



India-EU Ministerial Science Conference

7-8 February 2007, New Delhi

The New Delhi Communiqué

BACKGROUND TO CONFERENCE

- At their Summit in Helsinki in October 2006, the leaders of the EU and India reiterated their commitment to the EU-India strategic partnership. The leaders also provided a major impetus to their cooperation in Science and Technology by clearly underlining both the '*critical role of science and technology in striving towards their knowledge-based economies*' and '*the mutual benefits of further strengthening their S&T cooperation*'. In order to address the challenges laid down by their respective leaders the Member States of the European Union, India and the European Commission are holding the first ever EU-India Ministerial Science Conference, 7 and 8 February 2007 in New Delhi.
- Hosted by the Government of India and held within the framework of the German EU Presidency, this is the first time that EU Member States and the European Commission meet on a science ministerial level outside of the EU. It is also the first time that European Nobel laureates and other icons of European science interact in a forum with students outside of the EU.

This event therefore provides a unique window on science and technology in Europe, in an open and constructive dialogue with India. It is intended thereby to build mutual awareness, trust and friendship in science and technology between India and the EU.

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

The Ministerial Science Conference concentrated its discussion on two key questions and came to the following conclusions related to these questions:

1. What are the main economic and societal challenges that the EU and India are confronted with and what role do science and technology play in addressing them?
2. How can EU-India science and technology cooperation be further strengthened and its impact enhanced, and through what modalities?

As highlighted by the three co-chairs – Mr. Kapil Sibal, Indian Minister for Science, Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Annette Schavan, German Federal Minister for Education and Research, Dr. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research – in their concluding remarks, the Conference:

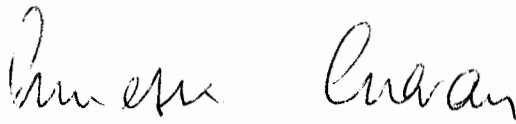
- Expressed appreciation for the valuable input received from the participating Indian and European experts representing the respective research communities, from both the private and public sectors; and took careful note of the S&T Session's conclusions and recommendations which constitute an integral part of this Communiqué and which are annexed.

- Recognised the importance of a strong science and knowledge base as a major prerequisite for competitiveness; recognised that enhancing sustainable socio-economic development and tackling global issues concerning e.g. health, environment and energy can only be done through international S&T collaboration.
- Recognised the growing importance of the internationalisation of science and technology and of the interdependence of innovation systems. Within this overall context, it noted with satisfaction the significant recent progress on S&T cooperation between India and a growing number of EU Member States as well as between India and the EU as a whole.
- Underlined that S&T cooperation between the EU and India should be based on the principles of symmetry, reciprocity, mutual benefit and, where appropriate, the co-investment of resources in joint actions.
- Stressed the importance of the European Commission and EU Member States working together in order to promote a clear and strong European dimension across their various S&T cooperative actions with India.
- Highlighted the importance of human resources in S&T and of increasing the mobility of researchers between the EU and India. In this context, it welcomed progress made by the EU on the 'researchers visa' which reduces barriers to movement within the EU of researchers who are not nationals of any of its Member States.
- Recognised the current “windows of opportunity” for a significant increase in the breadth and depth of EU-India S&T cooperation; these include the recent Indian announcement of a significant increase in public investments in research and in science education as well as the launch of the EU’s 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development 2007-2013.
- Underlined the potential benefits of joint or coordinated calls for proposals, in strategically important research fields of mutual interest involving the co-investment of resources equally open to research communities in the EU and in India on a partnership model for balanced mutual benefits for both sides.
- Noted the role of support initiatives aimed at facilitating partnerships and generating benefits for both parties, such as the possible organisation of ad hoc EU-India high level S&T advice as well as an EU-India high level Strategic Workshop Series to exchange knowledge and to promote scientific contacts and collaboration.
- Highlighted the usefulness of the various existing dialogues such as the Steering Committee of the EU-India Science and Technology Agreement, in order to agree on common priorities and implement EU-India S&T cooperation.

- Highlighted the need to build upon the high visibility and goodwill generated during this Conference through well-defined and practical follow-up initiatives and actions.

Done at New Delhi by the three co-chairs of the Conference on behalf of the Government of India, the German EU Presidency and the European Commission

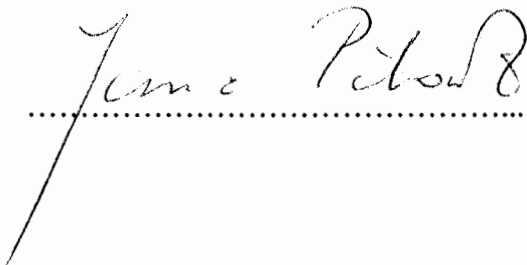
Dr. Annette Schavan, German Federal Minister for Education and Research


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Mr. Kapil Sibal, Indian Minister for Science, Technology and Earth Sciences


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Dr. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research


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Science Session

Conclusions and Recommendations

Principles: Shared Vision

- Win-Win
- Equal partnership
- Public acceptance on both sides
 - For example energy, environment, global change, human health

Some important lead points:

- New joint mechanisms for obtaining expert advice for selection of research areas and related issues for leveraging the possibilities offered by FP7 and 11th five year plan through coordinated programs of agencies
- Co investments and harmonized joint calls
- Linkages to bi lateral programs of EU member countries with India
- A balance of bottom up model as well as carefully selected strategic areas based on existing strength facilitating exchange of researchers between Europe and India after taking into account of intercultural divides
- EU India Strategic workshop series on some key areas like climate change, clean energy, combustion, comprehensive approach to system biology with a focus on infectious diseases and drug development including pre-clinical and clinical trials
- Mounting a joint and flexible funding program for exchange of researchers along the lines of Maire Curie

Major Recommendations

- Establishment of a critical number of Joint EU-India nodes for networking innovation systems in different regions of India and Europe
- New symmetric program for promoting S&T collaboration and mobility with joint funding
- Combined effort to create joint infrastructures for advanced research in both India and EU
- Follow-up funding systems for collaborating EU-India scientist networks