to engage in benchmarking. It has developed profiles of cities and has 330 indicators in 9 domains such as demography, social & education, transport, etc. The EU

is also actively encouraging non grant sources of finance; promoting an urban development fund for sustainable investment in cities.

Reflecting on the international dimension, Mr. Roland said that EU has developed ties with China, Brazil and Russia to exchange experiences on policies of redistribution at the urban level and was ready to look at India.



Colette Mathur, Co-President, the EuroIndia Centre briefing
the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh on the
EuroIndia Forum 2008



Colette Chaigneau, Deputy Mayor,
City of La Rochelle, France



I P Gautam,
Municipal Commissioner, Ahmedabad



Signing of MoU between City of Ahmedabad and
the City of La Rochelle, France

The Forum was attended close to 150 participants from India and Europe. It facilitated a detailed discussion and threw practical and concrete solutions on some of the complex and challenging urban development issues, with an ultimate aim to modernize Indian cities in a sustainable manner, thereby contributing to economic growth and bringing about improvement in living conditions in the cities.

The Agenda included "Creating New Cities or Upgrading Existing

Ones" "Integrated Urban Reforms – Regulatory, Planning & Governance", "Managing & Funding Urban Infrastructure Projects", "Boosting & Upgrading the Human Capital Required by Urban Development", "Energy Efficiency in Urban Transportation", "Energy Efficiency in Building Design and Construction", "Water Supply, Sanitation & Solid Waste", "The Need for Social & Cultural Integration through Housing", "City to City Cooperation and JNNURM" and "How Can Indian

Cities Sustain their Growth Environmentally and Socially?"

The proceedings and key outcomes of the Forum were presented to a larger audience in a Follow-up Session in Delhi on 7th April. It was jointly addressed by the mayors of Partner Cities from Europe and Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, and Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation.

