BENEATH POTENTIALS?
EU-INDIA RELATIONS

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to conceptualise the EU-India relations in theoretical terms and to analyse the expectations and prospects of the recently founded strategic partnership. The research was carried out in form of a qualitative case study mainly based on fieldwork in Delhi and Brussels. Foreign Policy Analysis provided the theoretical basis of the data analysis, encompassing the concepts of opportunity, presence and consistency as well as the theory of modern and postmodern states. The EU and India are currently redefining their roles as actors within international relations. Even though they are sharing many common values, on which the strategic partnership formally is founded, the investigation revealed common interest, primarily economic interest as the driving force behind the partnership rather than common values. On the one hand several factors have been identified which are slowing down the development of the relations, among them are a considerable inconsistency of European foreign policy as well as a lack of effort to invest in the relationship from the Indian side. On the other hand the partnership has been accredited great potential from both sides.

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Foreword

There are many people I would like to thank for their help and support during my fieldwork in Delhi and Brussels as well as during the time of writing. I am very obliged to Stefanie Möller and Jörg Wolff from the KAF-Office Delhi as well as Denis Schrey from the KAF-Office in Brussels for their kind support in arranging several interview contacts for me. In this context I would also like to thank Ginu Zacharia and George Mathew for their effort to get me into the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. I'm also very grateful to all my respondents for sharing their scarce time and providing revealing insights into the development of EU-India relations. I'm also very grateful to my supervisor Catarina Kinvall for her insightful comments and for 'leading me on the right track.' For the great time we spent together in Delhi I would like to thank my flatmates Annika, Ellis, Maria and Reefat as well as Surita Parashar and Bruno Héroux. There is furthermore to mention the very hearty and welcoming staff of the Institute of Social Science. I owe very special thanks to Linsey Berberich for the great effort she made with proof reading and editing this paper and several others in Lund and last but not least to my loving wife Melanie for her patience, mental support and encouragement during my research and writing.

List of abbreviations

BJP   Bharatiya Janata Party
CFSP   Common Foreign and Security Policy
EC   European Community
EEC   European Economic Community
EU   European Union
EFP   European Foreign Policy
ESS   European Security Strategy
FDI   Foreign Direct Investment
FPA   Foreign Policy Analysis
FTA   Free Trade Area
GOI   Government of India
IMF   International Monetary Fund
IR   International Relations
IT   Information Technology
JAP   Joint Action Plan
NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NPT   Non-Proliferation Treaty
US   United States
WTO   World Trade Organisation
UN   United Nations
UNSC   United Nations Security Council

Introduction

During my stay in Delhi a young Indian man with whom I was discussing my research with asked me, rather surprised: "Does India have any relation with the EU?" This statement perfectly expresses what later during the interviews became very obvious; the EU is hardly present in Indian society and has also not yet reached a satisfying level in Indian foreign policy. The relations between the European Union and India are good, but as the title of this thesis indicates, they might be much better.

Even though the EU is India's largest trading partner and despite the agreement on a strategic partnership, the progress of political rapprochement is rather slow, in spite of the holding of annual summits. Concrete action predominantly still takes place on the bilateral level between India and the respective European nation state, instead of on the supranational EU-level. India and the EU have hardly reached a level of political intimacy that appertains to strategic partners.

This becomes strikingly obvious when directly comparing EU-India relations with the fast improving Indo-American relations, which recently led to the establishment of a strategic partnership and the clinching of the nuclear deal, and also when looking at the improved political relations and economic ties between India and China.

Purpose and research question

The purpose of this thesis is to explore these relations on the political level and to discover some of the underlying reasons why the relations are not as good as they could be. This is also due to the fact that there is very little previous research concretely on EU-India relations.

Based on the above mentioned background I have chosen the following research questions:

How can the strategic relationship between the EU and India be conceptualized in theoretical terms?

'What do the EU and India, respectively, expect from a strategic relationship and what can be done to fulfil these expectations?

Methodology

Case study

To investigate the above mentioned research questions I have chosen a case study approach, particularly because of the great advantage it has in dealing with multiple sources of evidence and the opportunity to use many different methods. This approach provides the ground for a broad-based investigation of the phenomenon and might therefore draw a clearer picture of the underlying coherences in the EU-India relationship (Yin 2003:8,99). Another argument for a case study is the nature of the project. Due to the fact that not many people are occupied with EU-India relations, the broad based character of a case study is likely to provide relevant results, even if some sources are failing. This turned out to be a very relevant aspect during my research. While it was, for example, comparatively easy to get interviews with EU officials it was very difficult to get access to Indian government personnel. It took a lot of effort and the use of good contacts to obtain the chance to speak to an undersecretary in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

Because EU-India relations are an evolving process which is not very well investigated and understood, I have chosen an exploratory approach for the case study in order to find out what the relations look like and how they are developing. Nevertheless, I have also included some explanatory elements when it appeared to be appropriate.

Methods and selection of respondents

The collection of primary data is entirely based on nine qualitative, semi-structured interviews which were conducted in English in Delhi and Brussels with three EU Officials, five scholars from universities and think tanks as well as one Indian government official. Due to the nature of the research the interviews about EU-India relations were not aimed at the "Life world" of the interviewees in the strict sense as Kvale (1996:29/30) describes it. The choice of respondents is rather focused on key informants who have a special knowledge about the topic in order to obtain a deep insight into the evolving processes of the relations and the ongoing discourse (Boolsen 2005:172). In preparation of the interviews I developed a comprehensive interview guide, but after the first interviews I soon realized that it was too formal and constrained the explorative character of the research. I therefore only focused on a few main topics which I made sure to address during the conversation. The use of explicit questions or the mere dropping of main themes varied to a large extent depending on the personal style of the respondents. The semi structured approach offered a great advantage to ask further questions in order to get a deeper insight into the topic and the respondents' position on it (see Kvale 1996:97).

The two most important criteria for the selection of respondents was the position of the potential respondent and his or her accessibility. Since, as I mentioned earlier, not many people actually work on EU-India relations, it was necessary to find respondents who were occupied with the theme, either directly as government officials or indirectly as analysts. Along with the selection of an appropriate respondent came the problem of accessibility, since the higher rank the person held, the less accessible he was. It was therefore a great advantage to fall back on the help of a gatekeeper, as which the director of the Institute of Social Science served as well as the staff of the liaison office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Delhi. Both arranged several of my interview contacts.

The secondary data for the case study is based on both official government publications on EU-India relations, particularly the strategic partnership, as well as on studies and analyses about EU and Indian foreign policy.

Validity, reliability, role of the researcher and ethical considerations

The selection of respondents, particularly the limited accessibility of "persons in charge" might have influenced the validity of the interviews. Considering the fact that about half of the interviewees were scholars who were themselves analysing the development of the relations, it is likely that their information was biased to a certain extent. Also, the unbalanced distribution of official respondents is rather unfortunate. In order to eliminate this effect as much as possible I have deliberately tried to include a great variety of different sources. The scholars were professors of two different universities as well as one retired ambassador and one retired general in two different think tanks. The official respondents belonged to the EU council, the EU commission, the EU delegation to India and on the Indian side to the Ministry of External Affairs.

During the interviews I did not have the feeling that my position as a researcher somehow constrained the participation of the respondents, since all of them were willing to answer my questions frankly and without reservation, even though I am sure that none of them revealed any top secret information. Most of them also agreed on being quoted by name. In the following discussion I will refer to EU official or GOI official respectively, to protect the privacy of those interviewees who preferred to remain anonymous. The advocacy of my gatekeepers turned out to be a confidence creating support.

Outline

The following part of the thesis is divided into three main sections. The first section gives an overview of the theoretical framework which is based on Foreign Policy Analysis and includes the traditional concepts of actor-based and structuralist approaches. Those will be combined in the metatheoretical concept of Social Constructivism. The section also explains the analytical concepts of opportunity, presence and consistency as well as the distinctive characteristics of modern and postmodern

states. The second section very briefly outlines the history of EU-India relations. The analytical third part is divided into two subsections. The first one focuses on the characteristics of the two entities, while the second deals with the mutual perception of India and the EU and the building of the strategic partnership. The results of the analysis will finally be reflected in the conclusion.

Theoretical Framework – Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign policy can be conventionally defined as government actions which are directed at a state's external environment in order to sustain or change it in a specific way (White 2004:11). Traditionally there are two different approaches to analyse European foreign policy which can be found in the literature. Epistemologically, one of them is actor based, while the other is based on structure (White 2004:16).

Actor based approaches

Actorness can be defined in different ways. Legal actorness, according to public international law, comprises the right to participate in the international political system, but it also includes the commitment to obligations and to be held responsible by others (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:14). From a behavioural perspective, actorness refers to the autonomy of an entity. Namely, that it is capable of formulating objectives and making decisions and thus engaging in some form of purposive action (ibid.:17, Carlsnaes 1992:246). In conventional IR both definitions usually refer to the concept of an international system based on sovereign, territorial nation states as principle actors (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:14/15).

Due the changes within the global system after the end of the Cold War the classical definition of actorness, particularly its foundation on states, was challenged. The international importance of an actor in behavioural terms does not necessarily depend on the achievement of legal personality within the international system. "Weak states may have full legal status but are insignificant as actors, while bodies such as the

European Union can fulfil important functions without possessing legal personality." (ibid.:15)

The question of legal or behavioural status of actorness is rather unproblematic in the Indian case, while the position of the EU requires a closer look, due to its unique character which considerably differs from other international actors. To conceptualise the EU in this framework, scholars were going beyond the traditional state based model and extended the concept of actorness by identifying "a distinctive non-state but nevertheless collective entity." (White 2004:17)

A basic limitation of behavioural approaches is their conception of actorness as a mere function of political will and the availability of resources (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:22) while aspects concerning the political environment in which the actor is located are neglected. An EU specific problem with these approaches is that they conceive the EU as a unitary actor with a single voice, while actually 'multiple realities' constitute the EU (Jorgensen 1997:12 in White 2004:18). Brian White, therefore, proposes "that the EU is more appropriately analysed in foreign policy terms as a non-unitary or disaggregated entity in world politics." (2004:18)

Structuralist approaches
The other traditional approach to analyse European foreign policy is based on Structuralism. Structuralists see the sovereign state as the principle actor in the international system. Unlike the actor based approach, which emphasises the autonomy of the actor, Structuralist theory tries to explain the behaviour of actors as a function of the international institutions and structures in which the actor is located (White 2004: 18). It places emphasises on constraints which structural factors impose upon the identities, roles and policy options (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:22)

Due to the level at which they analyse the behaviour of states structuralist approaches have considerable limitations. The basic problem of this approach is its simplified view on policy processes. From an analytical point of view it limits the behaviour of states to the requirements of the system. This means that the interests of

states and thus also their behaviour is exogenous which makes it theoretically predictable. The only difference between states then would be their relative power capability (Andreatta 2005:31, White 2004:19, Bretherton/Vogler 2006:17/18).

"The assumption that structural imperatives determine the behaviour of the actors within the system leaves little room to explain those occasions when the state, or some other actor, does not behave in accordance with the dictates of the system. Clearly for those occasions a more actor-centred perspective is required which investigates the particularity of the actors." (White 2004:19).

A combined framework

For the analysis of EU-India relations, the unique character of the EU as an actor which is more than an international organisation and less than a state is the crucial factor in the development of an adequate framework. It should not be forced into inappropriate conceptual models derived from the study of states (Hill, 1990:54 in Ginsberg 1999:445). Nevertheless state-centric aspects are also important to allow for an appropriate conceptualisation of the Indian position and status within the international system. India is a typical representative of a sovereign nation state which undoubtedly has agency in the classical definition. Despite the fact that India is due to its traditional structure comparatively easier to grasp in theoretical terms, it underlies the same structural opportunities and constraints as the EU. Therefore even though the theoretical framework is developed around the 'bottleneck' of the EU's international status, its concepts equally apply to India.

The description of the traditional concepts to analyse EU foreign policy has shown that both approaches are taking into account important aspects of a new type of actor which is emerging in a globalizing world. They are both contributing in important ways to understanding, but at the same time, the effectiveness of both approaches to exclusively provide an analytical framework for all different facets of European foreign policy (EFP) is somehow limited due to their single edged epistemology (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:22). "As long as actions are explained with reference to struc-

ture, or vice versa, the independent variable in each case remains unavailable for problematization in its own right." (Carlsnaes 1992:250)

Since the EU is neither a state nor a non-state actor, and neither a conventional international organization nor an international regime (Ginsberg 1999:432), EFP can not easily be contained in a state centric analysis which has clear boundaries of internal and external political environment (White 2004:11). "Comparing and assessing EFP as if the EU were a state is a slippery slope" (Ginsberg, 2001:12). From a state-centric point of view the EU would certainly not be accredited as an actor (Bull 1983, Hill 1993, Zielonka 1998 in Bretherton/Vogler 2006:12, White 2004:14). But this contravenes the development of the EU's global role, which has been neglected or underestimated in IR literature (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:12) due to the difficulty of conceptualising in theoretical terms the character of European actorness as the result of a unique experiment in political integration (White 2004:15). Furthermore, state-centric approaches only focus on a part of external activities, namely the "high politics" which encompass diplomacy and military activities (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:12). Since the EU has been founded on rather the opposite, the "low politics" of economic relations, and since it is only slowly penetrating the field of "high politics", this focal range does not cover most of the EU foreign policy. India in turn is developing in the opposite direction. Its international relations are increasingly determined by "low politics" while even for nation states military power is loosing importance in a globalizing world.

To allow for the unique political form of the EU, whose creation reflects the political will of its founders as well as the structural opportunities offered by the changes of the international system and whose recent evolution of its external role reflects a similar dynamic (ibid.:20/22), it is necessary to utilise a theoretical framework which accounts for both dimensions, agency and structure. Actors and structures should also not be regarded as diametrically opposed, rather as interrelated entities (Carlsnaes 1992:245/6). The Social Constructivist framework developed by Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler provides an adequate solution to this problem. This approach "…conceptualises global politics in terms of the processes of social interaction

in which actors engage." (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:13) Despite its strong focus on agency, it also provides significant connections to structuralist approaches. "It tries to analyse the dialectical relationship between agent and structure rather than privilege either the one or the other" (White 2004:17).

Social Constructivism

Social Constructivism rejects an either/or approach as too simple (ibid.:22). Instead, it combines behavioural and structural considerations. The underlying idea is that "…human beings inhabit a social world, which they have themselves created but to which they are also subject" (Alvin Gouldner 1971:54 in Bretherton/Vogler 2006:21).

Social Constructivism is based on the assumption that the important structures of world politics are social rather than material, which means that they are not externally given but shaped and reshaped in the form of norms and rules through social interaction - they are intersubjective. The agency of actors enables them to participate in the construction of their own environment (White 2004:21/22; Bretherton/Vogler 2006:20). This act of social construction in turn gives meaning to the environment (Checkel 1998:325/6 in Rosamond 1999:658) or as Wendt puts it "Intersubjective structures give meaning to material ones, and it is in terms of meanings that actors act." (1994:389) This makes international actors "rule makers as well as rule takers." (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:21) A fundamental strength of Social Constructivism lies in its allowance for social change itself, since neither structures nor actors remain constant over time (Carlsnaes 1992:246).

The intersubjective character that results from the constant renegotiating of international structures is playing a major role in shaping the identities and the interests of actors (White 2004:21/22). The interests and identities of actors are not exogenously structured by their environment, they are rather shaped by their own interaction with their environment. "'We' are what we make of ourselves, and what 'we' make of ourselves will be related to what 'we' make of our environment." (Rosamond 1999:658) Since agents and structures are mutually constitutive (Wendt 1987 in Andreatta 2005:31), states are therefore not only forming the "international system; they

are also shaped by its conventions, particularly by its practices." (Keohane, 1989:6) Identities are "…relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self…" (Wendt 1992:397) They are providing the basis for the actors' definition of their preferences (Sedelmeier 2004:124).

The EU as well as India are currently defining or redefining their role as global actors. The shaping of identities and interests therefore deserves particular attention within the analysis of EU-India relations, especially since the very nature of interests depends crucially on the actors' identity (ibid.). For that it is also important to distinguish between the construction of distinctive identities and the effectiveness of agency, which is determined on the actor level by the availability of resources and on the structural level by the strategic position of the actor within the international system (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:21). Indian identity for example is to a large extent based on national sovereignty which has been acquired after centuries of foreign rule (see Cooper 2003:19), but India also actively shaped its own role as an global actor. Within the investigation of the European – Indian relationship structures also deserve a closer look. Social Constructivism rejects the assumption that structures alone determine the outcome of political processes. They can rather be described as 'action settings' which provide opportunities as well as constraints (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:21). Those patterns of constraint and opportunity enframe agency, structure and agency are interacting (ibid.: 35).

Due to this dialectical interaction between agency and structure the actions of all involved actors have intended as well as unintended consequences. Since those actions also encompass discursive practices (Hay 1995:200), it makes sense to also have a closer look at those discourses which are evolving around EU-India relations.

The concept of modern and postmodern states
The development of postmodern "states" out of the prevalent modern world order can be seen as a direct outcome of the interaction between structure and agency. The opportunity for the development of a "new system" arose from the stagnancy and the loss of effectiveness of the modern system in Europe, but it was the agency of the

states which allowed for the establishment of a postmodern system. As indicated above, the outline of this theoretical framework is constructed around the unique role of the EU and particularly its singularity as a postmodern state was a very prevalent aspect during the interviews I conducted and it is not less prevalent in documents and analyses. The postmodern and the modern system exist at the same time and India well rooted in the latter. Since the singularity of the EU attracts so much attention it is very important not to neglect India and its distinct characteristics. To allow for an appropriate conceptualisation of Indian foreign policy I will briefly out line the primary differences between the modern and postmodern order. The two systems provide the structural framework in which agency is effective.

The modern world order

The modern order in international relations is based on the recognition of state sovereignty and the consequent separation of domestic and foreign affairs, with a prohibition on external interference in the former (Cooper 2003:22). India is well situated within this world order. This system can be described as anarchic, since power and force are the guarantor for security (ibid.).

"States retain the monopoly of force and may be prepared to use it against each other. If there is order in this part of the system it is because there is a balance of power or because of the presence of hegemonic states which see an interest in maintaining the status quo…" (ibid.)

IR theories are still broadly based on those assumptions, especially realist theories, based on the calculus of interests and the balance of power, but also idealist theories seeking a collective security system (ibid.:23). The UN belongs to this universe. "It represents an attempt to establish law and order within the modern state system. The UN Charter emphasises state sovereignty on the one hand and aims to maintain order by force." (ibid.)

Postmodern developments

Based on the description of the modern world order, the postmodern system can be seen as a collapse of this system, but a collapse into greater order than disorder (ibid.:26). Cooper uses the example of the EU as the prime representative of a postmodern "state". The treaty of Rome, the founding constitute of European integration,

"was created out of the failures of the modern system: the balance of power which ceased to balance and the nation state which took nationalism to destructive extremes." (ibid.) "The postmodern system [therefore] does not rely on balance; nor does it emphasise sovereignty or the separation of domestic and foreign affairs." (ibid.:27) Postmodern institutions are for example the Convention on Torture, the NPT or the Strasbourg court of Human rights which interferes directly in domestic jurisdiction (ibid.:31)

Even though both systems are existing simultaneously "…there is a basic incompatibility between the two systems: the modern based on balance and the post-modern based on openness do not co-exist well together." (Cooper 2003: 29)

Analytical concepts

To analytically approach the described dimensions of structure and agency, the concepts of opportunity, presence and capability offer an adequate point of departure. This approach is prioritising the European perspective but not less effective to provide relevant findings about EU-India relations.

"Opportunity denotes factors in the external environment of ideas and events which constrain or enable actorness. Opportunity signifies the structural context of action." (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:24). Opportunity refers both to material events such as the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and to discursive practices which contribute to the forming of the EU's and India's collective identity (ibid.). They comprise globalisation discourses (Rosamond 1999:653) as well as those evolving around the Global War on Terror. Such discourses are not to be seen simply as a matter of exogenous structural change, they are influenced and shaped by the behaviour of actors (ibid.), by the EU and by India.

Presence in this context means the ability of exerting external influence in order to shape the perceptions, expectations and behaviours of others. It refers to the impact of foreign policy action on the outside world which determines the effectiveness for the EU of taking common foreign policy actions. It does not refer to the external ac-

tion itself. (Ginsberg 1999:435, Bretherton/Vogler 2006:27, Vogler/Stephan 2007:392). Due to its avoidance of a state centric approach, this concept provides some greater freedom in the analysis of EFP (Ginsberg 1999:448). "Presence emphasizes outside perceptions of the EU and the significant effects it has on both the psychological and operational environments of third parties." (Hill 1993 in Ginsberg 1999:448). On the one hand, presence refers to the EU's character which encompasses its material existence in form of the political system, the different institutions and the EU's identity, referring to its fundamental nature. On the other hand, presence aims at the unanticipated and often unintended consequences of the Union's internal priorities and policies which means that internal EU decisions may trigger reactions of affected third parties (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:27). Again even though presence is here primarily defined in accordance with EFP, the analysis will show that presence is also a crucial aspect of Indian actorness.

Since, as I have pointed out above, discursive practices have consequences for the shaping of structures as well as for the behaviour of actors, the meanings attributed to the EU and its activities by third parties are also important. Their understanding about EU policy making processes and the availability of political instruments determines to some extent the EU's international presence. (ibid.:29). For the analysis it is therefore interesting to investigate which story India has to tell.

Capability refers to the internal ability of external actorness, precisely to "those aspects of the internal EU policy process which constrain or enable external action and hence govern the Union's ability to capitalize on presence or respond to opportunity." (ibid.). Capability is based on a set of basic requirements of internal actorness, while for the analysis of EU-India relations only the concepts of consistency and coherence have particular relevance, especially since those are areas which were often found faulty by the Indian side. Consistency and coherence are aiming at the ability to identify priorities and formulate policies (ibid.:30). The concept of consistency refers to the degree of accordance between the bilateral external policy of the Member states and the official EU line (ibid.:31, Nuttall 2005:92). Consistency has rarely been a problem in fields where the Union exerts exclusive competence such as economic

relations, while it is of central importance for the analysis of EU foreign policy (Bretherton/Vogler 2006:31). Even though the member states are theoretically obliged to make sure that their national foreign policy is conform with the common position, it frequently deviates from the EU line particularly if member states have specific national interests and strong bilateral relations (Nuttall 2005:107). A lack of consistency has a negative impact on the presence. Coherence, refers to the degree to which policies of different institutions are coherent with each other (ibid.:92, Bretherton/Vogler 2006:30).

A brief history of EU-India relations

The history of EU-India relations goes back to 1963, when India was among the first developing countries to establish diplomatic relations with the then six-nation European Economic Community (EU Delegation 2007, Abhyankar 2007:452). An Indian attempt to achieve an Association Agreement was disappointed by the European Commission's classification of South Asian countries as 'non-associable'(Abhyankar 2007:452). The Commercial Cooperation Agreement which was signed in 1973 could be regarded as the starting point for the improvement of the relations (Abhyankar 2007:453). The Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development which came into force in 1994 was a strong impetus for the further development of the relations (EU Delegation 2007). The first political summit was held in Lisbon in 2000 and has been followed by annual summits alternately in Delhi and the capital of the EU presidency (Abhyankar 2007:454). In 2004 the EU and India agreed upon the establishment of a strategic partnership. One year later the Joint Action Plan was adopted as a roadmap outlining concrete actions for the next 15 years, implementing the partnership (Coulon 2006:341, Abhyankar 2007:456).

Introducing the actors

A new identity: Indian foreign policy

Indian identity – part one

Since the time of independence India has claimed what its leaders have regarded as its rightful position among the world's major powers (Chiriyankandath 2004:200). Based on its own stable democracy, India has long advocated a normative approach to international politics: multilateralism, global disarmament, international peace, eradication of colonialism and racism and a OneWorld policy (ibid.). It has, as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, espoused against the bloc rivalries during the Cold War, arms races and nuclear proliferation (Chaulia 2002:218). Despite this commitment for a more egalitarian international system, the Indian democratic approach as a value in itself has hardly been recognised throughout the Cold War and India's international visibility was very limited in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Due to India's image of being a poor developing country, the West did not perceive India as a country worth engaging (Bava 11/10/07).

India gained sovereignty only after the breaking of the British Empire. Its integration as an independent state into the modern world order still forms India's raison d'état (following Cooper 2003:19). Its national identity is largely based on history, particularly colonial history and the struggle for independence after centuries of foreign rule. Despite 60 years of independence, internal cohesion and security are still dominating issues. External interference is therefore regarded as a threat to internal order, a challenge to state sovereignty and is acrimoniously opposed (ibid.:24). "India is notoriously resistant to arrangements that might infringe her sovereignty." (ibid.:43) In the South Asian context India takes the position of a regional hegemon within a more or less fragile system of power balance (ibid.:23/4).

Imposed opportunity

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 marked a turning point in Indian foreign policy. The disappearance of one of India's

most important political and economic partners (Chiriyankandath 2004:199/202, Jain 2005:29) had a devastating impact on the Indian economy. India was thereafter forced to accept IMF funding and to liberalise its economy which had been based for decades on inward oriented import substitution and restrictions on trade and FDI (Chaulia 2002:228).

This 'imposed' opportunity to integrate itself into accelerating economic globalisation eventually led to the rapid growth since the late 1990s. "The increasing economic strength is giving India a new political profile and generating the potential to become an even bigger political player." (Bava 11/10/07) The substantially increased presence of India has not only brought it on the agenda of the EU and the United States, it also generated the agency for actively approaching new economic partners (Jain 2005:29). The economic rise has also "impart[ed] a greater urgency to the quest for global recognition." (Chiriyankandath 2004:203)

Increasing presence

The economic rise has been one of India's most conspicuous developments of the post Cold War era. The increasing economic presence has put Indian leaders in a position to realise the long nourished aspiration of global recognition for India and a rightful place among the world's leading powers. "Over the past decade India has made headway in evolving a foreign policy that assures its emergence as a power with an effective presence on the international stage." (Chiriyankandath 2004:210)

To achieve these goals, Indian foreign policy under the BJP led government emphasised Realpolitik and national interest (ibid.:208). Founded on a strongly accentuated threat to India's territorial integrity and its receding role in world affairs, the government pushed for a stronger strategic position of India (Chaulia 2002:221). According to Prime Minister Vajpayee "India has never considered military might as the ultimate measure of national strength," nevertheless "it's a necessary component of national strength" that will earn the respect of the world." (Chengappa/Joshi 1998:10-15 in Chaulia 2002:221) This assessment stems from the self-conception of the

Indian role in the South Asian context, which is largely based on the balance of power and includes a genuine option for war (Bava 16/08/07).

Since nuclear deterrence is still working among state actors (Cooper 2003: 46), India conceived and still conceives nuclear weapons as a valid currency in International Relations (Singh 1998:44). The former BJP president has made this clear: "[N]uclear weapons will give us prestige, power, standing" and foreclose India from being "blackmailed and treated as oriental blackies" by the Western world (Chengappa/Joshi 1998:10-15 in Chaulia 2002:221). The nuclear programme has thus not been driven primarily by urgent security considerations. It has rather been regarded as an essential contribution to serve India's purposes in the post Cold War international system (Chiriyankandath 2004:206), since nuclear power is still providing a voice in the world. India has therefore never become a party of the NPT since was not willing to accept the inequities implied in it (Coulon 2006:345). "One of the driving forces behind India's nuclear programme was its wish to achieve Great Power status." (George Perkovich in Cooper 2003:128). This perception was widely shared by my respondents:

"The 1998 nuclear test in India put it onto the global map. It is because at the top level in international politics, when you look at the currencies of power, nuclear power is seen as a currency of power. ... You can talk of the NPT, you can say countries should not have nuclear weapons, but the five countries which have nuclear weapons don't want to dismantle what they have. So there is active holding and keeping those weapons and developing more, they endorse the fact that having nuclear weapons counts in international politics." (Bava 11/10/07)

Engaging the US

A second pillar of India's neo-realist[1] strategy became beside the ideological renunciation of Nehruvian non-alignment (Chiriyankandath 2004:206), the successful at-

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[1] Neo-Realism as Realism is based on the assumption of anarchy within International Relations due to the absence of a central authority that could enforce the rule of law among sovereign nation states, which are seen as the key actors of IR. It is therefore within the states own responsibility to safeguard their interests. Respect for international law and morality can only be achieved by the threat of force (Steans/Pettiford 2005: 48-52). States are inevitably self interest oriented actors, while the structure of the system is the prime determinant of the actors' behaviour. Since states are characterised as rational actors, they are selecting strategies to maximise the benefits and to minimize their losses (Lamy 2006:210).

tempt to accommodate the United States, based on the acceptance of America as the only hyperpower in a unipolar world which cannot possibly be challenged by any other power (Jain 2005:33). India was actively engaging the US to reshape the international nuclear control regime in a more favourable way, while the 'new global norms' in the aftermath of 9/11 and the Global War on Terror were working for India. The focus was only on Washington; the rest of the world was more or less unimportant (ibid.:32). The EU was rather hesitant in this concern and followed its traditional perception of seeing India in relation to nuclear non-proliferation as a part of the problem, not as a part of the solution (Jain 08/10/07). "Most Europeans neither adequately appreciated nor shared India's security concerns about its deteriorating external security environment." (Jain 2005:32) According to Indian policy makers, it is still unlikely that the EU will abandon their opposition to nuclear armament (Coulon 2006:346). Due to the limited expectations regarding the EU, India primarily lobbied the US to compel Pakistan to crackdown on cross-border terrorism. The EU in contrast favoured a political, soft-power solution, trying to find a delicate balance between the competing neighbours (ibid.:33).

"Both Stephen Cohen (2001, p. 292) and C. Raja Mohan (2003, p. 90) suggest that it was a gamble that paid off, causing the USA to take India seriously and engage with it in a more sustained manner than it had ever done before." (Chiriyankandath 2004:206) The US recognition of India as an ally in the global war on terror was significantly abetting the rapprochement of the two states. Global threats create a need to cooperate (Bava 11/10/07) and India and the US as typical state actors sharing the same perception concerning global threats, which has led to close strategic cooperation. Grover has described this as: "We are both partners in the strive for global democracy, we have a very strong interest in terrorism, because we are both victims of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan." (03/10/07) The Indo-US nuclear deal is a prime example of the improved relations and of the deference paid to India. It also proves that the Congress Party has adopted the neo-realist and pro-American approach of the BJP towards foreign policy (Coulon 2006:344).

The massive improvement of the India-US relations is also stimulating the relations with the EU. The EU realized that since the US is becoming more and more important to India, it is high time to also devote greater importance to India in order to not fall behind (Jain 08/10/07). The EU is very aware of the fact that it has not yet reached the US-Indian level of intimacy, as a EU official said, but it is strongly engaged in enhancing the political dialogue (04/10/07). India for its part is interested in strong relations with both entities in fields that have a mutual advantage for both sides (Grover 03/10/07).

Indian identity – part two

India is neither an unquestioning or uncritical ally of the United States as its attitude towards the Iraq War demonstrates (Chiriyankandath 2004:208), nor can the EU or US "expect a major player like India to have a complete identity on each and every issue because the perceptions are different, priorities are different and geopolitical challenges which India confronts are different." (Jain 08/10/07) India has developed over the last decade a distinct new identity and it has acquired a good amount of self-esteem based on its stronger engagement with the world on many different levels and its new geostrategic position, particularly in coherence with the Global War on Terror. Its improved economic situation and the perpetual growth, its nuclear power and the awareness of its sheer size and population which account's for a sixth of the world's population have generated the basis this new position.

"As far as the international role of India is concerned, India today is a much more confident country, it is much more engaged with the world at many different levels, whether it is through our look East policy with South East Asia or through the strategic partnership which we now have with the United States and the European Union. And India is now seeking to and playing a more active role." (Thakur 12/10/07)

India does not want to be regarded merely as a backward developing country, dependent on international aid anymore. India sees itself as an emerging global power, which has to be taken into account, which can not be neglected anymore and which has to be treated as equal.

"One has to also understand that India is not a junior country. India is not a small place. You have to talk as equals even though there are asymmetries. India cannot be treated as ..., if it

will only continue to remain a recipient of international rules. India is going to rewrite rules. India will rewrite rules. And Europe will have to accept that; to engage the other as equal. You can't engage as superiors." (Bava 11/10/07)

The new Indian self esteem was very distinct in the interviews. India is claiming its place in the world, which is changing also due to India's growing presence. But at the same time many respondents were arguing that the EU still does not take India serious or serious enough, that it is not recognising India's new role and is still trying to impose its rules and norms on the rest of the world. Especially on a normative level the relation to the EU is still characterised by a distinct sensitivity concerning the meddling of Europe into South Asian affairs. The EU, which is well known for its normative power, is and increasingly will be challenged by emerging powers like India, which are demanding a new set of rules to detach the post second world war international order and to claim their rightful place in this order (Jain 08/10/07). Especially since the EU is deemed as trying to uphold the status quo, America is considered to be the better choice to rewrite the global rules (Jain 2005:34). It has been repeatedly stressed that many global problems such as environmental protection, climate change or global security will not have a solution until emerging powers like India are integrated into the process of solving those problems. Grover has aptly depicted the current Indian status: "We are certainly not somebody who can be ignored in any global situation." (03/10/07)

The EU: An actor sui generis

A postmodern "state"

The most flamboyant distinguishing feature of the EU is its hybrid entity. Depending on the political field the EU can resemble an international organisation or can have state-like qualities (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:22/23) and its development level of actorness is different from policy field to policy field (Groenleer/van Schaik 2007:970). But the EU is neither a state nor a political union of states, nor is it an over-developed international organisation. It is a partially constructed international political actor, clearly recognised as significant and, on occasion, powerful by those who encounter it (Ginsberg 2001:9, Vogler/Stephan 2007:392).

It has a multifaceted nature, thus "it can appear to be several different actors, sometimes simultaneously. It has, moreover, a confusing propensity to change its character, or the persona it presents to third parties." (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:22) The EU therefore lacks the attributes of cohesion, purpose, and continuity normally associated with national foreign policies (Ginsberg 2001:9). Due to the unwillingness of member states to transfer competence to the EU in policy areas which are considered sensitive, the competence of the Union can be shared between the EU and the member states, disputed or unclear (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:34). "Despite its shortcomings in actorness, the EU is not a political dwarf, since a political dwarf would not have any international influence." (Ginsberg 2001:9)

The EU is also an allegory of globalisation. "The strong economic focus of globalisation discourses and the emphasis upon the inadequacy of the state to regulate the activities of globally oriented economic actors, appeared to present opportunities, indeed imperatives for the EU to act externally on behalf of its members." (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:25). The establishment of the single market as well as the subsequent regional integration and the emergence of complex, multi-layered systems of governance "challenge[s] Westphalian[2] assumptions of sovereignty and territoriality and … might be considered as a new form of state, or 'international state'" (Cox 1986,1993 in Vogler/Bretherton 2006:19). The EU's cross-cutting nature blurs the traditional distinction between inside and outside and draws a more complex picture than traditional models of global politics allow. (Ferguson/Mansbach 1996:401 in Manners 2002:240). Within this new form of state, the member states are transferring national sovereignty to the centre. The EU is "…essentially organized as a network that involves the pooling and sharing of sovereignty… ." (Keohane/Hoffman 1991:13). Even though it is not anticipated that the EU will become a European federation or that it is usurping the core sovereignty of its member states (Vogler/Stephan 2007:392). It can therefore be described as a post-modern formation and a prime example for the deconstruction of modern states (Cooper 2003:50).

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[2] Westphalian refers to the Treaty of the Westphalian Peace in 1648 which led the basis of modern statehood and the normative structure for the international political system, with sovereign nation states as its principle actors (see McGrew 2006: 29/30).

A normative civilian power?

One of the fundamental characteristics of the EU is its nature as a civilian power which utilizes non-military means to uphold civilian ends. This "non realist view of the world in which non-military means and goals have a significant impact on international outcomes" (Andreatta 2005:35) is characterizing the EU as a postmodern entity within international relations and distinguishes it from actors such as the US and India. The EU's aspired status as a global civilian power is a fundamental aspect of the discourse about its role in international relations (Prodi 2000:3) and therefore crucial for the shaping of its identity: "We must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable global development. After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security" (ibid.). Another very distinct characteristic of the European identity is its strong commitment to human rights (Alston/Weiler 1999:6) which it also emphasises in its external economic relations (Cooper 2003:42).

The strong focus on a civilian identity stems from the Union's history as an economic community without any defence component. The EU therefore possesses only relatively limited military capabilities, which is also a result of defence remaining in the realm of the member states. Due to the EU's comparably weak position on hard power[3] in combination with a strong economic position, "the possibilities of influencing events by soft power is crucial for Europe's role in the world" (Andreatta 2005:35). The former EU president Romano Prodi has emphasised that Europe is supposed to play a role in international normative policy. It must be the concern of the EU to repeat the European model of the constitutional state which has substituted the primitive balance of power play, worldwide (Prodi 2001 in Kagan 2003:71). As a post modern state the EU believes in the projection of soft power as a way towards conflict resolution (Jain 08/10/07). The Europeans are not striving for hard power. Europe has developed a different perception of power within international relations originating from its historical experience with policies of power over the last centuries (Kagan 2003:65/6).

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[3] Distinction between 'hard' military power and 'soft' power which refers to political and economic instruments (Nye 1990:180-201).

Even though the European establishment of an identity as a peaceful civilian power has been quite successful, there are also some critical voices who see the abdication of military power as a major obstacle for the establishment of global actorness: "[W]ithout the backing of force and a willingness to use it, 'Europe' is unlikely to become a normative power, telling other parts of the world what political, economic and social institutions they should have." (Therborn 1997:380)

"In this postmodern paradise (as Robert Kagan calls it) it has been easy to forget that force matters. Unfortunately it matters more than anything else. Soft power is useful. Development aid does good and when strings are skillfully attached, it brings some influence; trade agreements are useful ways of binding countries together and provide some leverage during negotiations. But foreign policy is about war and peace, and countries that only do peace are missing half of the story – perhaps the more important half." (Cooper 2003:162)

Defining identity

As for India, the end of the Cold War marked a turning point of the EC's development, albeit under different signs. It took away the traditional and unifying concept of the enemy (Cooper 2003:3-5) and at the same time "catapulted the EC into a European Union with enormous responsibilities for supporting and stabilizing the democratic transitions of eastern Europe." (Ginsberg 1999:436) The post Cold War developments urged the EU to redefine its identity as a global actor both in economic and political terms.

In economic terms the EU clearly competes with the US and East Asia, particularly Japan but also increasingly with China. The single market and the Lisbon strategy[4] are means of increasing the EU's international competitiveness (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:19). Wallerstein describes this as a struggle "to gain monopolistic edges that will guarantee the directions of flows of surplus … clearly it must be of concern to Europe that she will become a poor second in the race." (1991:55).

In political terms the EU had and still has to redefine its role, first of all in consideration of its position towards the United States. Even though both entities are close al-

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[4] Lisbon Strategy aims to make the EU the most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010. This strategy involves a whole set of policy areas, from research and education to environment and employment. (European Commission 2007)

lies in many respects, there is undeniably a certain degree of discrepancy and competition on several issues. While Vogler and Bretherton call it a challenge of US hegemony (2006:19), my Indian and European respondents rather described it as a process of the EU finding its place in international politics. 2003 was a crucial year for the shaping of the EU's identity. The American decision for a pre-emptive military engagement in Iraq was juggling the EU's self-perception of being a global actor. "There was a gap between the perception and the image and the ability to respond to a crisis and be a crisis manager." The question arose: "Are we a strong political and security actor?" (Bava 11/10/07) The explanation of an EU official might provide an answer. He emphasised the nature of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as an evolving process. It was launched due to immediate European priorities in connection with the Yugoslavia conflict and later expanded. It is currently working its way out of Europe, but it still needs a broader base to be fully efficient (25/10/07).

The EU-US 'rivalry' in the context of EU actorness is not a question of military strength, since there is hardly any doubt about US hegemony in military terms (Jain 08/10/07, Bava 11/10/07), it is rather a discourse of EU 'responsibility' which has derived from the desire to distance the Union from US interpretations of the 'War on Terror' and a desire to establish an alternative EU approach to the threat of terrorism (Vogler/Bretherton 2006:26). Many respondents saw considerable potential for such an alternative EU approach, particularly if the EU could exert influence combining security and development issues in a holistic approach. Europeans and Indians agreed that in respect of development the EU is already significantly better prepared to tackle global problems than the US.

EU presence
The EU's presence as a global actor in international politics largely depends on it's capability to speak with one voice. When the EU speaks with one voice it carries the combined weight of almost half a billion Europeans (Eurostat 2007) which makes it the world's richest and economically and politically most powerful bloc (Ginsberg 1999:438). Despite this theoretical superpower position, there remains a ''disturbing

mismatch between aspirations and demands of the EU as an international actor and its relatively limited ability to deliver'' (Chaban et al. 2006:246 in Vogler/Stephan 2007:391/2). This involves to a large extent problems of consistency and coherence which have been widely criticised by the Indian but partly also by the European respondents: "Due to the very short terms of the presidencies of only six months, the focus of EU foreign policy shifts very quickly which leads to slow mechanisms. A more focused proceeding is desirable. Once started projects should be sustained." (EU 04/10/07) Particularly in respect to the relations with India an EU official identified the developments within the immediate periphery of the Union such as the conflict in Yugoslavia, the accession and integration of new member states and the process of finding a common identity as the major reasons for a lower stance on the global scene and the slower development of an international agenda (EU 04/10/07). I will more comprehensively analyse the problems of consistency in the next chapter.

The EU's presence is not only determined by its internal consistency but also by external structures and opportunities:

"The EU, like single state actors, is influenced by the shifting currents of international politics and outside demands for the EU to act internationally whether or not it is ready or capable. Foreign crises - embargoes, wars, human suffering - impact heavily on the EU and help explain responses. It cannot, nor does it want to, hide from the world." (Ginsberg 1999:435)

In the analysis of the Indian perception of the EU it will become clear that India too would like to see the EU develop a position of a strong global actor and take much greater global responsibility.

As the EU's presence on the global scene slowly increases, the EU's identity is shaping, too. Even though Jain (08/10/07) in line with Ginsberg (2001:9) is attributing the EU with a lack of vision concerning foreign policy objectives and priorities, particularly in respect of South Asia, there are clear signs for the development of such. The EU cannot and is not challenging the American position as the world's sole superpower by its own hegemonic ambitions. The EU instead endorses multi-polarity and so it is looking for new ways to engage the world. The initiation of the strategic partnerships is an attempt to approach the world and to exert global influence (Bava

11/10/07). "These partnerships are also indicating that these powers, say Russia, China and India are going to be critical players in this multi-polar world. The EU wants to be a part of the multi-polar [world]and so it is engaging the future critical actors." (Bava 11/10/07) The EU itself sees the initiation of the strategic partnerships as a way to claim its rightful place in the world. In respect to the partnership with India, Sami clearly stated that the EU, despite its rather late recognition of Indian importance, wants an equal position among India's other partners (24/10/07).

During the interviews it became very clear that the EU is accredited great potentials, but it became equally clear that the EU has not reached its full presence yet. It is rather seen as an evolving entity.

"Europe and the EU as an entity have a major global role to play, but it is an evolving process, we are not there fully. It is not perfect. But in terms of foreign policy and security and defence we are slowly emerging. … Basically we are going in a positive direction." (Sami 24/10/07)

Even though the EU does not speak with one voice on every issue and under every circumstance it is developing a common stance on several global issues, for example on environmental issues such as the Kyoto protocol, but also increasingly on energy (Sami 24/10/07). The EU is an evolving entity which still needs time to constitute itself (GOI 05/10/07).

Mutual Perception

Indians about Europe

Presence

The EU is still widely perceived as an economic giant but political dwarf (Bava 11/10/07). On the economic level it is seen as a single entity and taken very serious, but this does not translate into the realm of foreign and security policy. The EU's presence in international politics is rather limited:

"The effectiveness as an actor is reflected in the activities you do and in terms of outcomes and there the only visibility of the EU has been only on economic and trade issues, not on political, not on security. … You can't just say that we are the EU, talk to us. You talk because you see their ability to influence certain things. That happens on the economic. On the political level Where is the EU? There is no EU." (Bava 11/10/07)

Concerning the question of whether or not India takes the EU seriously, the answers were quite distinct: "The EU has not been taken serious, because the EU doesn't appear to be a political actor." (Bava 11/10/07) "Europe can only be taken politically seriously if it takes it self seriously." (Thakur 12/10/07)

The fact that bilateral relations are still very dominant is seen as a coercive result of the EU's limited actorness, while its capability to act is diminished by the preference of the larger member states for dealing bilaterally with India (Jain 2005:35, Abhyankar 2007:464). India is therefore impelled to maintain bilateral relations with the member states since the EU is not present as a political entity (Thakur 12/10/07).

As the major reason for the limited stance of the EU in international politics and the slow progress in the relationship, the underdeveloped CFSP has been identified and the most frequent complaint was that Europe doesn't speak with one voice. The EU lacks adequate competencies in several fields of foreign and security policy (Banerjee 06/10/07) which are the most fundamental areas of state sovereignty. The big European countries, especially, have very distinct national goals in their foreign policy to which they adhere to a greater extent than propagating a common external policy (Banerjee 06/10/07). There is, for example, no common approach towards terrorism. India therefore has to cooperate with each member state separately, which in turn emphasises bilateral relations instead of relations at the EU level. It was often mentioned that when dealing with the EU, India looks for one decision and not for 27 different opinions. This was also characterised as one of the major differences to American foreign policy which is perceived as distinct, flexible and endowed with a "get it through"-capability (Jain 08/10/07). India, despite the potentials which were widely accredited, is so far sceptical about the importance of the partnership if it ends up negotiating with every member state separately (Thakur 12/10/07). "Get

yourself elect a foreign minister!" (Thakur 12/10/07) was therefore a recommendation to increase the Union's presence and capability.

Other frequent reasoning from the Indian side for difficulties in the Indo-European relationship was the complex and sometimes inscrutable structure of the European Union. Main criticisms were, for example, the unclear distribution of responsibilities between the EU and the member states and between different EU institutions. This often makes it difficult to find the right contact person since it is not always clear who is in charge of specific issues. Also found faulty were the frequent diversions in EU foreign policy priorities which are caused by the very short terms of EU presidencies. Every member state brings in a change of direction during its presidency, which poses significant challenges for India to deal with.

As one of the major causes for the perceived inconsistency of European foreign policy, most respondents identified the rapid and large expansion of the European Union, which has led to a very heterogeneous structure of the Union and to very heterogeneous interests. Decision making has therefore become increasingly difficult. Bava, referring to organizational theory, sees the EU expanding beyond the optimal number of members which would inevitably lead to suboptimal outcomes (11/10/07). Jain has also characterised the EU decision making process itself, which is based on the work of committees, achieving compromises and consensus, as leading to time delays and being an inherent problem in the CFSP[5] (08/10/07). The transition from a community of nation states to a post modern entity, in which the member states are attributing more powers to Brussels and thus partly giving up their sovereignty, is naturally a rather slow process. This leads to a disconnect between the economic activity which is powerful and the political activity which is still evolving (Bava 11/10/07).

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[5] Comment: Exactly this is the way democratic decision making works. It is the fundamental strength of this system that a consensus based decision represents the interests of all involved entities, even though the decision making process can be time consuming and difficult.

Despite all criticism, most respondents acknowledged an improvement in the EU's presence, the Indian position towards the EU as well as of the EU-India relation itself. Particularly, the enormous potential of the relations has been emphasised.

A discourse of EU responsibility

Despite the criticism of EU inconsistency and as a result the preference of bilateral relations, there was great consensus among the respondents that a stronger EU is highly desirable. Nevertheless, its global political success will depend on presence and consistency in foreign policy (GOI 05/10/07). At the moment, countries do not look at the EU to lead out of a political crisis (Bava 11/10/07, Grover 03/10/07), but India recognises the EU's potential to become an important global actor (Banerjee 06/10/07).

India would like to see the EU taking greater responsibility in global affairs, particularly in security matters. It should develop and exert a critical and independent foreign policy based on strong political structures and independent from NATO or US support. This would also include the build up of an appropriate armed force. The EU's nature as a postmodern entity which is beyond the narrow limitations of the 'national' is seen as an important asset for the development of a multi-polar world and the taking of global responsibility, particularly since single states with a distinct national orientation have been identified to be less concerned about human rights or international law (Banerjee 06/10/07). The EU is therefore accredited a very important moderating and stabilising role in world politics. According to Banerjee "the world is transitioning from the nation states to larger unions, larger concepts of power, and larger views of international powers", hence the "EU is the essence of the future." (06/10/07) Even though its influence on the setting of new rules remains limited for the time being, since the international system is based on state sovereignty, the EU is accredited large potential to actively influence the shaping of new normative frameworks. The pooling of sovereignty considerably increases its authenticity and authority in world politics (Banerjee 06/10/07).

Among the Indian respondents were a couple of voices which are not opposed to the idea of an European normative counter weight to US dominance in global politics, although a distinct European-American rivalry was clearly not desired. A balancing European influence is rather seen as a step towards multi-polarity. European foreign policy approaches are geared towards the future world, while American neo-realist approaches, particularly under the Bush administration, are perceived as aiming at an out-dated world system. The EU is seen as possessing the potential to moderate the US unilateralism through its humanitarian approach (Banerjee 06/10/07). Particularly in the shortcomings of the American neo-realist approaches Grover sees the need for more European engagement and Indo-European cooperation:

"The world power patterns have changed. The Americans have got limitations, particularly in dealing with the Islamic world. Where the EU could act more easily because you have Muslim populations and you have had long centuries of relations with Islamic countries. The Americans, I think, are isolated there. India and the EU could both do something." (03/10/07)

As a major hindrance for a greater role of the EU on the international scene and a fundamental difference to the United States, Jain identifies the EU's lack of strategic vision for Asia (08/10/07). This might also constrain the Indo-European cooperation:

"India shares European aspirations for forging a multi-polar, rule-based world order, but it did not view Europe as a credible counterweight to the United States given the structural difficulties of making multi-polarity work effectively apart from the inherent constraints of an evolving CFSP in a more diverse and heterogeneous Union. India remains sceptical about the EU's political and foreign policy capabilities." (Jain 2005:34)

Patronizing Europeans

In general the EU, and especially the potential role which it could play, had quite a good connotation among the Indian respondents. Nevertheless, there were also some voices criticising a patronizing behaviour, although it seems to be decreasing.

"Notwithstanding the positive forecast of future opportunities, the relationship remains vitiated by old mindsets. … If the EU feels that India does not take its political ambitions seriously, India feels that there is a good deal of 'talking down' on the part of the EU and , more often than not, EU's views are seen as intrusive." (Abhyankar 2007:463/4; similarly Jain 2007:353)

As examples for 'offensive' EU positions towards Indian 'affairs' Coulon mentions the EU parliament's emergency resolution on Kashmir, the Ayodhya incident, the Christian Community in India, communal violence in Gujarat or the breaking of the de-facto moratorium of executions (2006:342). These views correspond with Jain's characterisation of European foreign policy as emphasising values rather than geo-politics, particularly in distant regions (08/10/07, Coulon 2006:344). The EU is, for example, trying to mainstream humanitarian and labour conventions through its trade and economic agreements and through development cooperation (Abhyankar 2007:465) "[I]t is a natural desire for the EU to spread its gospel overseas…" (Jain 08/10/07). This behaviour is regarded to some extent as hampering the relations between India and the EU.

Jain has furthermore named a significant mismatch of expectations in the realm of security cooperation. The EU is neither particularly attentive to Indian security concerns (2007: 353, Coulon 2006:344) nor do most EU member states share the same urgency or interest in a pressing need to cooperate with India on security issues. "To them, India is neither a genuine security 'partner' from halfway around the globe nor a solution to each other's security needs." (Jain 2007:354) The EU as a post modern 'state' believes in projection of soft power as a way towards conflict resolution (Jain 08/10/07) while India is facing traditional security threats like separatist tendencies, terrorist movements, insurgencies and more or less hostile neighbours (Jain 08/10/07, 2005:33) which require traditional countermeasures.

Europeans about India

The Indian essence

Like the European Union, India has been described as a strange 'political animal'. From a European point of view it is characterised on one hand by a dichotomy of political liberalism, openness and democracy and on the other hand by caginess, grim fixation on its national sovereignty and a conservative adherence to outdated rules (EU 04/10/07). Nevertheless, India has considerably increased its international

presence over the past one and half decades and is currently trying to establish a foreign policy which clearly exceeds South Asia (Coulon 2006:341). The EU has therefore, despite some admitted delay, recognised India's potential to play an important role on the international scene. Since it is considered as "one of the [global] key players, it did not make any sense to not have a strategic partnership with India." (Sami 24/10/07) In this context India's economic potential is considered as very important, both in terms of foreign direct investment as well as in trade.

While on the EU level the importance of India is well recognised, some member states have different priorities. The EU's interest is mainly driven by security concerns laid down in the 2003 security strategy. The strategy describes international cooperation with key actors as a fundamental necessity in dealing with the current global security threats, it thus recommends the establishment of strategic partnerships as an important asset (ESS 2003:20/21). Based on the anticipations of this strategy, India is included in the strategic partnerships only because of its future prospect and potential, not because of its current performance (EU 25/10/07). This definition of India as a key security partner should also be seen in contrast to Jain's perception that the EU does not see India as a genuine security partner from half way around the globe (see Jain 2007:354).

The member states' interest, in contrast, lies on economic issues. Their priorities are therefore on economic cooperation and less on political dialogue (EU 25/10/07). Furthermore, China is often perceived to be the 'easier' partner due to a considerable level of inconsistency and incoherence within Indian foreign policy. The dialogue with India is perceived as unpredictable and a constant renegotiating of frameworks makes it difficult and time consuming, while in China decision making is based on a set of fixed rules (EU 04/10/07). Particularly, the often emphasised shared democratic values are thus perceived by the EU or its member states as a constraint for fruitful agreements with India.

However, the EU is accrediting India an increasing political and economic importance, particularly since the economic liberalisation which is seen as a 'joining of the

world' (Sami 24/10/07). Due to this increased presence, India is currently claiming its 'fair share' in trade and economy as well as in global politics, for example, by obtaining a seat in the UN Security Council, but it simultaneously has to redefine its national identity:

"The Indians still have to come to terms with their own economic rise. It is a psychological problem. They are not yet used to the position the economic rise has generated. They don't feel safe in their new position, they are more used to seeing themselves as the leader of the non-aligned states and the developing world but not yet as a global player." (EU 25/10/07)

Indian priorities

Despite India's aspiration to become a serious political global actor, its focus predominantly still lies on economic development. An EU official has attributed this to a feeling of the necessity to catch-up with the globalising world. Due to the century long feeling of being poor and backward the Indian middle class is now primarily interested in sustaining India's economic growth and increasing prosperity. Human resources are therefore allocated to business related jobs which promise higher incomes rather than government institutions and think tanks. The latter are already suffering from a shortage of skilled manpower (25/10/07).

Also in international relations, India's focus is at the moment on a 'better life' and less on politics (EU 25/10/07), as for example the Indo-US nuclear-deal, with its massive economic component demonstrates. India is particularly interested in enhanced trade relations, it therefore looks at the EU primarily in its nature as an economic bloc (Sami 24/10/07). This unidirectional Indian perception of the EU has been criticised by EU officials as well as a fundamental lack of knowledge and curiosity concerning the EU. It has been further criticised that India has not invested sufficiently into the relationship and the discussion therefore still remains at the surface. The relationship feels one-sided, particularly if compared to the Chinese position towards the EU which sees it as a global political actor (EU 25/10/07). All respondents agreed that the initiative to develop the strategic partnership predominantly comes from the European side and that more Indian engagement would be highly desirable. Concerning the title of this thesis 'beneath potentials' one EU official found it rather surprising that the relations are as a good as they are and that the current

status is mainly based on the initiative of the EU commission to promote the relations, while very little effort is coming from the Indian side (25/10/07). The significance India is attaching to the EU becomes obvious when the relatively small number of Indian representatives in Brussels is compared to the numbers of representatives of the EU's other strategic partners (EU 25/10/07).

Self-criticism and improvements

While it has been stated that the Indo-European relationship is still suffering from the disturbance of the relations during the Kargil-Conflict in 1999 and that India has therefore not yet regarded the EU as a serious partner (EU 25/10/07), the European side has also admitted that the less active role of India might also have to be seen in connection with the complicated and rather intransparent EU structures. It is not always easy for India to see where the exact issues are where the EU as an entity can deliver and therefore contacts on the bilateral level are often preferred (Sami 24/10/07, EU 04/10/07).

Despite all criticism some recent improvement of the relations has also been accredited. The understanding of the EU is growing in India, and since a perception of the EU as an entity is developing, India is much more keen to cooperate on the EU-level (Sami 24/10/07).

Regarding the nature of the strategic partnership, the establishment of a mature dialogue is highly desirable. The EU and India should talk about democratic values, because they form the basis of such long term relationships. Among strategic partners there should be no issues which can't be discussed. This is unfortunately not yet the case with India, because India easily sees the addressing of certain issues as an interference into internal affairs, but the EU is confident about the development of the relations (EU 25/10/07).

Strategic partnership

What it is perceived to be

Jain stresses that there is no formal definition of a strategic partnership, nevertheless he gives an apposite characterisation of how a strategic partnership is perceived: "A strategic partnership is not an alliance, but an attempt to institutionalise a process and initiate a series of "strategic," sectoral dialogues considered important by both sides on bilateral, regional, and global issues." (2005:30/1) Even though the formulations of what strategic partnership means and how it could be characterised differed substantially, in essence the respondents agreed that it has to be a long term engagement and should go far beyond a mere enhanced economic cooperation. "India envisaged a relationship of sovereign equality based on comparative advantage and a mutuality of interests and benefits." (ibid.:31) "The strategic partnership is about recognizing potential and about engaging each other on a varied range of issues." (Bava 11/10/07) Jain depicts in a more formalized way what the strategic partnership is supposed to be for both sides:

"To the Europeans, a strategic partnership implies a global economic and political relationship involving the sharing of global responsibility and the building of a "coalition of interests" to meet the challenges of the 21ˢᵗ century. For India, a strategic partnership with the EU complements its efforts to emerge as a major power in world politics since it institutionalises a more productive, systematic and strategic multi-level dialogue with more concrete deliverables on a broader spectrum of issues with a regional economic grouping which is acquiring a political and strategic personality." (2005:31)

Both Indians and Europeans congruently identified, apart from economic issues which are of course very important, energy security, the fight against terrorism and the promotion of democracy as some of the most important common interests. An essential point is that both partners see each other as a key partner, that their relationship is elevated above those with other countries. Both partners should regard their cooperation as a great chance to overcome key global challenges by looking jointly after problems (Sami 24/10/07). As an example Grover has mentioned the better access the EU and India (in regard to the US) have to the Islamic world, which could be utilized for the common exertion of influence in order to stabilize the region. He has formulated a noteworthy idea, which exemplifies the potential quality

of an effective strategic partnership: "I personally feel we need to get together and try to act as a bridge between the United States and the Islamic world." (03/10/07)

Strategic partnership does not necessarily mean identity of views (Jain 08/10/07), it rather means that there should be no issues which can't be discussed. However, the European side has complained that this is not always the case yet (EU 25/10/07). Both sides also made quite clear that the strategic partnership is not seen as a present or future military alliance, even though cooperation on security matters is regarded as a priority.

How it is propelled

During the interviews the idea of the EU and India as natural partners (Sami 24/10/07) based on common features and values such as democratic, liberal and secular systems, common heritage (Grover 03/10/07) and the vast linguistic and cultural diversity (EU 04/10/07) was often emphasised. Sami, for example, sees India and the EU much closer in this regard than some of the EU's other partners, namely Russia and China and stresses those commonalities as the basis for the relationship (24/10/07). Despite those sometimes idealistic assumptions about the nature of the partnership it became quite clear that what actually drives the partnership is the specific 'national' interest of both sides, not shared values.

National interest also explains the EU's strong focus on China, because the country provides excellent opportunity due to its impressive economic growth, excellent infrastructure, a highly productive workforce and most importantly more business friendly internal structures. Those are all areas where India has deficits. "Chinese decision making is easier because it comes from only one place, the communist party of China. In India decision making is not so easy, because we work on a democratic consensus." (Thakur 12/10/07 similar Bava 11/10/07). Common values, such as democracy, that the EU and India share were often stressed, but in essence they are supportive padding rather than the driving force.

The EU, as well as India, values the potential which the development of the other partner and the partnership offers as the most important motivating factor. In comparison to the other partnerships of the EU, the partnership with India is entirely based on India's potential (Abhyankar 2007:456, EU 25/10/07). According to Abhyankar the initiation of the strategic partnerships reflects the EU's view of the likely shift in the world's economic focus towards Asia – considering that three out of six partners are Asian. He further sees the EU's interest of promoting multi-polarity as one of the main reasons for the partnerships (2007:458). Multilateralism and Non-Proliferation as common interests was also stressed by the GOI (05/10/07). This demonstrates the strong focus on opportunity within this relation, which should be seen in the discursive context of globalisation.

Many respondents emphasised security issues as a very important common interest. Security has also been identified as the reason for the initiation of the strategic partnership (EU 25/10/07, Bava 11/10/07), but economic interests crystallised to be the driving force behind the partnership:

"The driving force behind EU-India relations will continue to be trade and commerce. … Shared values undoubtedly facilitate the widening and deepening of a relationship, however shared interests will ultimately determine the scope and content of the India-EU strategic partnership." (Jain 2005:42)

Political dialogue or human rights issues are playing a rather subordinate role. In general the formulation of common interests among the respondents was rather conforming to those mentioned in the Joint Action Plan (JAP).

Another interesting aspect is the counterbalancing potential of the EU which a few respondents accredited in regard to China. The EU is supposed to keep an equilibrium between India and China and thus prevent instability in Asia (Banerjee 06/10/07). Due to China's hegemonic interest, the good EU-China relations could ensure the 'responsible' behaviour of China (Grover 03/10/07). Furthermore the partnership with India could also be beneficial for the EU in order to establish a second point of engagement in Asia and not to be 'dependent' only on the relations with China (Thakur 12/10/07).

Economic cooperation

"The potential lies essentially in trade and economic areas and one should not have unduly high expectation – not on the political." (Jain 08/10/07) According to Thakur economic interest is the essential motivation for the partnership: "Since the world has realized that Asia has become the power house of economics it is simply in everybody's interest to get into a strategic partnership with India." (12/10/07) This statement has to be seen in contrast to the fact that despite India's increasing attractiveness, for the time being China is the place where most of Asia's dynamic development is taking place and the EU is therefore more focused on China than on India (Banerjee 06/10/07). Even though the EU is so far India's largest trading partner, there is still enormous potential but also a need for growth, both in trade and in investment (Bava 11/10/07, Grover 03/10/07), since India's trade with other countries, primarily China, will soon overtake (Bava 11/10/07). Frequently mentioned promising areas of cooperation have been science and technology, particularly IT, space technology, nano- and biotechnology, but also, especially from the Indian side, environmental protection and civilian use of nuclear energy and infrastructure projects (Bava 11/10/07, Grover 03/10/07, Abhyankar 2007:463). There was pronounced consensus among the Indian respondents that the EU should be more active regarding the latter fields of cooperation. Both sides emphasised the importance of the successful establishment of an Indo-European Free Trade Area (FTA), which could possibly go far beyond the still pending outcomes of the Doha round.

Shortcomings and remedies

As pointed out earlier the Indian respondents identified the inconsistency of the European foreign policy as the most significant factor that is slowing down the development of the strategic partnership. The competition among the member states concerning bilateral relations with India diminishes the presence of the EU as an entity and the effectiveness of the partnership (Bava 11/10/07).

The lack of presence leads to another point widely criticised by both sides: an enormous lack of mutual understanding which stems from a no less substantial lack of knowledge about the other. For example experts on contemporary India are very

scarce in Europe (Bava 11/10/07; Jain 2005:35). This should be seen in contrast to the EU-China relations where the broad based relations have over a period of more than 20 years generated tremendous expertise about China (Bava 11/10/07). The EU-India relations are an elite driven process of a few diplomats, think tank people and high ranking politicians (EU 25/10/07). The problem that units in charge of the EU-India relations and the strategic partnership are ominously understaffed is not unique to the EU. India too is significantly lacking capacities to promote the relations (EU 04/10/07). Due to a lack of resources, India is not able to pay adequate attention to all European initiatives (Banerjee 06/10/07). Despite frequent consultations on high diplomatic levels there is little cooperation on the executive level. To really establish a functioning partnership a considerable improvement of the lower levels' coordination between the EU and India is necessary. Just short term visits of high level representatives are not sufficient. More contact between the Indian and European civil societies is also highly desirable (EU 04/10/07, Bava 11/10/07). The rather understaffed situation of the directorates dealing with the Indo-European relationship on both sides could be regarded as a good indicator for the importance ascribed to the relationship. Another quite peculiar point is that the Indian respondents more or less unanimously demanded that the initiative for an improvement of the relations must come from the European side.

Representatives of both sides stated that despite vast potentials, the strategic partnership does not seem to be either the EU's or India's absolute priority. "[W]hile India is currently focusing strongly on two areas – United States and East Asia – EU's Sinocentrism becomes responsible for it hardly figuring on the Indian radar screen." (Abhyankar 2007:464) An EU official has described the problem as a vicious circle: The strategic relations with the other partners of the EU are better developed and are therefore attracting more attention. The development of the relations with India is not a priority, due to its less attractive position caused by the less developed relations. India's status as the weakest strategic partner would be self-sustaining (EU 25/10/07).

Abhyankar even diagnoses an absence of political will to move the relations on a higher plane, due to different views and opposed interests (2007:466). He criticises that the EU in the strategic partnership emphasises areas which have traditionally been seen as intrusive by the Indian side such as a stress on conflict prevention, anti-terrorism, non-proliferation, promotion of democracy and defence of human rights. India in contrast insists on equality within the partnership and stresses the strengthening dialogue and consultation mechanisms as well as the deepening of political and economic dialogue (ibid.:457). Coulon in contrast states that a consensus has been developing inside the EU to avoid counter-productive confrontations at high-level meetings while India usually agrees to talk about controversial issues as long as confidentiality is guaranteed (2006:343). This can be seen as another indicator for Jain's definition that common interests rather than common values are driving the relations.

The remedies are arising from the nature of the problems. Both sides agreed that first of all the gap between India and the EU needs to be bridged, that the partnership needs more substance. Increasing knowledge about the other and substantial investments into human resources are regarded as preconditions to allow for exploiting the advantages of the strategic partnership. Abhyankar emphasises mutual understanding as a precondition for the success of the strategic partnership, since it "will depend on how each side visualises its goals and the relative importance of each to the other." (2007:456) Coulon also adverts that to facilitate a fruitful cooperation on global security issues "it is essential that the EU hears India's security concerns and adapts its dialogue accordingly, even if it involves putting aside references to moral values and international norms in trying to answer India's most urgent security concerns." (2006:348) Regarding the concrete steps to improve the relations and to build up the partnership, most respondents referred to the JAP, which appears to well cover the mutual interests as well as the required steps ahead.

Image building on the people's level is also considered as very important, since there is hardly any perception or understanding about the EU within the Indian society which is quite influenced by American culture and thus predominantly focused on

the United States (Bava 11/10/07, Jain 2007:355). Also, the European perception of India does not reflect its current status. A lack of mutual perception diminishes the presence of both actors and thus the chances to capitalise on the relationship (Bava 11/10/07).

"Since culture is most often the window to a country or region, both India and Europe need to foster greater cultural dialogue and exchanges with one another in order to better comprehend our differences and how they can be used in achieving common goals." (Jain 2007:355, similar Bava 11/10/07)

Most respondents made it clear that the establishment of good relations and cooperation does not happen over night. Particularly since both sides are looking for a long term relationship it needs time to grow and develop (Banerjee 06/10/07). Patience is needed and it should not be expected to achieve too much in too little time (EU 04/10/07).

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that India and the EU share many commonalities but there are no less divisive issues. The EU and India are, in fact, existing in two different systems, and as Cooper has said, they "do not co-exist well together" (2003:29). A lot of mismatch stems from the different real world context the two entities are existing in. As pointed out earlier, the European lack of understanding of India's security concerns in an unstable and partly hostile neighbourhood was widely criticised by the Indian respondents and poses a certain degree of constraint to the rapprochement in foreign policy. The European acceptance of mutual interference in internal affairs does not exist in a country which gained its independence only 60 years ago and which is situated in a region where the defence of national sovereignty might be crucial for the cohesion of the state. The European normative approaches in distant regions, for example its attempts to pledge India to various international standards, be it environmental standards or human rights, are slowing down the dialogue. On the other hand, the degradation of a partnership which is founded on common values and principles to a mere economic treaty or a memorandum of understanding cannot be in the interest of the two parties either. The understanding of the benefits which a

'post-modern proceeding' can provide will take time to develop, which is true not only for India but for Europe as well. Nevertheless there are already steps moving in this direction, such as the common strive for multilateralism or the preference of soft power.

To achieve a successful partnership mutual respect is very important. The Indian side was not just by chance criticising a lecturing tone coming from the EU, but particularly in a strategic partnership it is equally important to be open to respectful discussions, even about controversial topics. Equal partners have to treat each other as equal, in any respect, but cooperation on the high level of a strategic partnership will hardly be possible without the acceptance of a certain degree of mutual interference into domestic affairs. There is no necessity for identical views in all regards, but to establish a partnership in a climate of confrontation will probably turn out be too difficult. Trust building is therefore one of the most important measures to promote the partnership.

The partnership is based on a European initiative, but since it is a partnership and as particularly India emphasises one of equal partners, it also requires an equal effort for its establishment and improvement. The prime initiative has already come from Europe so now India is equally in charge of taking care of the partnership. India has admittedly various other interests and other partners, most importantly the US and China, and the EU is certainly not India's sole concern, but the EU is in no different situation. One of the Indian side's most frequent complaints is the EU's inconsistency. In the context of the relations which the EU has with its other partners, the question arises why the admitted inconsistency has it not put off the other partners (EU 25/10/07).

Since the structural settings need time to align for the time being, as Jain has made it clear, the partnership will be driven by mutual interest and not by mutual values. Common interest is not the worst motivation for the establishment of a common stance. Particularly, economic interest is maybe the most important unifying factor, but the question is if it is sufficient to keep the partners together, if it can generate

enough relatedness to develop a common will to jointly tackle the world's problems. That is what the Joint Action Plan is envisaging. If the plots of the JAP can be filled and a strong strategic partnership can be established, India and the EU can certainly expect a multitude of gains from this partnership, ranging from economic growth and human development to a position of great influence on the international scene. Shared values would then become a considerable common advantage, particularly in regard to China, because there won't be a gap of perception between India and the EU on how to tackle global challenges due to a common democratic tradition (Banerjee 06/10/07).

If interest drives the relationship, the future will show if the EU and India have the same interests in the long run. There is undeniably a great potential within the relationship and for its outcomes, we will see to what extent the relations are beneath their potentials today.

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Mikael Sami: Commission of the European Union, Brussels, interview conducted Oktober 24, 2007.

EU official: Council of the European Union, Brussels, interview conducted Oktober 25, 2007.

Appendix

Interview Guide

Mutual Perception

How can India's role in the region be described? (From an Indian and EU perspective)

Would you see India as a global actor?

The Chinese government sees the EU as a major force in the world. What is the GOI's perception?

The EU has been described as a strange political animal (intergovernmental, supranational almost state like but not a state). As what is the EU seen from an Indian perspective?

What is the EU's role in world economics and politics respectively?

It appears that India still favours bilateral relations with the member states instead of supranational EU relations.

Is the EU structure too complicated?

How would you describe India's perception of the efforts the EU is taking to build the strategic partnership and vice versa?

Even though the US and EU are strategic partners, the EU decisively distinguishes itself from the US. What are the most important differences?

How do these differences affect the partnerships India has with both entities?

Could the initiation of strategic partnerships by the EU, be an attempt to counterbalance US hegemony?

Strategic Partnership

What does "strategic" mean in this context?

Adapted from a statement made by former External Relations commissioner Chris Patten, would you say that that the EU and India are natural partners?

What are the goals of India and the EU concerning the strategic partnership?

How clear are these goals formulated?

How do the EU-China relations (strat. Partnership) influence the EU-India relations?

How do the US-India relations influence the Indo-European partnership?

The EU has identified its present and future strategic partners (USA, Canada, Russia, Japan, China and India) - India looks a bit passive, why?

What are the reasons behind the EU's initiation of strategic partnerships?

The EU could be described as a normative power, based on principles rather than practicalities at least on the political level. Would a partnership be easier to establish if the EU would not stick so closely to its principles? (e.g. non-proliferation)

The goals which India and the EU are trying to achieve in the strategic partnership are stated in the official papers. Apart from that, what are the wishes both sides want to fulfil in this partnership, what are their expectations?

Why is there this large discrepancy between economic and political relations?

What is happening on the annual summits?

What do you think could be done to improve the relations and to facilitate the development of a strategic partnership?

Which prerequisites are necessary to overcome the problems which are slowing down the development of a strategic partnership at the moment?

Would something like an Indo-European nuclear deal be thinkable in the near future?

Are India's disputes with its neighbours hampering the cooperation concerning security issues?

Foreign, Defence and Security Policy

What are the reasons for the lack of consistency and direction in the EU's foreign, security and defence policy?

Are there any serious ambitions to increase the EU's hard powers?

The EU is well know for its soft powers and more holistic approaches, especially in juxtaposition with the common US foreign policy. Is the EU better prepared to tackle global problems such as terrorism, conflict, environment and aid?

Do you think it would be suitable for the EU to acquire an military force, appropriate to its size?

Does Europe's military weakness somehow affect the build-up of a strategic partnership?

Which implications would an extended European military force have for India's perception of the EU and its role in the world?

How are the prospects for an Indo-European defence cooperation, especially for joint counter-terrorism actions?

Is military force still an appropriate means to solve global conflicts?

Wouldn't international strength for both sides rather come from their soft powers?

Economics

Which economic gains are expected from an improved relationship?

How could a strategic partnership contribute to India's dynamic growth?

What are the next economic topics which have to be addressed?

What about Doha?

If Doha fails, how are the prospects that a strategic partnership could generate better access to the European market at least for India? (preference treaty)

Could the initiation of a strategic partnership by the EU also be seen as an attempt to get better access to the Indian market and by-passing the WTO?

Which would be fields of potential or future economic cooperation?

How is the EU perceived as negotiator in economic terms?

Where are the differences to US negotiators?