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GOPIO Conference

On

**"NRI/PIO Business Networking for Trade
and Investment and Contribution of Indian Diaspora
in Europe"**



GLOBAL ORGANIZATION
OF PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN (GOPIO) BELGIUM

IN ASSOCIATION
WITH THE EMBASSY OF INDIA, BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

On

4 October 2004

at

ITUH Auditorium
5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II - B-1210 Brussels (Belgium)
Tel. : +32 2 224 02 54 - Fax : +32 2 224 02 99
www.gopio-belgium.be

GOPIO Belgium Conference

“NRI/PIO Business Networking for Trade and Investment and Contribution of Indian Diaspora in Europe”

4 October 2004, Brussels



GOPIO Belgium: GOPIO (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin) Belgium, a national Chapter of GOPIO International (www.gopio.net), was founded in Brussels on 2 October 2002. With its unique location in the heart of Europe, GOPIO Belgium is ideally placed to represent the PIO/NRI community in the European continent. In synchrony with the GOPIO philosophy, the main goal of GOPIO Belgium has been to raise the profile and visibility of the PIO/NRI community in the European Union. For realization of this objective, different groups, like the Indian community, the Belgian Government and the Government of India, on the one hand, and the Missions of various countries, which have PIO presence, on the other hand, are being linked together by the efforts of GOPIO Belgium.

Today, after two years, GOPIO Belgium has developed contact and effective working relationships with key people in the European institutions (Parliament, Commission, Council) and Brussels-based missions of some PIO countries. In addition, a few of the EU officials of Indian origin are already members of GOPIO Belgium; others are being formally invited to join.

Role of the Indian Diaspora: Twenty two million people of Indian origin live overseas spread over 110 countries having an estimated combined income of \$160 billion. The role of these successful overseas Indians is recognized in supporting the economic growth of India through investment,

trade and commerce, charitable contributions and lobbying on India's behalf. India gets about \$ 4 billion as foreign direct investment of which the contribution of the overseas Indian is about 9.15 per cent. The Chinese expatriates, by comparison, are responsible for about half of their country's \$ 48 billion in foreign direct investment. India, however, has not been able to attract the desired FDI from the European multinationals. GOPIO plans to address this issue very seriously and take necessary measures to make India an investment destination. The Indian Diaspora abroad is an asset for creating a global network and economic bridges that can be useful to both India and the resident country of the PIO/NRI.

Aim of the Conference: The Indian Diaspora has the potential to become an important factor in strengthening EU-India relations. Overseas Indians exhibit a great diversity not only in terms of geography and communities but also in socio-economic status, educational achievements, political participation and power. Strengthening of the EU-India relations will help trade networks and effectively and strategically link the Diaspora globally. PIOs/NRIs can thus become a major catalyst in enhancing these relations and in propelling the image of “New India” forward. In the light of the above, GOPIO Belgium is organizing, in association with the Indian Embassy, a one-day Conference on the 4 October 2004 in Brussels. The immediate aims of the conference are:

- To draw the attention of key European Institutions in Brussels to the economic importance of the PIO/NRI community in the EU member states.
- To demonstrate the role that the PIO/NRI community can play in strengthening and expanding EU-India relations.
- To set up a Brussels-based committee that would act as a channel of communication between the PIO/NRI community and these institutions, in order to influence the EU-decision making process on issues of direct interest to this community.

On 4 December 2003, GOPIO Belgium had successfully organized a seminar on “India: Opportunities Unlimited” with the aim of generating awareness amongst the European community about the dynamism of the Indian economy and investment opportunities in India. With the present event on 4 October 2004, GOPIO Belgium is all set to move into the global arena by actively contributing to the overall aims and objectives of GOPIO International. The Conference will present to the Indian Diaspora the opportunities in trade, commerce and investment and business networking. The conference will also focus on activities being undertaken by the European Commission, an executive arm of the European Union, within the framework of EU-India relations. These activities include EU support for promoting trade and investment between the EU and India; the possibilities offered by the EU-India Economic Cross-Cultural Programme for involvement by the PIO/NRI community; scholarship schemes; the EU's national indicative programme (2004-2006) for India; media activities, especially in the framework of the project being implemented by the Journalism centre in Maastricht and the International Federation of Journalists in Brussels, etc.

The Conference would also aim to raise European consciousness about the potential of the Indian economy and it will seek to forge strategic partnerships between India and the Indian Diaspora in Europe through interaction among leading business leaders, the representatives of different Missions and leaders of multi-national corporations

interested in tapping India's economic potential. Special sessions devoted to business meetings and networking activities will give rare opportunity for entrepreneurs, investors and other key decision-makers to form partnerships and to benefit from the vast economic opportunities arising from the opening of the Indian economy. The conference will seek to familiarize countries having PIO/NRI presence and use the GOPIO Belgium as a platform for interaction with Europe.

The Conference will be a congregation attended by business leaders, policy-makers, economists, manufacturers, export-import entities, consulting firms and social activists. In addition to the inaugural session, there will be technical sessions. Issues such as Business Process Outsourcing, raising the profile of the Indian Diaspora, economic contribution of the Indian Community in Europe, how to emulate business and entrepreneur skills taken from the Indian-American experience and if such experiments could be useful in Europe, economic contribution of the Indian Community in Europe etc. will be addressed by the panel.

Although the EU is India's largest trading partner and biggest foreign investor, yet India represents a miniscule proportion of its global trade and investment in the EU. In order to institutionalize a proper mechanism to promote trade and commerce, the Conference will also formally launch the Europe-India Chamber of Commerce to promote trade and commerce between India and the European Union. The Chamber will serve as the key liaising organization representing the views of companies, enterprises and semi-business groups of India and Europe having business interest in each other's countries. The body will develop a network of contacts and expertise. Further, with so much of fast developing business interest including visits by European and Indian business leaders and other active professionals, the body will work to provide substantial input into the various interest groups.

This effort by GOPIO Belgium is an evidence of strength of PIO/NRI in Europe. This conference is another step towards further interlinking India and the Indian Diaspora to develop strong working relationship for mutual benefit.