



## **THE FIRST EUROINDIA FORUM OF GOA** (8-11 February 2007)

The EuroIndia Centre, founded in 2002 by Dr Manmohan Singh and former Prime Minister of France Raymond Barre held its first Forum devoted to Cities in Goa from 8 to 11 February 2007, with its associate partner, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

In line with its mission of bringing Europeans and Indians closer, the Centre chose the theme of:

### **Urban India 2020: Investing in the future of India cities Leveraging European expertise for their renewal**

as a contribution to the success of the recently launched *Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission*.

*"This challenging mission 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"*

(Quote from Dr Manmohan Singh's message of support)

The Forum enjoyed the strong support of the Government of India and Goa. Chief Minister Pratap Singh Raoji Rane welcomed the organizers' wish to make Goa the permanent venue of the Forum.

Over 200 senior European and Indian city-stakeholders could have an intense and serious dialogue in a friendly and informal atmosphere:

✎ Representatives of Partner-cities: Frankfurt, Goa, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, La Rochelle, Lisbon, Lyon, Mumbai, Zurich

✎ Representatives of Partner-companies:

- Strategic Forum Partners: Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Renault



- Forum Partners: Alstom, Atherstone Capital Asia, Dexia, Housing Development Finance Corporation, V.S. Dempo & Co., India Brand Equity Foundation, Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation, Lafarge, V.M. Salgaocar & Bro., Taj Group of hotels, Veolia Environnement, Zee Telefilms
- Forum Carriers: Air France-KLM, Kingfisher Airlines

- ✎ Researchers, academics and experts
- ✎ Representatives of NGO's
- ✎ Representatives of the Forum institutional partners: The Ministry of Urban Development, The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, The Delegation of the European Commission to India
- ✎ Representatives of reputed organizations, such as the Planning Commission, the Reserve Bank of India, United Cities and Local Governments, the European New Towns Platform, the British Council, the French Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Tourism and Maritime Affairs, Unesco, etc.

9 plenary sessions and 12 workshops were organized over two and a half days on different urban issues taking into account both Indian and European concerns, expertise and keenness to share knowledge and best practices. They brought about an exceptionally rich dialogue leading to a clear Euro-Indian consensus on several counts:

- ✎ Public-Private Partnership can deliver on most Indian urban needs provided it is backed by political will and good governance. Adding a fourth P for Public would further improve the model by taking into account local political, social and behavioral factors and by initiating a serious dialogue with all stakeholders, particularly with the needy citizens, where NGO's can be very useful.
- ✎ The need to empower clearly designated officials in each municipality, among which preferably democratically elected Mayors as in all European cities.
- ✎ Involving all stakeholders in the planning and managing process: Citizens, NGO's, corporates, experts and making civic administrators accountable to them.



- ✎ Planners should take better cognisance of specific local factors and respect subsidiarity between the regional and municipal levels. Beware of the fashion syndrome: a system that works in a city may not work in another.
- ✎ The performance of an urban utility system that is intrinsically network-based cannot be fully judged before the complete system is in place.
- ✎ Funding is not an issue for viable urban projects, provided pricing of services is adequate. It will enable their sustainability and quality that, in turn, will ensure citizen-users' satisfaction and ownership.
- ✎ There are indigenous success stories in all sectors. New ones in Euro-Indian partnership could be created based on a strong performance-based contractual model that can be scaled up or replicated.
- ✎ Better leveraging of the land asset would provide umpteen opportunities for better urban infrastructure.
- ✎ Before thinking of new infrastructure projects, emphasis should be on improved utilization of existing assets. Brownfield urban projects should be considered first before greenfield ones. For instance, conservation of the historical centres of existing cities was advocated as a vital tool for urban renewal for its sound economics, besides its social and cultural benefits.
- ✎ Severe shortage of qualified manpower in all urban matters is a daunting overall constraint that may affect the eventual success of the JNNURM. It calls for drastic remedies: Improvement in existing training facilities, creating new specialized institutions, creating attractive career prospects, exchange of students, professionals and curriculum with European institutions, draft of European skills.
- ✎ Tapping European urban expertise through a city-to-city dialogue is seen as an great opportunity not to be missed, as it can add value to Indian indigeneous efforts, specifically in terms of technical expertise and civic governance, on a peer-to-peer basis. Indian cities should start networking with their European counterparts, while setting-up a clearly identified and stable international relation cell in their fold.

**A few concrete priority initiatives** have already emerged from the above consensus that would need proper nurturing, if actual results are to be shown at the next Forum:



- ❧ Need to push for further empowerment of Indian Mayors
- ❧ Need to create an international relations cell in Indian ULB's
- ❧ Reciprocal field study visits by Indian Partner-cities to European ones
- ❧ Making the EuroIndia Centre a dedicated clearing house for Indian and European cities wanting to exchange and cooperate
- ❧ Same for academic institutions which need to expand their tie-ups.
- ❧ Attracting the best European urban professionals to India to bridge the expertise gap in the short run and to tie-up with their counterparts for the longer run.

A few more will emerge from the exhaustive consultation of the Forum participants. They will all be furthered at the next Forum on Cities which is scheduled on:

**13-15 of March 2008  
at the Taj Exotica Hotel in Goa**

For additional information, please visit our website at [www.the-euroindia-centre.org](http://www.the-euroindia-centre.org) or contact:

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