

Other Countries of Europe

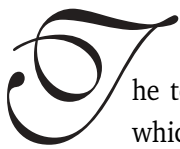


Late Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai, with members of the Indian Community in Paris on 15 June 1977



The Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee being greeted by representatives of the Indian Community at Kremlin in Moscow on 7 November 2001

Introduction



he term West Europe includes the European Union which, with its 15 member-States, two of which are permanent members of the UN Security Council, is now the largest economic entity in the world. The role of information technology in the American economic miracle of the 90s, has spurred a desire in the EU to make it the most competitive and knowledge based economy in the world. The last EU summit adopted a Charter on the Global Information Society and drew up an E-Europe-2002 action plan to create an information technology based society.

- 11.2. These developments have opened up new opportunities for India's skilled human resources and especially its IT experts. The EU has traditionally been India's largest trading partner and source of foreign direct investment, a major contributor of development assistance and technology, and also a home to a significant section of the Indian Diaspora. India and the EU share many common values and are both committed to upholding democracy. India's contacts with the community have acquired a political dimension with the commencement of India-EU annual Summits from June, 2000. There has been an abiding interest in Indian civilization in Europe. The Indian communities can bring about greater understanding and amity between India and West Europe. The Indian Diaspora can contribute to the strengthening of India's bilateral relations with their adopted countries. With its growing and varied skills, expertise and experience in developed countries the Indian Diaspora can in its turn make a catalytic contribution to India's development and modernization.
- 11.3. Two-thirds of the Indian community in the EU is found in the UK, which has been covered extensively in the previous chapter. Consequently, this chapter deals with the West European countries that have small but significant concentrations of Indian communities, barring the UK. Russia and Central/East Europe have been dealt with separately. Table 11.1 on the following page indicates the population distribution of the PIO community in Europe:

Table 11.1: PIO Community in Europe

No.	Country	Population (million)	PIOs	NRIs	Stateless	% of population
1	Armenia	3.7		200		0.005
2	Austria	8.1	3005	8940		0.154
3	Belgium	10.2		7000		0.069
4	Bulgaria	8.2		20		0.003
5	Cyprus	0.7		300		0.460
6	Denmark	5.3	900	1252		0.040
7	Finland	5.2	410	750	10	0.220
8	France	58.8	55000	10000		0.110
9	Germany	82.0	10000	25000		0.042
10	Greece	10.3		7000		0.050
11	Ireland	3.7	600	1000		0.027
12	Italy	57.4	36000	35500		0.063
13	Netherlands	15.9	200000	15000		1.350
14	Norway	4.4		5630		0.127
15	Poland	38.6	75	750		0.002
16	Portugal	10.0	65000	5000		0.700
17	Russia	145.6	44	16000		0.010
18	Slovakia	5.4		100		0.001
19	Spain	40.0	16000	13000		0.040
20	Sweden	8.9	9000	2000		0.012
21	Switzerland	7.2	8400	4800	300	0.117
22	Ukraine	49.0		3400		0.069
23	U. K.	56.9	(Total PIOs + NRIs = 1,200,000 approximately)*			2.109

* Exact figures of NRIs and PIOs not available. Total no. of Indians is currently estimated to be 1.2m.

History of the Indian Community in West Europe

- 11.4. The movement of Indian immigrants to West Europe is largely a phenomenon of the 20th Century, although such migrations may go back to several centuries BC. The Old Testament mentions the import of spices, ivory, and peacocks from India. Several Indian rulers sent emissaries to Rome and trade flourished between the two kingdoms more than two thousand years ago. Indian literature and science had an impact on Western societies. The Greeks learnt from Indian science, **especially the medical sciences and arithmetic. Europeans learnt of the concept of Zero invented by Indian mathematicians.** The *Panchatantra* was translated in the 6th Century from Sanskrit to Latin, Spanish, Italian and other European languages. The Europeans were familiar with *Buddha* and the concepts of *Karma* and *Nirvana*. Translations of *Puranic* tales in Europe were undertaken. Indian philosophy was greatly admired by German philosophers and writers including Kant, Hegel, Goethe, and more recently the humanist Herman Hesse, who recognised that India was a major civilization. There were Indologists of great repute such as Max Mueller. Historically India has enriched European civilization.
- 11.5. From the 19th century onwards - British, French, Dutch and Portuguese colonialism led to a significant migration of Indians, mostly as indentured labour, but also as traders, teachers, clerks, etc. to the European colonies. Following the emergence of aggressive nationalistic regimes in several countries in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America after they achieved independence, a significant proportion of these Indian communities migrated to the colonial centres. Thus Surinamese Indians went to the Netherlands; Indians from Madagascar, Mauritius and Indo-China went to France; from Mozambique and Angola they went to Portugal and from East Africa - to the UK. Some business and family ties, forged in the colonial era, as well as the fact that several members of the Diaspora had received their education in metropolitan centres, facilitated immigration.
- 11.6. After 1947, Indian migration took place in response to a demand for labour and professionals for the post Second World War economic reconstruction in West Europe. Many West European countries relaxed their immigration laws for both skilled and unskilled categories of Asians in the 60s and 70s. Following a surge in immigration from India and other Asian countries, restrictions were reimposed. Computer experts and other professionals such as engineers, business managers, nurses, teachers, scientists etc., were however, permitted to immigrate in restricted numbers. In recent years there has been a growing interest in EU member States in attracting foreign high-tech experts, particularly Indian IT experts who have already made a mark in the USA.
- 11.7. West Europe has also attracted illegal Indian immigration in the construction, agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Many of these have subsequently regularised their stay by taking advantage of periodic amnesty offers, prompted by the shortfalls of cheap unskilled labour. Some applied for political asylum in the 80s following the disturbances in Punjab. This trend has seen a significant decline as West European Governments have shown decreasing propensity to entertain such pleas. Besides the need to control illegal immigration, crime networks are associated with such

migrants. Illegal migrants bring a bad name to the Indian communities and have also resulted in some terrible incidents like the Malta Boat tragedy. Illegal labour moreover renders itself vulnerable to exploitation. The Government of India is trying to check illegal emigration.

- 11.8. The Netherlands has a Surinamese Hindustani (Indian) community of around 180,000, descendants of the indentured labourers sent by Dutch colonisers to Suriname under an agreement with the British Government. There is a small community of NRI/PIOs which came directly from India and today occupies top positions in business, academia, medical and other professions. Some unskilled labour has also come in illegally.
- 11.9. Portugal and France have a relatively large Indian community owing to their colonial connections with India. Portugal has around 70,000 people of Indian origin mostly from Mozambique, where their ancestors had gone as part of the colonial administration from Goa, followed by Gujarati traders from Daman and Diu. These migrants became junior administrators, teachers and doctors. Large numbers migrated to Portugal due to the unsettled conditions following Mozambique's independence and that of other African countries. A few Goan emigrants left around the time of the liberation of Goa. Their Catholic religion and knowledge of Portuguese and culture led to relatively easy assimilation in Portuguese society.
- 11.10. France and its overseas departments has an Indian community of around 330,000 – 350,000 who arrived from the former French colonies of Pondicherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandranagore. Later arrivals were mostly Gujarati businessmen and traders from other Francophone areas including Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius. In recent years professionals and software specialists, especially IT experts have migrated to France from India.
- 11.11. The Indian Diaspora in West Europe is in the process of establishing itself in the professions and trade. In politics they have yet to make a mark. Portugal and Netherlands have one PIO Member of Parliament each. Germany has a PIO mayor and a municipal councillor. Wealthy PIO diamond traders in Antwerp dominate India's diamond trade with Belgium.
- 11.12. Members of the Diaspora are attached to India. This is reflected mainly in contributions made during national crises, such as the Kargil War, Orissa Cyclone and the Gujarat earthquake. The Goan Diaspora provides computers to all the schools in Goa through non-governmental channels. PIOs in the EU however often complain of procedural bottlenecks and inadequate machinery in the Government of India that impede philanthropic contributions.

Prospects

- 11.13. West Europe today is a dynamic centre of inter and intra regional migration. The economic demands of a globalising marketplace, which seeks the best human skills and expertise available worldwide, have become an important factor encouraging immigration. Demographic factors, i.e., the aging population of West Europe has increased their dependence on young workers from developing countries. According to OECD reports and the World Migration Report-2000 this

dependence will deepen. It will in most respects enrich “social, political and economic life in the region” as economic necessity forces a change in anti-immigration attitudes. Opportunities in high-tech areas, bio-technology, Information Technology, finance, management and other services abound for qualified Indians. The profile of the Indian Diaspora in West Europe/the EU is thus likely to change in coming years owing to upward mobility among the existing Indian communities and continued immigration of highly qualified Indian professionals.

At the end of this chapter are short notes on Russia and some of the countries of Central/East Europe.

THE BENELUX COUNTRIES

THE NETHERLANDS

- 11.14. There are two distinct groups among the Indian community in the Netherlands - people of Indian origin who originally migrated from India to Suriname as indentured labour, and later migrated to the Netherlands, and a more recent wave of Indian professionals from India. The Indian community is estimated at 215,000 or 1.35% out of a total population of 15.9 million. There are also approximately 2000 illegal Indians, mostly Sikhs, in the Netherlands.
- 11.15. The colonial connection played a role in Indian migration to the Netherlands. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, the colonial government and estate owners in Suriname, then a Dutch colony, began looking for alternative sources of cheap and bonded labour. Under a Treaty signed in 1870 between the Netherlands and Great Britain, the Dutch colonial Government was permitted to recruit Indian labourers. Accordingly from 1873 onwards, a large number of Indian indentured labourers travelled to Suriname.
- 11.16. The approach of Suriname’s independence sharpened apprehensions among the people of Indian origin regarding their future status and economic and political rights. More than 1/3 of the PIO population availed of a provision in the Independence Act permitting Surinamese to migrate to the Netherlands before the transfer of power in 1975. Today, the Surinamese Indian community in the Netherlands, which calls itself the Surinamese *Hindustanis*, numbers approximately 200,000, while the more recent arrivals from India number around 15,000.

Economic Profile

- 11.17. Like other countries in Western Europe, the Netherlands enjoyed an uninterrupted two decades of economic growth in the 1950s and 60s, giving rise to an acute demand for high-skilled labour. The number of Indian families increased from 10 in 1960 to 250 by the end of 1970. Moreover, as the scope for imports of textiles, leather products and other consumer goods from developing countries increased, a number of NRIs set up trading companies in the Netherlands. Finally, expanding Dutch universities attracted some highly qualified and experienced Indian scientists, educationists and researchers. Thus there was a sizable influx of Indians to the Netherlands and the community’s size increased to the present level of 15,000.

- 11.18. Though the people of Indian origin from Suriname significantly outnumber and precede those who went to the Netherlands from India more recently, the latter have also made their presence felt. The NRI community in the Netherlands mostly consists of highly qualified engineers, doctors, scientists, businessmen and other professionals. Most of them occupy senior positions in their organisations. In terms of income, the majority of them can be grouped among the top 10% of the Dutch population. Their contributions are appreciated by the Dutch community and some of them have also been bestowed with special recognition and honours.
- 11.19. Besides the above, the Dutch (and Belgians) have been adopting Indian children on a regular basis, for which exact figures are not available. No instances of maltreatment have been reported. The numbers of these children will grow and they will form a distinct group that may like to renew its links with India in the future.

Socio-cultural Profile

- 11.20. The Surinamese Indians in the Netherlands share similar characteristics with the people of Indian origin in Suriname and other Caribbean countries. They are deeply religious, tradition-bound and are proud of their cultural heritage. Many members of the community can even today recite *Hanuman Chaleesa* by rote and retain a deep reverence for Indian epics like the *Ramayana*. One distinctive feature of the Surinamese-Indian community in the Netherlands is that even though they left Suriname over 25 years ago, they still speak Sarnami Hindi, the language they spoke in Suriname. Sarnami Hindi is a mixture of Bhojpuri, which they called Hindustani, and Awadhi, with a smattering of Dutch and English.
- 11.21. The Surinamese Indian community has established a large number of temples in various parts of the country. Religious/cultural centres run by Mata Amritanandamayi, Anand Marg, Arya Samaj, Babaji, Brahma Kumaris, Brahmarishi Mission, Divine Life Society, ISKCON, Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Sai Baba, etc. have branches throughout the Netherlands. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi had set up a Vedic University in Vlodrop. There are a number of Sikh Gurudwaras, Mosques/Islamic centres and some Buddhist temples in the Netherlands. Various Surinamese Indian associations like “Insaniyat” hold Diwali Milan melas, dance and music festivals. There are also Surinamese Indian weeklies, newsletters, music bands, etc. Hindi movies are very popular in the community.
- 11.22. Despite their continuing attachment to their roots, the Surinamese Indians have integrated well in Holland, and are making a useful contribution to the country’s economic and social life. The majority live in Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam and are found in business, education, medicine, law and other service industries. Similarly, Surinamese Indian musicians, artists, sculptors, sports persons, journalists, actors and singers have made a considerable contribution in the social cultural spheres. The Indology Department in the Leiden University conducts seminars and lectures on Indian culture. The Nederland Hindi Parishad, a Surinamese Indian organisation, is actively propagating teaching of Hindi language in various schools run by the community. Due to their efforts, Hindi will now be taught as an optional subject in selected primary schools in the

Netherlands. There are over 200 yoga schools in the Netherlands. There are three companies in the Netherlands producing TV programmes on India. Their documentaries are telecast on local TV stations. There are a large number of Indian/Surinamese Indian restaurants in the country.

- 11.23. Although there is no separate political party representing the Surinamese Indians, some of them are active members of Dutch political parties. One prominent member of the community, Ms. Tara Udayrajisingh Varma is a Member of the Dutch Parliament, and has recently visited India at the invitation of ICCR. Active participation by the Surinamese community in the Dutch political scene has helped in sensitising the Dutch Government to the concerns of the Indian community.
- 11.24. A distinctive characteristic of the NRI community in the Netherlands is their unity. Despite the fact that members of the NRI community hail from different parts of India and speak different Indian languages, there is only one socio-cultural organisation, viz., Netherlands-India Association, representing them. This Association organises cultural programmes showcasing cultures of different parts of India, celebrates Diwali and other Indian festivals, and also invites scholars and artists from various regions of India. There are other NRI organisations devoted to India and Indian culture, such as music schools, organisations for researchers in India, and also an Indian Ladies Club and Foundation for Critical Choices for India. The latter is a 'think-tank' that prepares special studies on critical problems facing India and organises international seminars and other activities to focus the attention of local policy makers.
- 11.25. Despite their common origin and cultural heritage, the two groups of Indians in the Netherlands, have different characteristics and cultural nuances and also differ in the degree of their integration with wider Dutch society. The Surinamese Indians are more integrated with the local society, partly due to their knowledge of the Dutch language and their familiarity with the Dutch system from colonial times. Indians who migrated to the Netherlands initially faced considerable problems due to the language barrier. However, since a majority of them were well-educated professionals, they were soon able to carve their niche in Dutch society and earn the acceptance and respect of the local people. During the interactions between the two groups and the High-Level Committee, it was observed that the only common language with the Surinamese Indian community was Hindi, while with the NRI community, it was English.
- 11.26. While there is scope for greater interaction between the two groups, members of the NRI community and the Surinamese Indian community come together at festivals and other occasions. The two groups have cooperated in setting up of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Amsterdam, for which the Surinamese Indians provided the land, while the Indians did the planning and the actual execution. Both Indo-Surinamese and NRIs contributed generously for relief assistance following the Orissa cyclone, Kargil war and Gujarat earthquake, channelling funds mostly through the PM's National Relief Fund. Last minute changes in policy decisions however made them feel that their efforts did not achieve the desired impact, nor were they given due recognition by the Indian authorities. A number of Indian/ Surinamese Indian artists are running private institutes

for teaching and propagating Indian classical music and dance. While there is a hall gifted by the Dutch government as a permanent facility to the Indo-Surinamese, both communities have jointly sought some Indian support for building a common Indian cultural centre, which will act as a hub for activities promoting a better and more authentic understanding of India.

Demands and Expectations

- a) Establishing an Indian Diaspora Consultative Committee for regular interaction on pressing demands of the NRIs/PIOs;
- b) Grant of dual citizenship;
- c) Grant of voting rights in Indian elections;
- d) Nomination of Rajya Sabha Members to represent NRIs;
- e) Involving NRIs in consultative bodies in sectors like tourism, international trade, etc.;
- f) Creation of a single nodal point to facilitate implementation of various proposals from PIOs/NRIs in the field of trade, investment, IT, etc.;
- g) Dissemination of information regarding investment rules, trade and business promotional events;
- h) Institution of favourable investment incentives and guarantees to encourage NRIs/PIOs to participate in the economic development of India;
- i) Setting up of a high level committee, with possible inclusion of an NRI, to explore possibilities for NRIs to play a role in the private banking sector;
- j) Exploring the possibility of increased cooperation between the two countries in the field of medicine and the role that the NRIs can play in this field;
- k) Clear mechanisms for facilitation of donations for relief operations in India;
- l) Reducing the cost of PIO Cards;
- m) Creating reserved seats/priority quotas for the children of PIOs/NRIs in Indian educational institutions;
- n) Establishing an Indian Cultural Centre in the Netherlands; and
- o) Developing archives on Indian cultural heritage.

BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG

11.27. The Indian community in the Low Countries is tiny, and estimated at 7000 or 0.069% of Belgium's population of 10.19 million. In Luxembourg, the percentage of the total population of 435,700 is the same with only 300 Indians present there.

Socio-economic Profile

11.28. The average per capita income of Belgium is US\$ 23,861. While the per capita income of the Indian community is not available, they are mainly to be found in the professional and more prosperous sections of society. Indians are employed in software, the diamond business and a few local industries in cities like Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels and Liege. A section of immigrants from Palanpur district in Gujarat had entered the port city of Antwerp to work with the Jewish community in the diamond business, and eventually started their own. The Antwerp Indians still form a very tightly knit group and actively celebrate Indian festivals. Indian software companies like HCL, TCS and Infosys have a presence in Belgium while Indian software professionals are in great demand by multinationals like Swift, Compaq and Alcatel. The professional Indians in Belgium represent the modern, youthful face of India. Some farm labourers and shop-hands, mainly immigrants from North India have also managed to enter Belgium illegally. Despite the small size of the community there are several Indian cultural associations. The leading ones are Bhartiya Samaj, Antwerp India Association and Shanti Darshan. An India Study Centre was set up in Antwerp in 1996. A few temples and gurudwaras built by the community are found in Brussels, St. Truden and Antwerp. The Indian community enjoys good relations with the local population. Due to their small size they are not politically active. The Indian community is law abiding. A handful of Indians work in the financial institutions based in Luxembourg, which boasts an Indian Association. As in the Netherlands, Belgians regularly adopt children from India.

Demands and Expectations

1. Grant of dual nationality
2. Reduction in PIO card fees
3. Reduction of restrictions in the foreign trade sector in India
4. Extension of better credit facilities by Indian banks

FRANCE

11.29. The Indian community in France is estimated at 65,000 or 0.11% of the total population of 59 million. Indian citizens constitute 10,000 while PIOs number around 55,000. In addition, the Indian community in the Departments/Overseas Territories of France including Reunion Islands, Guadeloupe, St. Martinique etc. numbers approximately 300,000.

Profile

11.30. The Indian community in France is estimated at 65, 000. A majority of the members hail from former French colonies in India; Pondicherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandranagore. Later arrivals in the country are mostly Gujaratis from other Francophone areas including Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius. With the end of the French Rule in the former Indo-China, some Indians of French nationality went to France. Head of the Ismaili community, The Agha Khan has set up

his headquarters near Paris. It is difficult to have exact figures of the Indian community since even Tamils from Sri Lanka are often referred to by the French as Indians. If we also take into account all those Indians who are settled in the various Departments/Overseas Territories of France, the Indian community may be 3,65,000 strong. Reunion itself has an Indian population of 2,20,000. A separate chapter on the Indian Diaspora in that Island has, therefore, been added in the Report.

Socio-economic Profile

11.31. A large majority of members of the Indian community are mainly engaged in private small businesses. Some are employed in educational institutions. While about 6,000 members are estimated to have taken up jobs in army/police forces, about 12,000 members are in the French Government service. Approximately 9,000 Indians may be working in a managerial capacity in French private companies. There are approximately 200 Indian professionals employed in well-known scientific, industrial and commercial companies/organisations. Some are running restaurants, shops, travel agencies and, IT companies. There is a small number of students. No definite figures are, however, available since it is against the policy of the French Government to disclose such information. Most of the people of Indian origin residing in France belong to the middle class. The businessmen also market handicrafts, home furnishings, fabric and garments, gems and jewellery, rice, spices, ethnic groceries, fruits and vegetables etc. from India. Indian food is getting increasingly popular in France. With France opening its IT sector for Indian professionals, Indian software industry may see a growth in exports to France in the IT sector.

Cultural Profile

11.32. The Indian community has formed a number of associations. However, an apex body of these associations was formed on 23rd January, 1996 and designated as Federation of Indian Associations in France (FAFI). The Federation which has been registered in accordance with the local laws consists of 24 member associations with the Indian Ambassador as “President of Honour”. Since its creation, the Federation in coordination with the Indian Embassy extends help to the member associations in organizing social and cultural activities.

11.33. The local Indian associations organize programmes of Indian classical dance and music, which are very popular with the European audiences. Most of these associations also organize classes or workshops of Indian classical dance and music, where the teachers are usually NRIs or persons of French origin having learnt these disciplines in France. A few of them also organize cookery classes, ayurvedic massage, yoga and conferences on Indian art, culture and spirituality.

11.34. Traditionally, the French have had a great love and admiration for Indian traditions and culture. The then President Francois Mitterrand had designated 1985 as ‘The year of India in France’ to acknowledge the Indian contribution in France as well as its various Overseas Departments and an year-long Festival of India was organised. A large programme of cultural activities including museum exhibits, musical and dance productions, films and public meetings was mapped out

during the Festival. President Mitterrand also awarded the prestigious 'Legion d'honneur' to Satyajit Ray in Calcutta during his visit in 1989 for the inauguration of the 'Festival of France in India'. India was also the country of honour at the 'Festival d'Avignon' in 1995 for which ICCR had sponsored more than 66 Indian artists. A Festival of Indian cinema, the only one of this magnitude (120 feature films and 40 documentaries) called 'Indomania' was organised by the Cinematheque Francaise, Paris from November'96-February'97. All these activities are an ample testimony of the French admiration for the Indian culture.

- 11.35. Apart from the associations promoting Indian performing arts, cuisine, yoga, etc. there are large number of associations of Pondicherians and Tamils which focus mainly on the conservation of their own culture (language classes, regular meetings of their members etc.). Their activities however, remain limited to their own members and their families. Indian cultural activities taking place in France are given free publicity by the Indian Mission through its monthly bulletin "Agenda Cultural" and a bi-monthly magazine "Nouvelles de L Inde".
- 11.36. There is no specific cultural centre in France for ensuring or promoting cultural exchange programmes with India, with either governmental or private support. However, two major institutions for promotion of performing arts, viz. 1) Theatre de la Ville, Paris and 2) Maison des Cultures du Monde, have an annual programme of performing arts which include performances by Indian artists. Both these institutions are subsidised by the municipal authorities of Paris, as well as the French Ministry of Culture, and both contact the Indian artists through their own network.
- 11.37. Besides, a number of small local 'indophile' associations exist in France. They generate funds through membership and the Indian programmes are organised by them. Most of them call upon the Indian artists residing in France to perform, as this saves them the cost of international air-fares, food and lodging. In general, they do not have sufficient funds to ensure the standards required for hosting eminent artists from India. Among the active ones may be mentioned Mandapa, Triveni, Les Cultures du Monde. Most of the cultural centres do not have their own hall or cultural centre, but some of the active organisations provide facilities such as halls, book and music shops, small exhibition space, reading rooms and space for practising yoga and Indian dance, etc.

Demands and Expectations

11.38. The main demands and expectations of the Indian community in France include:-

- (a) grant of dual nationality;
- (b) reduction in the fees presently charged for the PIO Card which is felt to be exorbitant;
- (c) removal of difficulties faced by them at Immigration and Customs counters of the Indian airports and with the banks for encashment of travellers' cheques, etc.;

- (d) abolition of the current dual tariff structure, under which PIOs are asked to pay more for hotel accommodation, air fare, visits to monuments and registration fees for conferences, etc. and are required to make payments in US dollars only;
- (e) removal of difficulties in remitting funds to charities in India;
- (f) an organisational structure with a single window for addressing the problems and grievances of the NRIs and PIOs;
- (g) more transparent investment opportunities;
- (h) the PIOs (approximately 250 families) residing in Lyon have requested the Government of India to open a Consulate there which could provide them consular services;
- (i) the Federation of Indian Associations in France (FAFI) have requested the Government of India for establishment of an Indian Cultural Centre in Paris with facilities for imparting classes in the field of Indian classical dances, vocal singing, Hindi language, yoga etc.;
- (j) the local Hindu religious organisation in France have requested the Indian Embassy's intervention with the local authorities for obtaining permission to construct Hindu temples in France;

PORTUGAL

11.39. Out of a population of 10 million, the Indian community is estimated at around 70,000 including 5000 Indian citizens, or 0.7% of the population.

Profile

11.40. Indian community in Portugal is one of the important non-English speaking components of the Indian Diaspora in Europe. It enjoys a special position in Portugal because of long colonial relationship with India. Migration of the community to Portugal has taken place in two streams; firstly that of direct movement from India – in smaller numbers from Goa, Daman, Diu before the liberation of Goa and thereafter in a pronounced flow after its liberation in 1961. The second stream consists of arrival in Portugal of Indians, mostly Gujaratis from Portugal's African colonies, particularly, Mozambique and Angola at the start of the decolonisation there in 1975.

Economic profile

11.41. The Indian community in Portugal has distinguished itself as a well-to-do community. Most Indians are either in retail or wholesale business. Some serve as skilled or unskilled workers. There are several Indians in medical and legal profession, in banks and in managerial and secretarial jobs. The affluent members wield considerable economic and political power. Commercial organisations, numbering about twenty, run by Indians include Indian restaurants, supermarkets, hotels etc. Like the British and the French, the Portuguese had also found the Indians useful in running the

colonial administration. For that reason, the Portuguese Government took large number of Indians for professions like teaching, medical, etc. The Goans in Portugal - around 15,000 – have thus been active in government and public services. Some of them have attained high positions in public services & universities. Of late, there have been increasing cases of illegal immigration from India mostly through other European destinations. These immigrants work as un-skilled and semi-skilled labour.

Socio-cultural Profile

- 11.42. Indians are concentrated in Lisbon and its suburbs and in Porto in the North. Emigrants from Gujarat and Maharashtra, who have gone from Mozambique, etc. include among them Hindus (about 33,000), Muslim (Sunnis) (about 12,000) and Ismailis (about 5,000). These groups while adopting Portuguese language and nationality have maintained their distinct socio-religious identities. Members of these groups are generally active in business, trade, construction, tourism and services. Besides the Gujaratis and Maharashtrians, there are a few thousands from Punjab who entered Portugal in the last one year or so, taking advantage of Portugal's liberal law enabling such migrant workers to get temporary (one year) residence and work permits.
- 11.43. There are over 20 Indian associations, which have been formed either on regional or communal lines. The Gujarati Hindus are a prosperous business community, active in trade and business, wholesale as well as retail. The Ismaili group is the most well knit and affluent. Its members run several hotels and other businesses in tourism industry. Goan are predominantly Catholics and are socio-culturally well assimilated in the national mainstream. The Indian community as a whole maintains its distinct socio-cultural identity. Many of its members have family ties with India.
- 11.44. There is a large temple-cum-community centre built in 1998 by Gujarati Hindus. It is one of the largest in Europe. The Ismaili group has an impressive Jamat Khana-cum-Community Centre built in the same year. Both those structures were inaugurated by the President of Portugal. The Islamic community also has an impressive mosque and related facilities. The Goan component of the Indian community enjoys a special relationship with the Portuguese authorities because of the Portuguese colonial connection with Goa. It is setting up a large premises of its own called Casa de Goa (Goa House) and for which it has received substantial assistance from the Government of Portugal. There are also some gurudwaras as well as an ISKCON temple. Gulbenkian Foundation and Orient Foundation actively organize cultural activities.
- 11.45. The Diaspora has people professing all religious faiths including Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The community responded spontaneously whenever there has been a national calamity in India like the recent earthquake in Gujarat. It responded with generous contributions when there were devastating floods in Mozambique. The Hindu community has also been organizing blood donation camps every year on the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth.

- 11.46. Almost 90% of the NRIs in Portugal speak Portuguese. By and large, they pursue their education in Portugal. In respect of professional and technical courses, they have expressed an interest in availing of the educational facilities in India.
- 11.47. There is a significant number of Indian restaurants offering North Indian cuisine. Indian food is liked by the Portuguese. There are several socio-cultural associations formed either on regional or communal lines. Those associations conduct socio-cultural functions for their members and families and attend to welfare and other activities of the community. They also organize cultural events to celebrate major religious festivals.
- 11.48. The community, has adapted itself quite well. It has no problems of its interaction with the local populace and has earned respect as a peace-loving community.
- 11.49. Prominent academicians who are working on Indo-Portuguese related areas include Professor Luis Filipe Reis Thomaz, a historian and Professor of Universidade Nova; Professor Narana Coissoro, Member of Parliament, a prominent lawyer and President of Oriental Institute; Professor Teotonio de Souza, Dra. Rossa Maria Perez, ISSTEC - Instituto Superior de Ciencias do Trabalho e das Empresas; Professor Doutor Alfredo Bruto da Coasta, former Minister of Social Welfare and currently Professor of the Catholic University and Dr.Orlando Costa, writer and author of two award winning books. Among other prominent Persons of Indian Origin, we may mention the names of Professor Andre Goncalves Pereira, another prominent lawyer and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr.Kantilal Jamnadas, prominent businessman, owner of DANCAKE Portugal and President of the Hindu Community of Portugal

Political profile

- 11.50. Although the Indian community is generally not very active in national politics, there are many individuals who have attained notable political eminence. We may mention, besides Professor Andre Goncalves Pereira and Professor Doutor Alfredo Bruto da Coasta, former Minister of Social Welfare, the names of Professor Narana Coissoro, Member of Parliament since 1976, one of the four Vice Presidents and Dr.Abilio Fernandes, Mayor of Evora since 1977. Various groups of the Indian community have good equation with political parties and the Government, who in turn seek electoral support by participating in and encouraging the socio-cultural activities of those groups.

Media

- 11.51. Zee TV programmes received through transmissions from London are quite popular.
- 11.52. The community keeps itself well informed about India through TV, Print Media, internet and their visits to India.

Demands and Expectations

11.53. During the Committee's visit to Portugal in February 2001, the representatives of the Indian community made the following demands:

- (a) Grant of dual nationality. In this connection, it was pointed out that the Government of Portugal allowed dual nationality to its nationals.
- (b) Reduction in the fee of PIO Card.
- (c) Establishment of an Indian cultural centre in Portugal in view of the community's keen interest in Indian culture.
- (d) Facilitating the issue of passports to the Indian workers in the construction sector, which include illegal immigrants so that they may avail of Portuguese Government's amnesty schemes to legalize their stay in Portugal.
- (e) Opening of an Indian bank or its representative/liaison office in Portugal to facilitate remittances to India.
- (f) Direct flights to Portugal from India since travel through Paris or London, as at present, results in wastage of time in transit in order to catch the connecting flights.

AUSTRIA, DENMARK, GERMANY, GREECE, IRELAND, ITALY, NORWAY, SPAIN AND SWEDEN

11.54. As mentioned above, there are very few Indians in these countries lacking any colonial connection with India. Their communities comprise of professionals (nurses and doctors, engineers, scientists, academicians), small and middle level entrepreneurs and traders, and in some cases illegal immigrants.

AUSTRIA

11.55. The Indian community as a percentage of a population of 8 million at around 12,000 is just 0.15%. Early Indian immigrants to Austria were mainly nurses from Kerala, who maintained their links with their homeland. Some Indian professionals in the UN settled down in Austria. There is a small community from rural Punjab, whose members graduated from odd jobs to later become successful businessmen. Some Indians acquired Austrian citizenship by claiming refugee status. There are two Gurudwaras and one temple in Austria.

DENMARK

11.56. Out of a population of 5.3 million, the Indian community at 2150 comprises 0.04%. Indian nationals in Denmark are mainly computer professionals, journalists and doctors. The Indian

community, by and large, is law abiding and does not face any specific problems in Denmark. There are around 12 Indian Associations that organise cultural programmes and celebrate national days and Indian festivals. Places of worship of different Indian faiths have been built in Copenhagen. There are several yoga and meditation societies run by Danes and Indians. There are three local radios (FM), viz 'Pride of India Radio', 'Sabrang Radio' and 'Sunrise Radio' run by people of Indian origin. A local TV channel called 'Indivision' run by a Danish national of Indian origin, telecasts miscellaneous programmes for the community on Saturdays and Sundays.

GERMANY

- 11.57. The Indian community at 35,000 is barely 0.04% as a percentage of a population of 82 million. Of these, only 10,000 Indians are estimated to have acquired German citizenship, mainly due to restrictive citizenship laws. The majority of Indians emigrated in the 1960s and 70s. There are places of worship for the Indian community in almost all major German cities. The NRI community is comprised primarily of technocrats, businessmen and nurses. In addition to the estimated 6000 registered asylum seekers, around 2- 3000 illegal Indian immigrants may have entered Germany through Central Asia/East Europe.
- 11.58. Recently, noting the contribution of Indian IT experts to the American economic miracle, Germany has begun to actively woo high-tech Indian professionals with offers of attractive employment opportunities. A few Indians have also acquired political eminence. Dr. R. Gujjula, a doctor in Altlandsberg, holds the post of Mayor. Mr. Sebastin Edathy is a Member of the German Parliament from the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD). Mr. Debashish Bhaduri, SPD, is a Municipal Councillor from Tiergarten Mitte Berlin.
- 11.59. There is a rich independent legacy of studies on India in Germany. Indology Departments were set up in Bonn University in 1818 and later on in Humboldt University in 1821. 22 universities in Germany offer courses in Indology. There is an Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) at Berlin. The Gandhiserve e.K., also in Berlin, is devoted to the dissemination of information on Mahatma Gandhi (its President is Mr. Peter Ruhe).

GREECE

- 11.60. Indians comprise 0.05% of the Greek population of 10 million. Till the 1970s, one route of entry was for Indian seamen jumping ship to slip into the country illegally. Following the deteriorating conditions in Lebanon, more than 2,000 Indians living there left for Greece and stayed on quietly after the expiry of their visas. On January 1, 1998, the Greek government granted a general amnesty to all illegal immigrants, thus legalizing the status of Indian immigrants also. Most Indians hold low to middle-level positions in shipping companies, banks and other companies. Some of them have their own businesses. Illegal Indian immigrants are working in agriculture, industry and shops or as domestic help. The Greek Orthodox Church does not allow cremation of dead bodies in Greece. Indians have to take their dead to India for cremation. As permission of

the Greek government is required for setting up any place of worship by foreigners, there are only make-shift gurudwaras in a few areas. Indians in Greece have no role in the country's politics.

IRELAND

11.61. The Indian community at barely 1600 comprises a tiny 0.027% of the Irish population of 3.7 million. It is believed that links between India and Ireland can be traced to the migration of Dravidian tribes to Ireland around the sixteenth century. One of the earliest documented arrivals was that of Dean Mohomet from Patna in the 18th century. The cricketer Ranjit Singh bought Ballynahinch Castle in Connemara in 1924 and was succeeded by his nephew Duleep Singh. The Maharaja of Baroda maintained a stud farm in the west of Ireland. In the early 1920s, Mohammed Ali, a bonded Indian labourer working on sugarcane plantations in Cuba, escaped to Ireland and was followed by his relatives. The majority of Indians are however self-employed businessmen in the textiles sector who arrived before 1960. Recently, apart from semi-skilled and skilled workers, professionals like doctors and software engineers have migrated to Ireland. NRIs in Ireland keep themselves abreast with happenings in India and are culturally active. There is a small Sikh Gurudwara in Dublin.

ITALY

11.62. The Indian community as a percentage of a population of 57.4 million is about 0.063% at 71,500. Italy and India have had relations since ancient times. The *Romas* or the Gypsies who migrated to Italy claim to be persons of Indian origin. However the number of Indians trying to enter Italy has never been significant. From 1990 onwards however, the Italian Government declared a series of amnesties for illegal aliens in view of acute labour shortages. Consequently more Indians started arriving in the country. Italy's membership in the Schengen Agreement also facilitated the flow of illegal immigration.

11.63. Most of the Indian immigrants are farm labourers from Punjab. Some businessmen run restaurants and jewellery and other shops. Some Indians are working in international organisations, hospitals and churches, the latter mainly hailing from Kerala. Places of worship of different faiths have been constructed. Keralites have formed an association of the *Indian Priests and Sisters Union*. Certain universities in Venice, Milan, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Turin have departments on Indian studies. The Indian community has generally adapted well to the local conditions and is regarded as sincere, law abiding, hard working and has earned the goodwill of the local community.

NORWAY

11.64. The approximate number of the Indian Community is 5600 out of a population of 4.5 million and comprises 0.12% of the population. Immigration from Punjab began in the early 1970s. The Indian community is culturally active and endeavours to preserve its traditions and ethos. The Board of the Indo-Norwegian Society has equal representation of Indian and Norwegians and

plays an important part in promoting harmonious cultural relations. There are two Gurudwaras located at Oslo and Lier and a Hindu Temple near Oslo.

SPAIN

- 11.65. The Indian community as a percentage of a population of 40 million is again only 0.04% at perhaps 30,000. Most Indians originally travelled to Spain from Africa, while others came from India and even Japan and Southeast Asia. Sindhi traders and shopkeepers thrived in the free ports of the Spanish Canary Islands of Las Palmas and Tenerife following the imposition of import and foreign exchange restrictions in Spain after World War-II. They conducted a brisk trade with the North African continent from Las Palmas. When Ceuta and Melilla, parts of Spanish Morocco, were also declared as free ports, Indian businessmen set up trading houses and retail shops catering to the tourist trade. By the mid-seventies, there were over 200 Indian trading houses in Ceuta and Melilla. With the liberalisation in import policies introduced in the eighties, business activity shifted to the port cities of Malaga and Barcelona. Madrid also attracted many Indian businessmen.
- 11.66. The Indian community in Spain enjoys a good reputation. Indians are considered hard working, non-political and peaceful. The Indian community has integrated well with Spanish society. Sindhis and Sikhs form the majority of the Indian community. The community celebrates various Indian festivals. Rath Yatras are also taken out by members of the *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* movement with the enthusiastic support of the Indian community.

SWEDEN

- 11.67. Out of a population of 8.9 million, PIOs number 11,000 or 0.012%. Most are Punjabis, Bengalis, Gujaratis and South Indians. Some Indian students who went to Sweden in the 1950s settled down there. Another stream of Indians came from Uganda in the 1970s. Some Indians sought and obtained political asylum after 1984. They are a law-abiding, respected community. The influx of IT experts has raised their prestige in Sweden. The Indian community is culturally very active. Different associations hold cultural functions and observe national days.

RUSSIA

- 11.68. Out of a population of 145.6 million, the Indian community numbers 16000 and as a percentage of the population is 0.01%. It includes students, businessmen and others. In addition there are about 1000-1500 Afghan nationals of Indian origin staying in Russia. The estimated strength of the student community is approximately 7000. Those working in Indian business establishments comprise the second largest section of the community. About 100 companies and 15 Indo-Russian joint ventures are functioning in Russia. The Indian Association (erstwhile Hindustani Samaj) during the 42 years of its existence has been in the forefront of the community's social and cultural life in Moscow. Other cultural organisations include the Bharatiya Sanskritik Samaj and

the Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee. There is also a Ramakrishna Society – Vedanta Centre at Moscow with another branch at St. Petersburg. The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, The Embassy of India Club and the Indian Women’s Association encourage participation of the Indian community in national, social and cultural events. The ‘Russia Journal’ is a prominent English weekly publication brought out by Mr. Ajay Goyal, an Indian citizen. Voice of Russia has some Indians who broadcast Asian programmes. There are 13 Indian journalists based in Moscow representing various prominent newspapers, news agencies from India.

CENTRAL/EAST EUROPE

- 11.69. The size of the Indian community in the countries of East/Central Europe is very limited. Before 1990 there were a number of Indian students in the higher educational institutions of these countries. In Ukraine this trend persisted even after 1990 with the number of Indian students in Ukrainian institutes of higher learning increasing to nearly 7000 by 1997. However due to the recent de-recognition by India of degrees of some Ukrainian institutes, the number of students from India has dropped to 3000.
- 11.70. Some enterprising members of the Indian business and trading community, many of whom are networked with overseas Indian companies in Dubai, Hong Kong and London, are today exploring new business opportunities in this region. In Poland, some companies employ a number of Indians on work visas. Professionals working with multinationals or Indian companies and software experts comprise another category of Indians in this region. The Indian community in Poland is generally well educated and dynamic. Those in business and working with multinationals or Indian companies are reasonably well off. Of late, some NRIs have made significant investments in Romania in the metallurgical, mobile telephones and trading fields. It may be mentioned that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore had visited Romania in 1926 and had delivered a series of talks. He is still remembered with fondness by many Romanians.

Demands and Expectations

- 11.71. Predictably, the Demands and Expectations of the Indian communities in these countries are similar, and revolve around the following:
- a. Steps to obtain recognition of Indian educational degrees (in some countries of east/central Europe – a converse demand is for India to recognise their degrees, particularly medical degrees by India’s IMC);
 - b. Opening of local branches of Indian banks particularly in Rome;
 - c. Direct airlinks to India;
 - d. Frequent visits by Indian cultural troupes;
 - e. Screening of Indian films;

- f. Simplification of Visa rules;
- g. Reduction of PIO card charges;
- h. Steps to curb harassment by immigration and customs authorities in India;
- i. Improvement of online services (information, relevant rules and regulations etc.) geared to the needs of the Indian community abroad;
- j. Improvement of consular services;
- k. Better projection of India in the local media in order to boost the Community's pride.

