

REPORT ON THE INDIA-EU FORUM

Effective multilateralism

Sapru House, New Delhi, 8-9 October 2009

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The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) jointly hosted the inaugural India-European Union Forum on Effective Multilateralism at ICWA in New Delhi on October 8 and 9, 2009. The Forum was part of an ongoing dialogue which began in 2008 upon the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, and which had the aim of contributing to the realisation of the multilateral dimension of the EU-India Partnership.

Participants presented papers and structured the discussion along the following themes:

- Building a New Paradigm for EU-India Relations: From Trade and Development Cooperation to a Meaningful Strategic Partnership;
- Reform of the International System: The Quest for Democratisation;
- Climate Change and Sustainable Development and the Financial and Economic Crisis;
- The Contribution of the EU and India to UN Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Principles for a Common Effort;
- Anti-Terrorism and International Values: Lessons Learned and Prospects for Institutional Cooperation between India and the EU.

This report is only a preliminary account of the corresponding debates that took place during the Forum. A comprehensive compilation of the papers submitted by participants is due for publication in the coming months.



A shifting paradigm in India-EU relations

There was a consensus among the participants that both India and EU share common perspectives on multiculturalism, diversity and plural societies. They also share a commitment to democratic principles and judicial values, the safeguarding of human rights, human development, and a vibrant media.

Both institutions endorse multilateralism as the guiding principle of their dialogue. However, misperceptions remain - together with a partially obsolete paradigm - that may constitute obstacles to a more substantial and strategic cooperation, particularly with respect to security issues.

It was clear that in order to lend substance to the EU-India strategic partnership, both partners need proactive foreign policy establishments. The EU is a complex entity combining supra-nationalism and inter-governmentalism, making it difficult for other actors to relate to it, especially considering that its Member States compete amongst themselves through more traditional channels. India is, on the other hand, a sovereign state, for whom the preservation of independence is paramount. At least at the level of discourse, both the EU and India perceive effectiveness in terms of following well-established rules.

The Forum attempted to identify areas of mutual interest and deliberate on the need for effective multilateralism for the pursuit of the collective good. Both India and EU are contracting parties to several multilateral treaties and are well placed to tackle global issues such as international security, disarmament, counter terrorism, WTO negotiations, global governance, and the management of multicultural relations. Further, the 2005 India-EU Joint Action Plan (JAP) provides a sound framework for effective cooperation and consultation.

However, to foster effectiveness in India-EU relations, a new paradigm needs to be explored in order to advance the common interest whereby both actors build on their respective complementarities. And in order to take full account of the importance of India as a regional and global actor, it is necessary to leave aside a relationship exclusively based on development cooperation and technology transfer.

Multilateralism and global governance

The concept of 'effective multilateralism' has emerged as the basic doctrinal foundation of EU deliberations. Since 2003, it has also been the basis for the EU's external relations, with the aim of expressing the global need for effective international institutions and decisive international action.

Over the past decade, two global challenges have underscored the imperative of effective multilateralism but have also highlighted the weaknesses of multilateralism in its current form: the so-called 'war on terror' and the current financial crisis.

The international system is experiencing a crucial hegemonic shift from the West to the East, and different global actors are emerging in other regions. It is widely acknowledged today that traditional global actors - the United States and the EU - cannot manage world affairs without those emerging actors: Brazil, China, India, and South Africa. The most appropriate forum for global governance therefore is an effective multilateralism that rests on an inclusive dialogue between a plurality of actors. A multi-polar system of international relations is long overdue, within which global powers need to embrace multilateralism in order to solve global problems.

Despite this shift in the global balance of power, no new institutions have been created nor have those already in existence experienced substantial reform. A specific response to this quiescence was the creation of the G-20, which during the discussions was equated to 'club governance' - with its limited membership and exclusivity - and to 'light multilateralism', that is, a less bureaucratic form of multilateralism. The G-20 needs to promote multilateralism in order to strengthen its legitimacy and prove that it can implement its decisions. Nonetheless, it cannot replace the UN, but instead should be seen as a consensus-seeking forum for the transition to an appropriate restructuring of the world order. This may entail an increase in participation via an expansion of its membership, moderated by the need to ensure efficiency in decision-making.

The democratisation of the international system through widespread participation is a 21st century imperative. Therefore, the quest for democratisation should be pragmatic rather than idealistic. To that end, it was suggested that the EU should support the expansion of the UN Security Council through the promotion of India, Japan, South Africa and Brazil as permanent members, but that new ways of decision-making should also be explored in parallel in order to avoid Security Council paralysis. Moreover, there should be a greater reliance on those organs and institutions which already reflect a fair measure of democratisation, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and the G-20.

Globalisation has further intensified the level of economic interdependence in the world market. The EU - that is, EU Member States - is over-represented in global forums and, due to complex internal bargaining processes, expends a lot of time and energy in finding a common position. Some international financial institutions ought to be led by individuals from developing countries in the interests of overcoming this 'democratic deficit'. Such new democratic paradigms would facilitate amicable trade consultations and WTO negotiations. The need for a rule-based international system is thus critical.

Democratisation and human rights; peacekeeping and peacebuilding

India and the EU share some common perspectives on democracy and endeavour to build institutions and civil society organisations for the advancement of democracy. The nature of democratic systems within developed states and other entities can influence the scope and depth of global democratisation.

India as a sovereign state naturally desists from exporting democracy to its neighbours; instead it encourages them to understand the benefits of democratic processes through its own example. The EU applies the model of democracy promotion, for example, through its insistence on 'democratic conditionalities' such as aid conditionality, the inclusion of 'democratic' clauses in international agreements and the enforcement of the Copenhagen Criteria.

Ethnic violence, conflicts among societies, failing states and unstable regimes are issues of mutual concern. The two partners have played a significant role in addressing these problems through UN mandated peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. India's contribution has been noteworthy and it has expanded its role from the provision of peacekeepers to include their training. The principle of peacebuilding is common ground for the EU and India.

Some commentators have described India's efforts in Afghanistan as democracy promotion, and the same label could also be applied to the Security Sector Reform (SSR) approach of the EU Police Mission. NATO's intervention is an ongoing issue of concern because of its inability to create a sustainable climate of security and stability in the reconstruction period.

In contrast, India's policy is to desist from intervening in the affairs of other states, and instead chooses to support UN-mandated initiatives.

EU and India both understand the need to act responsibly in their roles as major players in the international system, although they do not always have equivalent perceptions of what such responsibility entails. Concrete measures must be implemented to ensure the protection of civilians in conflict zones and to prevent mass violations of human rights. Whilst humanitarian intervention and the principle of the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) are two important elements of responsible actions pursuant to the EU security doctrine as revised in December 2008, India tends to perceive underlying strategic and imperial interests as the drivers behind these actions. Initially India was against any form of intervention, and later supported the idea of R2P only for cases of perceived genocide. But earlier this year, India expressed its endorsement of the principle in the aftermath of the civil war in Sri Lanka and during the UN General Assembly R2P debate in July.

Fight against terrorism

Terrorism is a major challenge for both India and the EU and both sides must develop effective counterterrorism strategies. EU-India counterterrorism co-operation has so far been bilateral rather than multilateral, and has gradually improved since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001 in New York and 26 November, 2008 in Mumbai. There is a preference in both India and the EU for a multilateral approach to addressing terrorism along the lines of the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as a comprehensive approach, which emphasises the importance of preventive measures in order to combat radicalisation and to protect potential targets. The EU's general approach to counterterrorism does not involve international military action, but is based on the rule of law and human rights.

The role of international criminal justice has the potential to play an important role in the realm of counterterrorism. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon was set up to try those responsible for the murder of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and to punish other acts of terrorism. Although terrorism crimes are not formally included in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the worst terrorist crimes are im-

PLICITLY part of its mandate since they constitute crimes against humanity. Therefore the ICC could be used a powerful counterterrorism mechanism. The principle of universal jurisdiction also has an important role to play, in particular with respect to the obligation pursuant to various UN terrorism conventions to extradite or prosecute terrorism suspects.

Energy security and climate change

India and the EU each face the challenges of energy security and climate change. Energy is an important factor for development and improving the Human Development Index and climate change has long term impacts on economic growth, social development and political stability.

By 2030, India will have a population of 1.4 billion, and will have experienced a mean annual growth of around 8%. As a result, its energy consumption is expected to rise by a factor of seven. India's National Action Plan on Climate Change intends to increase the environmental sustainability of this growth, including measures such as promoting the widespread use of solar electricity by 2020. The EU is committed to reducing its overall emissions to at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020, and it is ready to scale up this reduction to as much as 30% under a new global climate change agreement should other developed states follow suit. It has also set itself the target of increasing its share of renewable energy use to 20% by 2020.

There is an opportunity for a co-ordination of the contributions of India and the EU towards curbing climate change in view of the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Conference. However, the position of the US with respect to climate change may render such collaboration more difficult.

In addressing these global issues, the role of multi-lateral institutions needs to be enhanced. Despite the movement towards global governance, it remains to be seen if groups such as the G-20 can provide the appropriate decision-making platform. The fact that climate change featured for the first time on the G-20 agenda at the recent Summits in London and Pittsburgh is a promising sign, nevertheless, neither Summit yielded much progress on key goals such as financing or emissions reduction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While both the EU and India engage in multilateral initiatives, the EU is a 'new' supranational entity and India is a sovereign state. Thus, they adopt fundamentally different approaches to addressing issues of common concern. It is therefore necessary to create groups and partnerships for joint research into these issues. Civil society exchanges and increased youth participation can further enhance the efforts of both partners to develop common understanding and co-ordinated responses. India and the EU share common perspectives on a multilateralism that rests on diplomacy through the United Nations, and agree on issues such as the UN Charter, UN peacekeeping, and the Millennium Development Goals. There is an acknowledgment that together they face the threats of climate change and terrorism and together they must endeavour to develop effective responses.

Although the EU and India have different perceptions of rules, this should not diminish the potential for an effective partnership. Both actors play by the rules, and can and should work towards defining and implementing those rules through more dialogue and exchanges. The Strategic Partnership should, to the extent possible, avoid rituals, communiqués and meetings that do not produce concrete results, and should instead concentrate on substance and implementation. Each party should perceive the other as a genuine security partner and view their respective interests, regional commitments and universal obligations as mutually reinforcing, not mutually exclusive. More EU-India cooperation within the UN as a response to global challenges is crucial, as is a long-term commitment to multilateral solutions.

Potential areas of EU-India cooperation within the UN security framework include:

- ◆ *Conflict prevention* by promoting democratic processes and platforms for enlarging options and space for dispute resolution;
- ◆ *Conflict prevention interventions* by providing conciliation missions, technical and advisory services, monitoring and evaluation, and linking development assistance;
- ◆ *Support of appropriate Track II processes* which can provide early diagnoses of potential conflicts and generate solutions;

- ♦ *Further bilateral co-operation and inter-operation-ability in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, both within and in parallel to the UN framework.* This would include agreements allowing for the pooling of the EU's financial and technical resources with India's human resources and experience, as well as agreements establishing joint operations. Enhancing the role of the UN in peacekeeping and peacebuilding would include efforts to achieve stable long term financing of the UN's peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. With respect to the latter, the possibility of creating a G-20 type forum for peacebuilding and/or peacekeeping was mentioned. This would not supplant the role of the UN nor would it act as a substitute for UN reform. Instead, it would provide a forum for consultations and cooperation and act as a facilitative mechanism in a field in which the UN retains a central role. There is also scope for co-operation among the parties' respective peacekeeping forces through participation in UN-mandated joint peacekeeping missions in conflict areas such as Israel and Palestine, the Sudan, and other African countries. While there are already some examples of ad hoc inter-operation-ability in the Sudan, a system of inter-operation-ability requires institutional mechanisms, such as the exchange of information in the planning phase of operations.
- ♦ *The enhancement of peacebuilding efforts through democracy promotion.* In relation to Afghanistan, India and the EU should jointly promote political and civil society dialogues. More broadly, the two partners could co-operate in countering the threats associated with failed or failing states such as Mauritania, Somalia, and Yemen. Tackling this issue effectively also requires the involvement of other major powers within the UN framework; the EU-UN co-operation in Lebanon being a fitting example.
- ♦ *Effective co-operation in addressing terrorism.* This would be accomplished through specific mechanisms for intelligence sharing, training and capacity building as well as through the exchange of threat

assessments. Fields of cooperation include cyber security, physical security, technology transfer in relation to security, and research and development. Dialogue and cooperation should not be confined to police organisations but should also involve the judiciary, for example, the EU should involve Eurojust in addition to Europol. One of the areas of co-operation at the multilateral level that could be explored is UN Security Council Resolution 1267 sanctions, such as the freezing of financial assets related to terror activities. The provision of financial assistance to weak states is another option. Further, the India-EU Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism needs to be established in order to facilitate the development a common understanding of terrorism-related issues and appropriate response mechanisms.

India and the EU should capitalise on the expansion of the G-20's agenda beyond economic and financial issues by ensuring that climate change becomes part of the agenda. They need to work within the G-20 to promote effective multilateralism and sustainable development, whilst using their strategic partnership to identify common interests. But in order to facilitate such co-operation the EU needs first to resolve the problems related to its representation in the G-20.

The EU and India should conduct a greater number of high-level dialogues on regional/global issues such as the rise of China, the Obama Administration, and the future security architecture of South East Asia. In this respect, think tanks play an important role in research and in the development of enlightened policies. Both ICWA and EUISS are well placed to channel their resources in this regard and have stated their willingness to create an alliance which is open to other Indian and European think tanks.

The ICWA and the EUISS agreed to continue their dialogue. The following issues may appear on the agenda at the next forum: global governance, minorities and inclusive society, regionalism, disarmament, and their mutual interests in West Asia, the Persian Gulf and Africa.