

Manipal Centre for European Studies

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

India-EU Engagements

A Decade in Reflection and the Way Forward

The relationship between the India and European Union has evolved over the last fifty years. Diplomatic ties between the two was initiated in 1960s and with the signing of the cooperation agreement in 1994, the bilateral relationship paved the way for a multi-tiered institutional political dialogue, in the form of summits. Since, the first India-EU summit in Lisbon June 2000, fourteen annual bilateral summits have been held so far.

The Joint Action Plan (JAP), signed in 2005, upgraded the bilateral relationship to strategic partnership to strengthen dialogue, enhance economic policy, develop trade and investment and bring together people and culture. With the establishment of the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation (SFIC) in research and innovation, India was the first partner country outside Europe, identified for closer cooperation.

The India-EU Study Centres Programme (IESCP) was set up by the European Commission in 2008 to enhance understanding of the EU in India and vice versa with the means of academic and research collaborations. In October 2009, the Delegation of European Union to India invited “Expressions of Interests” from Indian and European Higher Education Institutions to establish the European Studies Centres in India, and Contemporary India Study Centres in Europe. Subsequently, three Centres each in India and Europe were established as a result of this initiative. One of them came into existence in Manipal in December 2009.

Since then, Manipal Centre for European Studies (MCES) has been training youngsters in European Studies through its various programs including an MA in European Studies. European Studies in India has gained momentum also with EU’s keen interest in cooperation with India as well as steadily rising response and participation of the Indian universities towards India-EU institutional cooperation.

It is time to introspect the last 10 years, acknowledge milestones and assess challenges encountered in the journey of India-EU cooperation. In this decade, India has come to have at least four Jean Monnet Chairs, a few Jean Monnet modules and now, two Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence, the first one awarded to Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE).

As any institutional cooperation involves accounts to narrate and experiences to share, MAHE proposes to organise a two-day conference on ten years of European Studies in India on December 6-7, 2019. This is being organized under the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. The Conference includes paper presentations by young researchers in the area, and panel discussions with the experienced academicians in Indian and European Studies, followed by a Round Table on December 7 to discuss the way forward.