

II India-EU Forum

on Effective Multilateralism

EU-India relations: in search of a paradigm

REPORT AND POLICY OPTIONS

Luis Peral

The India-EU Forum on Effective Multilateralism is a joint initiative of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), a think tank of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Following the inaugural event last year in Delhi, the second India-EU Forum was held in Brussels on 11-12 October 2010 in collaboration with the European Commission and with additional support from the Foundation for European Progressive Studies. During two days of intense discussions, a core group of 50 high-level officials, analysts and researchers from India and the EU made an exhaustive and informed assessment of the state of the external dimension of India-EU relations and put forward sound proposals and policy options for the years to come. The Forum was organised along six sessions under the Chatham House Rule, with a Pre-Forum debate and a Closing Session opened to the wider community of policy-makers and researchers in Brussels.

FOREWORDS

Álvaro de Vasconcelos
and
Sudhir T. Devare

This Report is specifically addressed to decision-makers who will contribute and give content to the multilateral dimension of the EU-India Strategic Partnership, in the conviction that the II India-EU Forum provided a unique combination of the highest expertise and knowledge available both in India and the EU. The Report is based on discussions held in Brussels, but it further elaborates on some of the relevant arguments put forward by participants and incorporates some policy options and questions that can be helpful in transforming common ground into effective joint action at the international level.

11-12 October 2010





From left to right:

Jayant Prasad, James Moran, Sudhir T. Devare, Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Radha Kumar, Graham Watson, Maria João Rodrigues, Narendra Jadhav

FOREWORD BY

Álvaro de Vasconcelos

Director, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris



From left to right: Helga Schmid and Álvaro de Vasconcelos

The EU-India forum organised by the ICWA and the EUISS is a pioneering exercise. Clearly, the strategic estrangement of India and the European Union makes no sense in the current geopolitical landscape. It is detrimental to both sides, and it does not help in achieving a fairer world order. The EU-India Forum has shown that this anomalous situation – reminiscent in a certain sense of the Cold War era – can and should be rectified. There is no reason why the largest democracy and the largest group of democratic nations in the world should find it difficult to meaningfully talk to one another in order to combine their strengths and overcome their weaknesses.

The first and now the second EU-India Forum, as this report drafted by Luis Peral highlights, have made it clear that both Europeans and Indians share common interests in relation to a number of critical global issues. Hence mutual cooperation based on reciprocity would have enormous advantages for both sides. The high-level participation of officials and experts from both the EU and India in the Forum adds weight to this conclusion.

Unsurprisingly, the global priorities identified respectively by the EU and India are quite similar. The low levels of interaction between the two preclude, however, a clear understanding of their respective perspectives in this regard and this muddles the picture. This also holds true for the regional concerns of India and the EU,

each strongly focused on their respective neighbouring environments, which are the theatres of some of the most world's intricate and intractable conflicts – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East and the ongoing war in Afghanistan, to name but two. If there is a need to understand better the regional roles of both India and the EU, there is also a need for a better understanding and mutual acceptance of the role both play in world affairs.

It is high time for a change of paradigm in India-EU relations, which have so far excessively concentrated on trade and development. There is no denying the importance of these questions, nor should they be abandoned or downgraded. But now is the time for a fully-fledged, mature political relationship to develop, one that can make a difference to the multilateral order – in which both the EU and India have a vested interest.

This is the reason why the participants in the EU-India Forum have welcomed the present debate on the Strategic Partnership between India and the EU and voiced their hopes that the conclusions and recommendations they have issued will be useful in the context of current efforts to give substance to the bilateral relationship.

A Forum like this one helps the strategic actors overcome the deficit of understanding and knowledge affecting both protagonists; these gaps should be the subject of all-year-round exchanges between the strategic thinkers of both sides. India and Europe cannot be matters confined to the respective regional experts; they must become part of mainstream strategic thinking. Joint initiatives in the political and security area that is at the heart of the ICWA and the EUISS activities are part of the proposed mainstreaming.

The forum has shown that both the EU and India share an interest in various topics relating to the effective multilateralism agenda that they could usefully explore in common: these constitute a good basis for research and debate, ranging from the reform of the UN to peace building and peacekeeping, to justice and the fight against terrorism, proliferation and climate change, to name but a few. The EUISS and ICWA are committed to working closely along these lines, not just in the context of the annual EU-India Forum but also on a broader and ongoing basis, so that this informal, flexible process of exchange becomes instrumental in providing substantial ideas and proposals to the EU-India Summit process.

FOREWORD BY

Sudhir T. Devare,
Director-General, ICWA, New Delhi



From left to right:
Sudhir T. Devare, Boguslaw Majewski, Luis Peral and Jayant Prasad

For the past two years, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA) have been engaged in a regular dialogue on a wide range of issues, global as well as regional. This exchange of views and opinions between a large number of scholars and experts from both sides, namely, the European Union and India, marks an important development in structured communication between these two large entities, one a sovereign state and the other a union of twenty seven sovereign states. What is significant is that the two share a great deal in common, and are united by a belief in democracy, pluralism and diversity. The need for intensive engagement between the two has been recognised in recent years. The emergence of an annual India-EU Summit in the last decade testifies to this.

Importantly, the forum on Effective Multilateralism organised by the ICWA and EUISS alternately in New Delhi and Brussels has sought to find ways to supplement and reinforce the dialogue mechanism at the highest official level in the changing context of the roles that the EU and India can play together in addressing major global or regional concerns. In a rapidly growing multipolar world both India and the EU are faced with challenges and also responsibilities which they can best meet through mutual understanding and cooperation. The Strategic Partner-

ship entered into between the two in 2005 underlines the need to develop such cooperation across the wide spectrum of issues – strategic, political, economic, commercial and socio-cultural.

The debate in the recently held forum in Brussels focused on several topics on the effective multilateralism agenda which included reform of the United Nations Security Council, international security concerns such as the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, terrorism, efforts towards peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and climate change. Emphasis was also placed on areas such as economic exchanges, trade and exploration of promising areas of cooperation such as education and skills development. Perhaps the EU's own evolutionary process and India's greater familiarity with dealing bilaterally with the member states of the EU may have initially proved to be something of an obstacle to effective cooperation. The discussion in the forum on whether there should be a change in the paradigm of India-EU relations needs to be seen in the context of the changing profiles and growing capacities of both India and the EU. What form that this changed paradigm should take was discussed in the open and frank exchanges between high-level officials and senior experts on the two sides.

Participation of Parliamentarians from the EU and India added a useful dimension to the debate. A series of important recommendations was made both with regard to security as well as economic issues while expressing the hope that there will be an early finalisation of the Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. The conclusions of the forum are contained in the detailed report below written by Luis Peral.

The forum in October has clearly demonstrated the importance of enhancing the EU-India Strategic Partnership. While a new era has opened in the EU following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, India is increasingly regarded as a new global player. It is important that the EU and India understand each other better and appreciate their mutual priorities and concerns. The need for closer engagement not only between officials and experts but also at the civil society level cannot be over-emphasised. The EUISS and ICWA are working towards this objective and hope the exchanges organised under their auspices can make a useful contribution to the EU-India dialogue at the Summit level in the future.

Report and Policy Options

INTRODUCTION: COMMON GROUND AS A BASIS FOR GLOBAL ACTION

The underlying general assumption of the debates held at the second India-EU Forum on Effective Multilateralism was that the India-EU relationship is in the process of evolution with new paradigms being devised. There was unanimity that the traditional paradigm based exclusively on trade and aid, which characterised the last 20 years of the relationship, is already well-defined and that a wider and more comprehensive paradigm may be envisaged. The preservation of multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pluralistic and democratic societies in both India and the EU can and should be considered as a firm basis for a new paradigm, which the envisaged signature of the Free Trade Agreement will contribute to reinforce. Security in a broad sense, encompassing food security, water, climate change and other aspects that will be detailed in the Report below – but avoiding securitisation of the relationship – was proposed as the key dimension of the emerging new paradigm.

The expansion of the bilateral relationship between India and the EU towards closer understanding and cooperation on global security issues is possible and needs to be considered intensively in the present international context. It requires, however, profound internal homework on both sides, although the current signs seem positive. As pointed out by some participants, India is not only growing economically, despite the financial and economic crisis that the Western hemisphere is experiencing, but is also modernising its capabilities for external action and engagement, starting with a greater involvement in the region. The EU is in a stronger position to deliver as a global actor following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty while member states experience growing difficulties in advancing individual agendas at the global level.

It should also be noted that the context in which this relationship is developing has also changed dramatically in the last ten years, since the rise of new global actors, including India, has given shape to a multipolar world. This should of course be reflected in India-EU relations, but no paradigm can be successfully built between the two countries with the aim of counterbalancing the power of others such as China. In fact, the EU-India relationship should not at all be premised on such a consideration. The financial and economic crisis has confirmed the relative decline of the West, while emerging economies are showing a spectacular dynamism, including in the case of India achieving greater internal economic cohesion, as signalled by Indian participants. As a result of the crisis, India is becoming more self-confident, while the EU has become more inward-looking as it concentrates on trying to solve internal financial tensions. Also as a consequence of the different impact of the crisis as they have experienced it, India and other new global actors will be called to exercise greater responsibility towards the world order.

The time is thus ripe for India and the EU to start working together for the preservation of global public goods even as they continue to reinforce their strong bilateral ties. Such cooperation is imperative if Indian and European citizens are all to maintain good living standards and/or enjoy them in a sustainable manner. The crucial test for Europe and India is to develop the multilateral dimension of the Strategic Partnership they have agreed upon, which already contains the basic principles for action. A new paradigm will not emerge by just invoking common interests and values. It is time to launch (initially at least) modest initiatives rather than overambitious projects at the global level so as to unleash the potential of a closer alliance between India and the EU in advancing effective multilateralism.

Instead of looking for yet another metaphor for the state of India-EU relations at the global level, the Forum set out to explore in detail three main areas in which this new paradigm can materialise in the near future. During the discussions, it emerged that policy-makers and experts on both sides were ready to speak with unprecedented clarity on the most delicate issues.



From left to right: Shyam Saran, Sudhir T. Devare and Álvaro de Vasconcelos

REFORMING GLOBAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS AND EXPLORING PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION

Structural and non-structural reforms of the international security system

MAIN DEBATES

In spite of the difficulties besetting the process, the reform of the international security system is urgent. As one of the participants bluntly declared, the UN Security Council is a relic whose legitimacy is quickly diminishing. This crisis of legitimacy is not only reflected in states' positions, but in increasing reluctance to contribute to



From left to right: Jean Lambert, Eduardo Faleiro, Luis Peral, James Elles, Manvendra Singh and Christian Wagner

the functioning of the UN security framework. Different approaches between India and the EU, and also within the EU, are currently impeding a consensus that could trigger a global process for adjusting the Security Council to the contemporary world reality. The possibility of the EU backing India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat – of which France and the UK are already in favour – was mentioned in the debate, although tensions between Germany and Italy over the former claiming another permanent seat have blocked any chances of such support until now.

New seats at the UNSC will not however necessarily guarantee the increased efficiency of the Security Council. Even if enlargement seems to be the necessary starting point, India and the EU should also start discussing other aspects which may be crucial for a broader systemic reform. Unless the present context is altered by unexpected events or circumstances, the chances for reform increase as the scope of the discussion broadens, so that there is room for bargaining. Inaction is however not without consequences. If decision-makers give up on taking decisions on what is undeniably one of the most pressing current issues affecting international relations, the gap between international institutions and international realities will grow even faster.

In the interim, India and the EU can jointly promote essential non-structural reforms as regards decision-making processes and implementation of Security Council decisions on peacekeeping. Possibilities such as informal consultations at G-20 level in certain cases can help prevent further de-legitimation of UNSC decisions. In this context, it was considered 'disappointing' by a high-level Indian representative that the EU is barely involved in UN peacekeeping today, while India is present in 43 out of 64 operations and is contributing with 10 percent of troops. It was however mentioned that the EU currently covers 40 percent of the UN peacekeeping budget.

More detailed consideration was given during the debate to the need to revise the chain of command in UN peacekeeping operations, which may contribute to preventing fatigue setting in among main contributors. Greater participation of contributing countries in the planning and conduct of operations at the UN Department of Peacekeep-

ing Operations (UNDPKO) was considered a crucial issue. EU representatives offered to launch a bilateral dialogue in order to reach a common proposal that should have a better chance of gaining acceptance at the UN level. Some Indian representatives argued that the UN rules on the chain of command should not be used as an excuse to reduce contributions. There is a need, however, as pointed out by practitioners, to carefully analyse the practical implications of different models of command structures, which may not be as substantial as commonly believed.

MAIN POINTS

Enlargement of the UNSC's membership

- Intra-EU tensions further complicate the process of reaching a consensus with third countries on the expansion of the UNSC membership, while India is of the firm view that she is eminently qualified to hold a permanent seat at the Security Council, and seeks explicit support from the EU: should the EU therefore not launch an internal debate on UNSC enlargement, including on this demand and on how to associate the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with the work of the UNSC so that intra-EU tensions are softened? Should this debate not include the possibility of an eventual third European seat at the UNSC being adjudicated to the EU? What are the chances of intensifying dialogue between India and the EU on the UNSC agenda so that the latter has a clearer idea of what the former's contribution to world peace will be?

Improving UNSC decision-making

- It seems clear that decisions of the Security Council based on independent assessment of the situation prevailing in the country concerned may enjoy greater acceptance than those merely based on the interests of permanent members. How can India and the EU contribute in this direction?

Greater participation of major contributors in the DPKO

- As regards questions such as the implications of the UN chain of command and its impact on troop contributions, should not an independent assessment of an advisory group of Indian and EU experts facilitate an eventual official discussion of a proposal that could be submitted to the UN?

Updating UN crisis response mechanisms

- How can the EU and India contribute to a global reflection on the need to transform the traditional tools deployed by the UN for responding to crisis situations?

Bilateral cooperation under the UNSC umbrella?

MAIN DEBATES

Quite apart from the difficulties pertaining to global consensus and the resilience of UN structures, India and the EU do not seem to be fully prepared yet for a mean-

ingful discussion even on non-structural reforms of the international security system. This should not impede, however, closer bilateral cooperation under the UN umbrella. Still, one Indian participant pointed out that while India became a 'true union' in spite of diversity upon independence, the EU has not yet established a unified Security and Defence Policy and thus cannot yet be regarded as a full partner for India.

Some participants were of the view that contributions to the UN will even decrease, while coalitions with SC mandates could be a more effective way of dealing with international crisis, including in the context of R2P (Responsibility to Protect) cases. An eventual coalition of both Europe and India would only be possible in order to implement an UNSC mandate and would also respect international law while implementing such a mandate. EU representatives pointed out in this context that EU operations are sometimes deployed in theatres where NATO and the US cannot go, due for instance to the lack of acceptance of locals. However, some participants referred to the EU's poor performance when it comes to translating its own commitments into practice, as both civilian and military headline goals show, in particular with regard to the deployability of battle groups.

Crisis response may constitute the best context for cooperation between India and the EU. Closer engagement in disaster management may even entail sharing means and resources since bilateral cooperation must have in this case a concrete operational dimension, including a bottom-up and a top-down approach. The fact that both India and the EU are deployed in the Gulf of Aden provides a specific opportunity for institutionalising closer cooperation, including the exchange of information, the codification of best practices on maritime surveillance, and the search for permanent judicial solutions to the international crime of piracy. Mention was also made of the need to involve the industrial sector in this kind of operation, so that it can progressively take care of its own security needs. The challenge now is to improve coordination of international presence in the Indian Ocean and to make sure that prosecution of pirates is put in place, while training of Somali security forces is pursued in neighbouring Uganda. The fact that two thirds of Indian oil and 90 percent of EU imports are transited by sea should offer a good basis for maritime security cooperation, while a bilateral and multilateral discussion on how to address root causes of conflict should be launched.

In the words of one of the European participants, the EU is generally considered a potential *easy partner* by India when it comes to international operations. However, the question of incorporating Indian personnel in CSDP operations would need further discussion and consideration. According to some qualified participants on both sides, the time is ripe to discuss a framework for joint action. Indian representatives suggested a frank and open dialogue on practical arrangements regarding eventual bilateral peacekeeping/crisis management operations under UNSC mandate. Two main obstacles can be raised in this regard. On the one hand, according to some Indian representatives, India is not yet willing to

embark on this kind of coalition arrangement, even with all guarantees of respect of international law and with such arrangements being under the mandate of (and thus involving cooperating with) the Security Council. On the other hand, EU representatives repeatedly offer India the possibility of taking part in CSDP operations – which are always complementary to UN action and do not entail competition between the EU and member states – without any reference to the possibility of discussing an alternative framework for common action.

MAIN POINTS

Flexibility of respective approaches to crisis management

- CSDP (formerly ESDP) operations have already been in existence for over a decade: is it not time to adopt a more flexible approach in terms of command that helps accommodate the potential contributions of other countries in order to better serve the objectives of the UN security system? India has a strong tradition of contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations: is it not time to expand her contribution to other dimensions of international operations, particularly to the civilian dimension of these operations that the UN Secretary General is deeply committed to enhance in order to maximise their effectiveness?

Counter-piracy and the rule of law

- As counter-piracy operations have begun to demonstrate, subjecting suspected pirates to the jurisdiction of third countries may not guarantee respect of basic human rights, while the fact that a relatively large number of suspects are set free jeopardises efforts to stamp out piracy: does it not seem feasible to initiate an exchange of proposals between India and the EU considering that both are and will increasingly be involved in this kind of operations?

Step-by-step approach to cooperation on joint crisis management

- Since the extraordinary impact of eventual India and EU cooperation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding seems undeniable but difficult to initiate, should it not start with some immediate modest initiatives while political obstacles to wider cooperation are removed? Will small steps undertaken incrementally not help remove political obstacles? Cooperation on training of future peacekeepers – which India is championing – or the establishment of a consolidated system of information sharing in this field are among the most feasible options.



From left to right: Helga Schmid, Álvaro de Vasconcelos and Jayant Prasad

GIVING IMPETUS TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT WHILE COUNTERING CLIMATE CHANGE

Worldwide socio-economic development and fair trade

MAIN DEBATES

India and the EU have different traditions in the way they approach conflict and crisis situations in third states. The crucial difference lies in the level of interference in 'internal' affairs of third countries that each of them considers appropriate to solve problems connected to human security. While India tends to be more cautious in preserving state sovereignty, the EU is usually eager to promote international action in order to stop or prevent mass violations of human rights – even if it is not able to react speedily and adequately in most situations. Although the discrepancy does not affect principles of international law, but concerns primarily the extent to which the faculty to respond to potential international crimes should be exercised, a framework of cooperation centred on responses to natural disasters and the promotion of socio-economic development may be easier to attain.



From left to right: Claude-France Arnould, Damien Helly and Satish Nambiar

There is indeed a broad 'de-politicised' sphere of activities ranging from humanitarian action in favour of victims of natural disasters to setting the foundations of sustainable development, including a fair international trade regime and peacebuilding activities, which can facilitate consensus and even joint actions of India and the EU with considerable international impact. Political reality is, in contrast, more complex since certain humanitarian situations may be highly sensitive for either India or the EU. The proposal of EU representatives to find common ground between India and the EU on situations such as those in Burma/Myanmar and Sri Lanka illustrate this point.

India's overarching goal is that of internal development so that her population achieves freedom from want throughout her territory. Progress is being made in overcoming the gross economic imbalances of different

Indian states and thus providing for more cohesiveness. As India finds her own way of inclusive development, the EU needs to put aside a donor mindset and perhaps provide some hints on how to reduce social imbalances while dealing with her own economic problems. But both India and the EU have a vested interest in the global system allowing for the balanced development of different regions and countries, so that their own development strategies are sustainable. Both the EU and, particularly, India are in this sense interested in fostering Asian regional integration, which is perhaps the lowest in the world.

The last phase of negotiations of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement – especially if obstacles regarding the social and environmental clauses are resolved in a way which is acceptable to both parties – opens new and promising possibilities of engagement at the bilateral and global levels. India and the EU can start cooperating in new areas such as maritime transport and civil aviation. In a global context, both the completion of the Doha Round and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) demand a joint specific impetus on the part of India and the EU. A concerted scheme on how to meet the challenges in the light of recent financial and other constraints may indeed intensify the momentum of broader international negotiations. In this fundamental dimension of international relations, the complementarity of India and the EU may help shape the world trade regime.

A drastic change of paradigm was proposed in this connection. On the one hand, if a global market is being created, it is also time to create a global social contract on which India and the EU should work together. On the other hand, a straightforward question was raised: India being now aid donor; should the EU not stop giving aid to India and find new forms of cooperation?

MAIN POINTS

Common lesson-learning on disaster response

- Regarding responses to natural disasters abroad, both the EU and India have accumulated experiences which are rather diverse in the case of the former but quite intense in the case of the latter – regarding for instance the tsunami in 2004. There are not a few difficulties in this field – Haiti being a recent example – when it comes to coordinating international responses; and debates such as that of the role of the army (with Pakistan as a case in point) are still open: should not both parties undertake a lessons-learned exercise and try to harmonise approaches bilaterally and at the global level on how to mitigate and respond to natural disasters?

A middle-ground approach to peacebuilding activities

- Socio-economic development has been recently considered by the Security Council to be a prerequisite for stability and international peace, which entails that a closer connection needs to be established between peacebuilding activities and development aid. The general approach of India is

formally respectful towards local ownership, while the EU is more 'interventionist' vis-à-vis local authorities: would it not be possible for both parties explore a middle-ground approach that could encompass the merits of their respective perspectives? As an example of possible concrete issues on which to exchange experiences, ways in which local civil society might be involved in designing and implementing foreign-funded projects deserve close attention.

Involvement of India's and the EU's respective legislatures

- Although the FTA may become a reality soon, there are pending minor obstacles regarding social and environmental clauses which are in principle required by the European Parliament and would, also in principle, be rejected by the Indian Lok Sabha: is this not a good opportunity for the Indian Parliament to create a Group of Friends of the EU that would parallel the EP Group of Friends of India and facilitate communication on these issues in the future?

Bilateral proposals on global economic governance

- When it comes to international trade and international financial mechanisms, there is no need to restate the urgency of a potential India-EU alliance being instrumental in completing the Doha Round. Moreover, is it not time that India and the EU make proposals of a broader scope, including the restructuring of the Bretton Woods institutions, which could be channelled through the G-20? The recent rebalancing of voting rights in the IMF is a good starting point, and confirms that the time is ripe for far-reaching reforms, momentum for which may not emanate from within the relevant institutions.

Climate change

MAIN DEBATES

In the connected though autonomous field of climate change, the debate at the Forum focused on missed opportunities in Copenhagen. In the view of a qualified Indian representative, the EU did not succeed in pushing for an international regime commensurate with its own advanced proposals due to overemphasising the necessity of the US being an integral part of the final consensus. By compromising in this way, the EU in fact downgraded its proposal and lost bargaining power while implicitly entrusting the US with the task of setting the minimum common denominator with those who were not in favour of international constraints and monitoring of the eventual agreement. The political document which came out of the Summit, as agreed by the BRICs and the US, fell well short of expectations on the baseline for the target of global warming, the funding for reduction of emissions of developing countries and the nature of the verification process of targets to be agreed. India's position was, and still is, closer to that of the EU in some respects, but it is for the EU to decide, it was said, who are and who will be its interlocutors on setting standards in this field.

Other possibilities could be explored in this context, including how to achieve an adequate mix of energy sourc-

es. In this connection, the possibility of exploring an India-EU nuclear deal was mentioned, but contested by one participant.

In the present circumstances, India and the EU are bound to lead by example in cooperating in the field of clean technologies and clean energy. There are some preliminary positive prospects of developing clean energy sources on both sides, although they are insufficient to meet the imperative global challenge of bringing about a *green revolution*. India is undertaking an effort that was considered superior to that of the EU by Indian representatives, taking both sides' respective limitations into account. The debate should not perhaps be focused on who is doing more but on how both can do better by increasing cooperation. A discussion on equitable burden sharing that takes into account standards of consumption in India and the EU seems to be the necessary starting point.



From left to right: Acharya Arabinda, Gilles de Kerchove, Álvaro de Vasconcelos and K.C. Singh

The goal should be intense and focused bilateral cooperation of all public and private actors in all relevant aspects, from facilitating necessary technology transfers to the commitment to re-establishing (with possible amendments) the UN method in the upcoming Cancun Conference as well as in the following stages of the process. A positive note on the vitality of multilateral frameworks dealing with connected complex issues, which was only confirmed after the Forum, was signalled by a Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation having been recently adopted according to the UN method, but without the US joining the consensus, at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meeting in Nagoya.

MAIN POINTS

Summit process and respective positions at the international level

- Even if the EU has not made an effort to engage with countries other than the US in trying to build international consensus on cutting CO2 emissions, should not both India and the EU reflect on why their 10th summit, devoted to climate change, did not result in a clarification of their respective positions in the run-up to the Copenhagen conference?

Sustainable global development

- The fact that the final consensus in Copenhagen did not satisfy the expectations of the EU in particular should

not affect the paramount need to help those countries that can hardly devote resources to clean technologies. India and the EU represent asymmetric positions in this sense: should they not try to articulate development needs and action to prevent climate change in a way that could facilitate a global consensus?

Global regime for the transfer of clean technology

- India, understandably, needs to think first about the welfare of her citizens, hence her insistence on the transfer of technology when it comes to preventing global warming: as part of the above-mentioned need to find consensus, should India and the EU not join forces in order to make proposals on a fair international regime to deal with the technology gap?



REINFORCING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTERING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM IN TARGETED REGIONS AND BEYOND

Afghanistan and Pakistan

MAIN DEBATES

Both India and the EU share a rule-of-law approach to countering terrorism in spite of attacks that have taken place in their respective territories. Geography matters in this respect, however, India is more directly concerned with the immediate trans-border terrorist potential impact of radicalisation in the region, which may also have broader political consequences, while the EU is in principle more interested in preventing the capacity of terrorist groups to act trans-continently. However, no simplistic approaches should prevail in connecting terrorism with geography, nor for that matter with ethnicity or religion. Demonisation of the citizens of a certain region just because the planning of a terrorist attack can be supposedly traced back to that region – as in the case of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan – is unacceptable and does not provide justification for military action. Moreover, indiscriminate military action is never justified, and constitutes a serious breach of International Humanitarian Law amounting to a war crime.

Although it is generally acknowledged that US-led military operations in Afghanistan and certain areas of Pakistan over the last decade have impeded a comprehensive balanced strategy being applied, it is also argued that the withdrawal of US and ISAF troops may inevitably lead to a civil war in Afghanistan and would allow for a stronger Pakistani influence in the neighbouring country. However, military action has proven counterproductive also in that sense. According to the diagnosis made in 2009 by General McChrystal, former Commander of both US and ISAF forces in Afghanistan, the excessive use of force by international troops had in fact exacerbated local insurgency. A decade of militarily-led action has thus fuelled radicalisation in the region while not helping to diminish the terrorist threat. As stated by an Indian governmental representative, terrorists are today better connected among themselves, better equipped, and – the most worrying aspect – they can easily find recruits, unlike in the past, willing to blow themselves up and cause terror for the sake of an ideology.

Afghanistan, which was described as rather decentralised and even fragmented country in terms of organisation and governance by a qualified Indian representative, will never accept an imposed system of governance. Thus, the international community needs to strengthen local leadership. Both India and the EU institutions have similar non-military approaches in their respective action in Afghanistan. India is perhaps the only donor country that has put the policy of so-called *Afghanisation* into practice, by letting Afghans manage projects funded by her and concentrating efforts on capacity building of Afghan civil servants and students. A good example of mutual lack of knowledge, this time on the part of the EU, is that the work of India in Afghanistan is ignored in Brussels in spite of its success and effectiveness and the fact that India is the most favourably viewed external actor by Afghans. The EU, for its part, adopted an Action Plan on Afghanistan and Pakistan only in 2009, which endorses the civilian-led approach and the principle of local ownership. However, EU member states are channelling the core of their contributions, including funds earmarked for development programmes, through respective Provincial Reconstruction Teams under the umbrella of ISAF, with a particular focus extending more recently to police training, while the EU mission for police training, EUPOL, remains understaffed. EU member states' cooperation is concentrated in regions where their respective national troops are deployed, thus not contributing to a unified or even coordinated operation. It was also pointed out by a participant that the EU, as a Western donor, has a tendency to make recommendations or even prescribe reforms rather than creating a space that enables local stakeholders to find their own way to state-building.

In Pakistan, unmanned US drones keep bombing areas where suspected terrorists are supposedly hiding out in spite of the protests of the government. Although many claim that these operations are targeted and necessary, other possibilities need to be urgently explored, taking into account that similar action has contributed to the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. Also in the light of that experience, the transfer of Pakistani soldiers now

deployed along the Indian border to the FATA will not in itself be sufficient to solve problems. India's position that Pakistan is in fact funding terrorists that could destabilise Muslim communities in her territory further complicates the prospects of a solution.

An EU representative claimed that India is making a concerted effort towards easing and ultimately resolving the conflict in Kashmir, which is said to be among the main causes of the Taliban-related conflict not being solved; and it was even suggested that EU support to India's bid for permanent membership of the UNSC should be tied to the resolution of the conflict in Kashmir. Indian representatives offered an account of past and future initiatives as well as of obstacles not related to India's positions, while they also pointed to the fact that organisations closely working with the European Parliament and other institutions on the issue cannot be considered neutral. The question of how the EU and other global powers can help in building confidence between the two countries, including finding alternatives to the bombing of Pakistani territory, was not raised.

MAIN POINTS

Civilian leadership of international action in Afghanistan

- A militarily-led counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan may only perpetuate the situation of conflict. More consistent and in-depth analysis should be carried out on how to fine-tune international and local responses to obtain intended results. India and the EU – excluding member states in this case – are in a good position to initiate this process of reflection: how can civilian and military assets be combined in order to provide space for reconciliation and peacebuilding in Afghanistan?

Transition phase upon international troops withdrawal

- The beginning of the withdrawal of US troops next July as announced by President Obama, which was later confirmed at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, and the independently decided withdrawal of Dutch, Canadian and other contingents may finally allow for such reflection, but a new problem will emerge if Afghan institutions are not yet ready to take over. India and the EU should exchange views on the eventual need to provide for a 'transitional phase' in Afghanistan: is it too late to revitalise the civilian leadership of the United Nations, to which military contingents would be fully subordinated as was the case until the 'war on terror' was launched in 2001?; is it not time to end all violations of Humanitarian Law by foreign contingents?

Multi-track diplomacy, civil society and economic exchanges

- India and the EU institutions should explore other ways of isolating those radicals who support criminal acts or who disrespect human dignity, by working towards the opening up and strengthening of local civil society. In the particular case of India, her decisive involvement in regional initiatives and bilateral, trilateral or other dialogue formats should provide a thrust in this direction: can the implementation of the recently signed Transit and Trade Agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan help this process?

Towards broader regional cooperation

- A regional solution may allow Afghanistan to become a 'hub' for the continent with good prospects for political and economic stability, but there are a range of obstacles, including how to manage to get Iran, crucial for success in this regard, and the US to sit at the same table: how can India and the EU help curb pending obstacles towards strengthening regional cooperation?



From left to right: Jayant Prasad, James Moran, Sudhir T. Devare, Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Radha Kumar, Graham Watson, Maria João Rodrigues, Narendra Jadhav

Bilateral cooperation to enhance multilateral action against terrorism

MAIN DEBATES

EU representatives assured that EU-India cooperation against terrorism would not weaken India's bilateral dialogues and agreements with member states, who still have 'primary responsibility' for internal security according to the Treaty of Lisbon. A qualified European official announced his intention to propose a set of cooperation measures to counter terrorism to the Indian Government during the upcoming Summit. Among the components of the framework document that will be discussed, institutionalised cooperation between Europol and corresponding Indian bodies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and cooperation on issues such as cyber security, transport security, the handling of explosives and screening of open sources were mentioned. For the EU, a comprehensive approach in dealing with terrorism means not just consequence management and tools to fight terrorism but primarily prevention mechanisms. The EU also believes in judicial solutions, so that not only Ministries of the Interior should be involved in counter-terrorist cooperation but also Ministries of Justice.

Bilateral counter-terrorist cooperation under the rule of law may indeed have global impact. It will strengthen those tools which are adequate to prevent and punish terrorist activities and contribute to put an end to the militarisation of international responses to terrorism. Moreover, a bilateral alliance of India and the EU along these lines would qualitatively transform what is currently a timid and unsatisfactory cooperation between India and certain EU member states on the issue.

A bilateral framework for countering terrorism would also favour joint consistent work at the UN level with an aim to advance the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2006. In particular, India and the EU should

work together on the completion of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, showing commitment to an international order based on legal rules and the conviction that the solution to terrorism lies in a well-functioning domestic and international judicial system. Moreover, this particular line of cooperation could extend to other crimes established in international treaties such as piracy, which is of course connected to operations that both India and the EU are embarked upon, or human trafficking.

Main points

Lack of concept not an obstacle

- India and the EU are committed to an international functioning legal system which particularly seeks to defy terrorist threats and bring the authors of terrorist attacks to justice. Reflecting this common conviction, cooperation on police, particularly including intelligence, and judicial action, should be effectively pursued both bilaterally and multilaterally: is it not time to find ways of guaranteeing cooperation in spite of the lack of a concept of terrorism which is only problematic in a very limited number of cases and should in any case be subjected to judicial interpretation?

Rule-of-law and organised crime

- Success in countering terrorism and organised crime cannot be achieved today without effective international cooperation. This is also true as regards international peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in countries where no functioning judiciary is in place. It makes little sense to contribute with peacekeepers and other assets to international operations that are not effective precisely due to the lack of cooperation on this aspect: should not India and the EU start discussing how to guarantee punishment of suspected criminals captured in the framework of those operations?

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS : HOW TO DO IT?

The question underpinning all the proposals and suggestions in this document is how to enhance bilateral relations between India and the EU with an overarching global dimension: is a change of paradigm emerging and consolidating? A mutual genuine recognition of their respective roles as global players can only go in parallel with concerted international action in some of the above-mentioned issues. No shortfalls were identified during the Forum: such a process can only be beneficial for both sides and by extension for the world community. Moreover, it does not seem particularly difficult a process; both India and the EU are consolidating their specific imprint on world issues, while their respective situation and capacities are distinct and thus complementary in

many respects. But why are results slim beyond the domain of bilateral trade? While acknowledging that first steps are the most difficult in general terms, two unrelated areas of action merit specific reflection, the first entailing human interconnections in a broad sense and the second referring to specific technical measures to facilitate decision-making.

Measures facilitating interaction among people

Participants in the Forum often highlighted the lack of mutual knowledge as perhaps the main obstacle to undertaking concerted action. Measures to facilitate and promote interaction among Indian and European societies were thus proposed in general discussions as a necessary accompaniment of all other steps in the process. Education and training for high-skill jobs were identified as a promising field for cooperation, also considering efforts carried out in India in order to provide high-level and technical education to 500 million youngsters in the coming years, including by opening the door to private universities. An EU-India student exchange programme equivalent to Erasmus could indeed be established and launched in a relatively short timeframe, but it would be very expensive given the scale required. It was also stated by Indian representatives that such a programme should be connected with the facilitation of visa procedures for Indian students having completed their studies in the EU, which remains a pending issue independently of exchange programmes.

As regards the labour market, complementarity is already patent and will become one of the most pressing issues in just a few years – the EU will need around 60 million skilled workers that India could easily provide, it was said – but there is yet little thinking on how to manage demographic imbalances in such a way that they became beneficial for the countries of origin and receiving countries as much as for migrants themselves. The overall challenge, on which urgent reflection and action is needed, is how to facilitate migration while controlling the illegal influx of people and human trafficking, as required in particular by the EU. The fact that migration policies are in the hands of member states while measures to counter illegal migration are dealt with in Brussels does not help when it comes to discussing a comprehensive scheme. A need to study and work jointly and more consistently on the role of the Indian diaspora in EU member states was considered to be a good starting point for working on the human dimension of EU-India relations.

Technical measures to facilitate decision-making

The EU-India Summit process has not rendered results commensurate to the expectations and potential of the

relationship, although it has improved visibility, particularly of the EU in India. High-level political structures may find it difficult to take technical decisions in such a formal setting, all the more so while there is as yet no fluent communication between respective advisors and administrative services. The constellation of dialogues and fora already in place throughout the year-long cycle have shown signs of fatigue in some cases, but restructuring and rationalising may be a titanic task. In order to be relevant in helping forge common will, contributions should be of a technical nature, and of course they should result from working groups with balanced EU-Indian representation. If the latter has been achieved, the technical value of most outcomes is lacking. The existing structures are perhaps not small and flexible enough to go beyond a generic consensus which does not facilitate decision-making.

As proposed in the concluding session of the Forum, the organisers could set up small technical joint working groups or assign technical reports to pairs of researchers on each of the themes outlined in this report in which cooperation is possible and desirable. Initial proposed topics are:

- (i) reform of the Bretton Woods institutions;
- (ii) shared approaches to counter climate change;
- (iii) revitalising the MDGs and the Doha Round, and
- (iv) peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

It is the conviction of participants in the Forum that decision-makers do not need more general documents expressing a vague agreement on principles but specific independent technical reports on which to build political consensus.

SUMMARY OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Structural and non-structural reforms of the international security system

- Explore prospects for UNSC reform, including on Indian and even EU seats, and increase EU-India dialogue on the UNSC agenda to facilitate support for India's permanent membership.
- Explore ways to limit discretionary powers of permanent members of the UNSC in view of further legitimisation of the institution, in particular by incorporating independent assessment of situations potentially threatening peace.
- Set up an India-EU advisory group on reform of the chain of command in UN peacekeeping operations and on UN response to crisis situations, with a view to increasing the participation of major contributors.

Bilateral cooperation under the UN umbrella

- Jointly explore new UN crisis management tools which are more adequate for coping with current challenges and promote the participation of the EU and India in the civilian dimension of UN international peacekeeping and peace-building operations.
- Increase dialogue with India on maritime security operations, starting with information sharing and including prosecution of suspected pirates. Reinforce cooperation on training of future peacekeepers and the establishment of a consolidated system of information sharing on respective contributions.

Humanitarian action, worldwide socio-economic development and fair trade

- Undertake a joint lessons-learned exercise regarding responses to natural disasters on the basis of the failures and shortcomings of recent operations undertaken in Haiti and Pakistan.
- Explore ways to involve local civil society in peace-building and development schemes funded by India and the EU.

- Enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation on social and environmental issues, in particular through support to the setting up of a European delegation of the Indian parliament.
- Expand EU-India dialogue beyond the rebalancing of voting rights at the IMF and initiate a larger debate on reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Climate change

- Undertake a lessons-learned exercise with regard to the outcome of the Copenhagen conference, including on how to improve EU-India Summit diplomacy.
- Launch a dialogue to articulate respective needs and complementarities with a view to reaching a fair international agreement, particularly in the field of technology exchange.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

- Explore ways of coordinating civilian and military assets for reconciliation and peace-building in Afghanistan, including examining prospects for India and the EU working more closely in the civilian dimension.
- Exchange views and specific proposals on the eventual need to provide for a 'transitional phase' in Afghanistan, especially regarding the strengthening of UN civilian leadership.
- Enhance dialogue and cooperation on respective differentiated contributions to regional solutions to Afghanistan.

Bilateral cooperation to enhance multilateral action against terrorism

- Reinforce cooperation between the EU and India on intelligence, judicial procedures and police.
- Explore ways of cooperation with regard to the prosecution of suspected criminals, ensuring that human rights guarantees are observed.

Programme, *day 1*

09:30 -- Visits of the Indian Delegation to EU Institutions

Crisis Management and Planning Directorate: visit and informal discussion

12:30 -- Pre-Forum Lunch Debate

How does India see the European Union and vice versa?

Chair: Luis Peral, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
Panel: Eduardo Faleiro, former Cabinet Minister, Government of India
Manvendra Singh, former Member of the Lok Sabha, Bharatiya Janata Party
Jean Lambert, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, European Parliament
James Elles, European Conservatives and Reformists, European Parliament
Discussant: Christian Wagner, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

16:00 -- Opening Session

Welcoming words: Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Director, EU Institute for Security Studies
Sudhir T. Devare, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs

Key-note Speech: Helga Schmid, Director of the Policy Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU

16:45 -- Coffee / Tea break

17:00 -- First Session

Elements for a new paradigm in India-EU relations

Chair: Klaus Voll, India-Europe-Consultancy, Advisor on Asia, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

Panel: James Moran, Director for Asia, DG External Relations, European Commission
Jean-Luc Racine, Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud, Centre national de la Recherche scientifique
Shankar Acharya, former Chief Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance
Narendra Jadhav, Economist, Member of the Planning Commission of India

19:30 -- Dinner

Hosted at the Embassy of India to Belgium and the European Union (*by invitation only*)

Programme, day 2

09:30 -- Second Session

Exploring prospects for closer engagement in crisis management and crisis response: peacekeeping, maritime security operations and natural disasters

- Chair:* Damien Helly, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Speeches:* Claude-France Arnould, Deputy Director General, Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Panel:* Lt Gen (retd) Satish Nambiar, former Director, United Services Institution of India
Richard Gowan, Associate Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University
Denis Chaibi, Member of Cabinet, Cabinet of the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, European Commission
GVC Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru University
Colonel Richard Spencer, Chief of Staff, EU NAVFOR Atalanta Operational Headquarters

12:30 -- Lunch Debate

Climate change after Copenhagen: prospects for the Rio+20 Earth Summit

- Chair:* Giovanni Grevi, Senior Researcher, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior
- Key-note speech:* Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary of India, former Special Envoy of Prime Minister on Climate Change
- Discussants:* Michael Starbaeck Christensen, Deputy Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Climate Action, European Commission
Jo Leinen, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, European Parliament

14:15 -- Third Session

Anti-terrorist policies and the Rule of Law: cooperation for enhancing control of financial assets

- Chair:* Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Director, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Panel:* Gilles de Kerchove, EU Counterterrorism Coordinator, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
K. C. Singh, former Secretary (Economic Relations) and former Co-ordinator for Counterterrorism, Ministry of External Affairs of India
Acharya Arabinda, Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

15:45 -- Fourth Session

Towards a regional approach in Afghanistan: perspectives for cooperation on peacebuilding

- Chair:* Luis Peral, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Panel:* Jayant Prasad, Special Secretary (Public Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs and former Ambassador of India to Afghanistan
Bogusław Majewski, Head, Asia Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
Sudhir T. Devare, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs

18:00 -- Concluding Session

Enhancing the EU-India Strategic Partnership: prospects and proposals

Chairs: Sudhir T. Devare, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs
Álvaro de Vasconcelos, Director, EU Institute for Security Studies

Introductory words:

Jayant Prasad, Special Secretary (Public Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs and former Ambassador of India to Afghanistan

James Moran, Director for Asia, DG External Relations, European Commission

Panel:

Radha Kumar, Director, Delhi Policy Group

Graham Watson, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, European Parliament

Maria João Rodrigues, Special Advisor on European policies, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, University of Lisbon

Narendra Jadhav, Economist, Member of the Planning Commission of India

20:00 -- Cocktail Dinner

List of participants

- Shankar Acharya, Former Chief Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance of India
- Palavi Aiyar, Europe Correspondent, Business Standard
- Acharya Arabinda, Research Fellow, S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies
- Claude-France Arnould, Deputy Director General, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Jaimini Bhagwati, Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and to the European Union
- Timothy Boden, Chief Advisor of the Delegation to India, European Parliament
- Helena Boguslawska, Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Gilles Boquerat, Responsible for India and South Asia Programme, Institut français des Relations internationales
- Pablo Bustelo, Research Fellow, Elcano Institute of International and Strategic Studies
- Ivan Calabuig-Williams, Counterterrorism Coordinator Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Nicola Casarini, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Denis Chaibi, Member of the Cabinet of Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, European Commission
- Gilles De Kerchove, EU Counterterrorism Coordinator, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Sudhir T Devare, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs
- Álvaro De Vasconcelos, Director, EU Institute for Security Studies
- James Elles, Member, European Parliament
- Michael Emerson, Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies
- Olov Erenkrona, Advisor, Government of Sweden
- Eduardo Faleiro, Former Cabinet Minister, Government of Goa, India
- Marlene Flageollet, Unit India, Nepal and Bhutan, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Somnath Ghosh, Counsellor, Embassy of India to the EU
- Michel Goffin, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium
- Richard Gowan, Associate Director, Centre on International Cooperation, New York University
- Giovanni Grevi, Senior Researcher, FRIDE
- Joanne Hamer, Poland, EU NAVFOR Atalanta Operational Headquarters
- Damien Helly, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Shada Islam, Senior Programme Executive, European Policy Centre

- Narendra Jadhav, Member of the Planning Commission of India
- Ashutosh Jindal, Adviser, Embassy of India to the EU
- Juha Jokela, Programme Director, Finnish Institute for International Affairs
- David Kitching, Junior Policy Officer, Foundation for European Progressive Studies
- Alexandra Knapton, Member of Cabinet, High Representative and Vice-president of the European Commission
- Radha Kumar, Director, Delhi Policy Group
- Jean Lambert, Member, European Parliament
- Erwan Lannon, Representative Brussels Office, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Jo Leinen, Member, European Parliament
- Bogusław Majewski, Head of Asia Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Morgan McSwiney, Policy Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- James Moran, Director for Asia, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Pol Morillas, Brussels Office, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Alok Mukhopadhyay, Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
- Gabriel Munuera Viñals, Unit India Nepal and Bhutan, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Bettina Muscheidt, Co-desk Officer for Afghanistan, DG Relex, European Commission
- GVC Naidu, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Satish Nambiar, Former Director, United Services Institution of India
- Rosemary Opacic, Administrator, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament
- Luis Peral, Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Terkel Petersen, Asia Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- Jayant Prasad, Special Secretary (Public Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs of India and former Ambassador to Afghanistan
- Gareth Price, Head of Asia Programme, Chatham House
- Rajit Punhani, First Secretary, Indian Embassy to the EU
- Jean-Luc Racine, Research Director, Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud
- Hanno Ranck, Head of Communication & IT, EU Institute for Security Studies
- T.C.A Rangachari, Former Ambassador of India to France, Ministry of External Affairs of India
- Jean-Christian Remond, Head of Unit-India Bhutan Nepal, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Maria João Rodrigues, Special Advisor on European policies, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, University of Lisbon

- Isabelle Saint Mezard, Ministry of Defence of France
- Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary and Former Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India on Climate Change
- Mykolas Savelskis, Brussels Office, EU Institute for Security Studies
- Helga Schmid, Director Policy Unit, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- K.C Singh, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs of India
- Manvendra Singh, Former Member of the Lok Sabha, Bharatiya Janata Party
- Andrew Small, Transatlantic Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States
- Richard Spencer, Chief of Staff, EU NAVFOR Atalanta Operational Headquarters
- Ernst Stetter, Director, Foundation for European Progressive Studies
- Mirjam Swart, Italiani Europei Foundation
- Rensje Teerink, Desk Officer Nepal, Bhutan and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Paul Turner, Afghanistan Assistance Strategy, DG RELEX, European Commission
- Klaus Voll, India-Europe-Consultancy, Foundation for European Progressive Studies
- Christian Wagner, Head of Asia Research Division, German Institute for International and Security Affairs
- Graham Watson, Member, European Parliament
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