

Workshop on the Future of European Studies in Asia

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ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION

An Independent European Institute: promoting European studies in India

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Over the last decade, India and Europe have greatly enhanced their levels of co-operation into a relationship that has adapted to reflect the changing political and economic landscape. The European Union (EU), however, as an integrated region, has very little visibility in India. Europe is still considered through bilateral relations with individual countries. There is less knowledge among the Indian academe, policy makers and among the media, about the different aspects of European integration and how it impacts EU-India relationship.

Specifically in the academe, academic programmes also tend to focus on language and the study of the culture, history or the economy of a particular country such as through Germanic studies, Spanish studies and so forth. Some universities offer general courses on European studies, but there are no nodal programmes focusing on the EU, although this knowledge is increasingly needed by specific groups with different interests and projects. Many professionals working directly on issues related to Europe do not have access to updated and relevant information. Providing such knowledge will lead to increased mutual knowledge and enhanced relations between the two entities.

The Euro-Asian Institute (EAI) has been established as an autonomous body affiliated to Jamia Millia University, New Delhi, India, with the objective of fostering improved relations between the EU and India. As part of its mandate, the institute aims at developing core competence in European studies and in improving EU visibility in India among policy makers, academics, research institutes, think tanks, business entities, the media and the general public.

The core objective of the institute is to create a greater awareness of the different aspects of European integration and EU-India relations and publicise these amongst target groups and thereby give this relationship greater visibility. Several interlinked activities involving people from different sectors of society, such as those from media associations and business organisations; policy makers and academics; endeavours to identify the major themes of European integration and the evolving EU-India relationship. The purpose of bringing such diverse stakeholders together is to broaden

the knowledge about European Integration within India. More importantly, in identifying what knowledge about the EU integration process is available to these different groups and what knowledge and information gaps exist, it is possible for the institute to bring out an outline for curriculum development to tailor for specialised courses and programmes on EU integration to suit specific needs. The ultimate goal is to promote increased co-operation between the two regions and more importantly, become a nodal center for EU-India issues and as a centre for the dissemination of specialised information on Europe.