

International Conference

On

**EUROPEAN UNION AS MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION:
LESSONS FOR SOUTH ASIA**

(26th October 2023)

Conference Proceedings



Organized by

JEAN MONNET CHAIR

The European Union as an Actor in South Asia'

Department of International Relations

National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad



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One Day International Conference
**'European Union as Model for Regional Integration: Lessons for
South Asia'**

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JEAN MONNET CHAIR



Compiled by
Prof. Dr. Muhammad. Riaz Shad



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INAUGURAL SESSION



<i>Welcome Remarks</i>	Brig Shahzad Munir Director General (DG) NUML
<i>Introduction of the Conference</i>	Prof. Dr. M. Riaz Shad Jean Monnet Chair & Head, Department of International Relations, NUML
<i>Speech by Keynote Speaker</i>	Ambassador Naghmah Hashmi Former Ambassador to European Union
<i>Speech by Chief Guest</i>	Mr. Philipp Oliver Gross Deputy Head of Mission, European Union Delegation to Pakistan

WELCOME REMARKS

Brig Shahzad Munir
Director General (DG) NUML



Greetings, Assalam O Alaikum, and a pleasant morning to all. It's an honour to stand before you as we convene for the One-Day International Conference hosted by the National University of Modern Languages. On behalf of our esteemed institution, I extend a heartfelt welcome to each one of you for this significant event titled "European Union as a Model for Regional Integration: Lessons for South Asia." This conference, spearheaded by the visionary team at the Jean Monnet Chair in collaboration with our Department of International Relations, aims to recognize and highlight the commendable efforts of the European Union (EU) in the realm of regional integration.

Our overarching goal is to extract valuable insights that can guide the path for South Asia, especially in light of initiatives like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The success story of the European Union stands in stark contrast to the regional landscape of South Asia. While Europe has achieved remarkable integration, displaying unparalleled synergy, South Asia unfortunately lags behind, often being labeled as one of the least integrated regions globally. This dichotomy underscores the importance of drawing lessons from the EU's journey for the benefit of South Asian stakeholders. Our gathering today is graced by distinguished speakers and panelists whose expertise span academia, diplomacy, policy formulation, and the vibrant world of civil society. As they share their insights and rich experiences, I am confident that this forum will spark new ideas, ignite meaningful discussions, and inspire visionary outlooks. We have always believed in the transformative power of dialogue, and I anticipate that today's deliberations will not only deepen our collective understanding of regional integration but also sow the seeds for future scholarly pursuits in this domain.

To everyone present, I extend my sincere appreciation for your enthusiasm, insights, and willingness to engage in meaningful discussions. Undoubtedly, your active participation will shape the course of today's event. As we embark on this enlightening journey together, I eagerly anticipate hearing great ideas, facilitating shared learning, and fostering the collaborative spirit that will define our day. Thank you for joining us, and may Allah bless our proceedings with wisdom and clarity. Ameen

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONFERENCE

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad

*Jean Monnet Chair & Head, Department of International Relations,
NUML*

The present conference, titled "European Union as a Model for Regional Integration: Lessons for South Asia," delves into the realms of political and economic liberalism. In the case of certain regions, such as Europe, regional integration signifies a transformative shift from confrontation to cooperation, and from conflict to peace, facilitated by economic interdependence and integration. The parallels with South Asia are evident.



The European Union (EU) stands out for two distinctive features. Firstly, it is the sole regional organization with both intergovernmental and supranational policies and institutions. Unlike other regional organizations functioning merely as intergovernmental platforms, the EU assumes the dual role of both an arena and an actor. Secondly, the EU has achieved unparalleled success in regional integration. The process typically unfolds through four stages: a free trade area, a customs union, an economic union, and ultimately a political union. The EU has already attained the economic union stage and is actively pursuing political union. In contrast, South Asia has barely initiated efforts toward establishing a free trade area.

Regrettably, South Asia remains the least integrated region globally. Numerous political, economic, and social factors contribute to the dearth of regional cooperation. Historical political perceptions, a lack of political will, and apprehensions regarding Indian dominance stand as formidable obstacles to regional collaboration in South Asia. Economic factors, such as structural inequalities, including market asymmetry (with India significantly larger in both market and population size), and a less diverse range of market products, further impede progress.

In this context, the European Union offers valuable political, economic, and social lessons for resolving political disputes, fostering mutually beneficial economic cooperation, and prioritizing human security. The focus of today's conference revolves around two key sub-themes: a comparative analysis of regional integration in Europe and South Asia, followed by an exploration of the lessons that South Asia can glean from Europe's success story.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Ambassador (Retd.) Naghmana Hashmi *Former Ambassador to European Union*



Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi underscored the considerable distinctions between the European Union and South Asia. She emphasized why it is improbable for South Asian nations to emulate the EU's approach of relinquishing aspects of their sovereignty to form a

comparable institution. Ambassador Hashmi noted that the European Union, an ongoing project since 1950, demanded substantial political will and compromise from independent sovereign states with diverse historical backgrounds, languages, and cultures to unite. She pointed out that the United Kingdom, for example, initially sought EU membership but faced rejection from France twice. In 2016, the UK chose to exit the EU and is currently exploring ways to reverse that decision. Ambassador Hashmi credits the EU as an influential regional organization, serving as a model for entities like ASEAN and SARC.

She attributes the EU's consolidation partly to the similarities shared by its member states in terms of Western culture, religious foundations, and business practices. In contrast, South Asia grapples with pronounced differences, including lower literacy levels, a population exceeding 2 billion, with a significant majority living in poverty, and diverse

economic systems, featuring a substantial informal economy constituting 70% of the region's economic activity.

On a political level, Ambassador Hashmi highlights the EU's success in resolving the historical Franco-German dispute through states' willingness to cede part of their sovereignty to a supranational institution. However, she notes the EU's ongoing challenges resulting from the rapid inclusion of former Soviet Union states. Additionally, she underscores the limitations of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC) Charter, which prohibits discussions on bilateral and contentious issues. Drawing a contrast with the EU's model, where member states have relinquished certain defense-related sovereignty to NATO, Ambassador Hashmi underscores the constraints within SARC that hinder regional cohesiveness.

Ambassador Hashmi also points to India's foreign policy decisions, particularly its alignment with the United States against China and its perceived support for the Gaza massacre. These stances, she argues, create challenges for South Asian countries in establishing a common foreign policy due to differing positions and priorities among nations in the region. In conclusion, Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi emphasizes that the substantial fundamental differences among South Asian countries may impede them from reaching a consensus or willingly surrendering parts of their sovereignty, akin to the European Union's model.

ADDRESS BY CHIEF GUEST

Mr. Philipp Oliver Gross

Deputy Head of Mission, European Union Delegation to Pakistan

Mr. Philipp Oliver Gross, the speaker, commenced the session by extending a warm welcome to the conference participants and lauded the National University of Modern Languages, with a special mention of the commendable efforts



by the Department of International Relations under the leadership of Professor Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad, for their role in organizing the conference. He underscored the significance of the event in facilitating discussions on the European Union as a model for regional integration and its global importance.

Mr. Gross highlighted that the conference took place in the context of the Erasmus Plus Jean Monet Chair awarded to Professor Riaz in 2020. Leveraging his extensive experience with European institutions since 1999, the speaker delved into the historical roots of European integration, tracing its origins to the aftermath of centuries of conflict among European nations, particularly during the period from 1914 to 1945.

The speaker elucidated the visionary objectives of the European Union's founding fathers, emphasizing their goal not only to render war between France and Germany unthinkable but also materially impossible. He referenced French Foreign Minister Robert Schumann's articulation of this vision on May 9, 1950, proposing the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community. The principles of this declaration centered around the understanding that substantial efforts were necessary to secure world peace in the face of significant threats.

Continuing the historical narrative, Mr. Gross explored the progression of European integration, highlighting key milestones such as the establishment of the Coal and Steel Community in 1952 and the subsequent creation of the European Economic Community in 1958, leading to the development of a free trade zone through a customs union and a common market. The formation of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1958 and successive waves of enlargement underscored the appeal of the European Community's model to other countries. The European Union itself was founded in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, with the core vision of fostering an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.

The speaker also touched upon the robust institutions comprising the European Union, including the European Commission, European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice, emphasizing the supremacy of EU law over national law. Additionally, he discussed the economic integration of the EU, encompassing the common market and common trade policy, along with political aspects such as international development cooperation and environmental policies.

Mr. Gross highlighted several achievements of the European Union, including the freedom of movement for EU citizens, the Erasmus Plus program, the EU's motto of "United in Diversity," the introduction of the single currency, the elimination of roaming charges, and the EU's leadership in development assistance and humanitarian aid.

He further discussed various visions of European integration, the institutional framework based on the Treaty of Lisbon, and the role of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Moreover, he mentioned the EU's engagement in military and civilian missions in third countries and regions outside the EU, involving contributions from military forces and civilian experts from EU member states.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by the EU, particularly in the context of global processes and the imperative to strengthen democratic legitimacy, Mr. Philipp Oliver Gross expressed hope that the insights shared at the conference would be valuable. The European Union delegation to Pakistan extended wishes for engaging and productive discussions, eagerly anticipating the outcomes of the conference.

ACADEMIC SESSION-I

Comparative Characterization of Regional Integration in Europe and South Asia



THE EUROPEAN UNION AS MODEL FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Dr. Irene Wieczorek

*Associate Professor in EU Law, Durham Law School, Durham University,
UK*

The European Union (EU) stands out as a multifaceted model for regional integration, particularly in the realm of criminal justice cooperation among member states. Dr. Irene Wieczorek, the speaker, underscored the significance of gleaning lessons from the EU experience and its potential relevance for regions such as South Asia. One key aspect of inter-state organizations, according to Dr. Wieczorek, is the necessity for sovereign states to cede a certain degree of their sovereign power to achieve common objectives. The EU, she notes, exemplifies strong integration compared to other organizations like ASEAN or the United Nations.



From a legal perspective, EU law diverges significantly from international law. Notably, EU law is approved through qualified majority voting, complemented by a directly elected Parliament, and possesses direct effect in member states—a distinctive feature. The EU's policy scope extends into sensitive areas like criminal justice, where traditionally reluctant member states collaborate extensively.

Dr. Wieczorek discusses the advanced cooperation strategies in this domain, emphasizing two key legal integration approaches: **Strengthening the Legal Framework:** This involves enhancing inter-state cooperation through mutual legal assistance, extradition, and the mutual recognition of decisions in criminal matters. **Harmonizing National Legislations:** Member states are compelled to harmonize their substantive

criminal law legislation, covering a wide array of areas such as counterfeiting, money laundering, terrorism, and more. Additionally, procedural criminal law legislation, including victims' rights and legal aid, is harmonized.

These strategies, Dr. Wieczorek notes, are complementary, not mutually exclusive. EU law instruments focusing on mutual recognition, like the European Arrest Warrant (EAW), have streamlined judicial cooperation, as seen in high-profile cases involving figures like Julian Assange and Carles Puigdemont. The speaker highlights the importance of trust among EU member states, especially in fundamental rights protection, as challenges arose regarding prison conditions in certain states. The flexibility displayed by the Court of Justice in exceptional cases showcases a nuanced approach to integration.

Dr. Wieczorek emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of the EU's legal and policy approach to regional integration in criminal justice. Mutual recognition, the success of the EAW, and the necessity for trust in fundamental rights protection emerge as crucial elements. Harmonization of national legislation and procedural criminal law legislation is a significant part of this integration, with over 40 legal instruments enacted by the EU.

The primary actors in the EU's criminal justice system, namely Europol, Eurojust, and the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO), are discussed. Europol facilitates police cooperation, Eurojust assists in judicial cooperation, and the EPPO acts as a supranational prosecutor with binding powers.

Dr. Wieczorek concludes by drawing lessons from the EU experience in criminal justice integration. She underscores the importance of achieving a high level of integration and trust in this sensitive area. While full integration might not be universally feasible, milder forms of regional cooperation, as seen in Eurojust and Europol, could serve as models for other regions. Institutionalizing and legalizing practices like international police

cooperation are deemed essential for enhancing effectiveness and transparency, as exemplified by cooperation between mainland China and Hong Kong.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Mr. Tariq Niaz

PhD Scholar, Department of IR, NUML



Mr. Tariq Niaz, a PhD Scholar in the Department of International Relations at NUML, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to address the audience. In his speech, Speaker

Tariq Niaz delved into the significance of the "Political Economy of Regional Integration in South Asia," stressing that despite shared heritage, history, language, culture, and social practices among member nations, South Asia remains one of the least integrated regions globally. This lack of integration, he argued, poses a significant challenge to the human security of a substantial portion of the world's population and emphasized the importance of regional integration for fostering peace, prosperity, and stability in the region.

Geopolitical Environment of South Asia

Tariq Niaz discussed the geopolitical environment of South Asia, highlighting the region's unique characteristics and challenges. Covering a vast landmass and home to nearly a quarter of the world's population, South Asia faces complex security issues,

inter-state disputes, and untapped economic potential. Historical differences contribute to political conflicts overshadowing economic and strategic interests. Notably, regional trade in South Asia remains remarkably low at just 5%, in stark contrast to other highly integrated regions. SAARC, established in 1985, aimed at achieving stability and peace but faced challenges due to regional politics and capacity limitations. Niaz touched upon various disputes, particularly involving India, such as conflicts over Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, and issues related to the Indus Water Treaty, as well as border and maritime disputes with neighboring countries.

Drivers of Regional Integration in South Asia

Tariq Niaz outlined the drivers of regional integration in South Asia, considering the complex historical context, geopolitical significance, pivotal roles of India and Pakistan, and challenges in aligning national interests with integration goals. Strained bilateral relations, the absence of conflict resolution mechanisms, and global power dynamics further complicate the integration process. Domestic politics and weak political institutions in the region pose additional hurdles. While acknowledging the role of regional organizations, their effectiveness in promoting integration varies.

Impediments to Regional Integration in South Asia

Highlighting core issues hindering regional integration, Tariq Niaz identified longstanding conflicts like the Kashmir dispute and various border issues involving India and Pakistan. Diverse cultures, histories, and ideational values within South Asia present integration challenges. Structural inadequacies within SAARC, the predominance of a state-centric socio-politico-economic and security construct, and the influence of global powers, particularly the United States, were noted as impediments. Niaz also discussed India's sub-regional and trans-regional initiatives, each with distinct countries and objectives, reflecting the evolving landscape of regional and global dynamics influencing South Asia's integration efforts.

The Way Forward

Tariq Niaz emphasized the urgency of addressing regional conflicts within South Asia through peaceful means such as dialogue, negotiation, and diplomacy. He called for collective efforts by South Asian nations to promote peaceful conflict resolution, foster trust, and enhance cooperation. Additionally, he suggested the establishment of a Fast Track Mechanism with a single-window approach to streamline bureaucratic processes and facilitate more efficient regional cooperation. These points underscore the importance of diplomatic solutions and streamlined procedures in addressing and resolving conflicts in the South Asian region.

SAFTA AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Dr. Usman W. Chohan

*Director, Economic Affairs and National Development, Centre for
Aerospace & Security Studies, Islamabad*

Dr. Usman W. Chohan's speech delved into the intricate subject of "SAFTA and trade liberalization in South Asia," wherein he adeptly addressed the audience and outlined the structure of his presentation. The comprehensive discourse covered recent developments, the



delineation of two regions within SAFTA, regionalization, and the prerequisites for a structure akin to the European Union.

Dr. Chohan meticulously traced the evolution of trade between India and Pakistan, underscoring the significance of trade complementarity. He raised concerns regarding non-tariff barriers, dumping practices, and trade complexities, emphasizing the imperative for domestic industries to enhance their competitiveness on the global stage. Furthermore, he expressed apprehensions about certain industries adopting protectionist measures.

Employing graphs and statistics, Dr. Chohan accentuated trade imbalances, stressing the need for improvement. His speech offered valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of trade and economic relations in South Asia, shedding light on both challenges and opportunities within the SAFTA region. He highlighted the disparity in export sizes and nature, emphasizing a trade complementarity issue. While South Asian nations can fulfil up to 60% of each other's needs, they can only address 20% of those needs, resulting in an imbalance.

Dr. Usman delved into the historical roots of global trade competitiveness, particularly within the context of South Asia's experience during European colonialism. He examined the impact of trade on consumer and producer surplus, employment, and savings, providing a nuanced perspective on the complex interplay of economic factors. The speech also touched upon the significance of SEFTA and the transit route issue with Afghanistan, connecting it to the broader vision of regional connectivity extending to Central Asia.

Critically assessing the concept of regional integration within SAARC, Dr. Chohan pointed out weaknesses in infrastructure, diplomatic relations, and trade, which collectively account for only 5% of overall trade in the region. He challenged the conventional notion of a unified South Asian region, arguing that human-drawn boundaries reflect the way people divide the natural world.

Dr. Usman's focus on regionalization, drawing parallels with the European Union, highlighted the artificiality of human-drawn boundaries and the fluid nature of regions. He questioned the traditional understanding of South Asia as a unified entity, emphasizing historical connections between Europe and Asia. The unique dynamics of the Bay of Bengal region and challenges within BIMSTEC were discussed, along with the impact of politics on border securitization, particularly in the context of India and Pakistan.

The speech explored the global trend of regionalization, where supply chains have shifted from globalization to regional connections. Dr. Usman emphasized that the definition of a region depends on historical and modern worldviews, prompting a thoughtful reflection on South Asia's journey towards achieving a union akin to the EU. He urged the audience to appreciate the EU's accomplishments while acknowledging the complex historical, geographical, and political factors that make regional integration in South Asia a challenging endeavour.

Dr. Usman's address encouraged a nuanced understanding of the EU's achievements, juxtaposed with South Asia's unique historical trajectory. He highlighted the absence of comparable traumatic experiences in South Asia since its partition in 1947, suggesting that this might contribute to a lack of a shared identity and a robust push for regional integration. Acknowledging the EU's long historical process, shared identity, and the impact of the World Wars, Dr. Usman cautioned that even if South Asia were to achieve regional integration, it would need to address disparities among member states, akin to challenges faced by the EU. The speech underscored the intricacies and challenges of regional integration, emphasizing the need for careful consideration of the broader context before aspiring to unity in South Asia.

ACADEMIC SESSION-II

Lessons from European Union for Regional Integration in South Asia



CONSTRUCTING POLITICAL WILL FOR COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA: LESSONS FROM EU

Irina Von Wiese

Former Member of European Parliament, Qualified Lawyer and Academic



Irina Von Wiese, a former Member of the European Parliament elected in July 2019 as one of the Liberal Democrats, shared her insights during a speech, reflecting on her visit to Islamabad in 2019 and drawing parallels between the European Union (EU) and global political dynamics.

The genesis of the EU was a key focus of Irina's discussion, emphasizing its origin as a peace project responding to the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust. She

underscored the EU's success in achieving lasting peace among member states, despite the challenges faced. The delicate balance between integration and expansion within the EU was explored, acknowledging divergent member state interests. Some advocate for deeper integration, while others prioritize expansion, necessitating careful navigation of trade-offs.

Common values such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law were deemed crucial for the EU's success. Irina highlighted the necessity for member states to cede some powers to supranational institutions for effective functioning. While foreign policy remains primarily under individual member states' authority, she acknowledged the potential for change due to shifting geopolitical events.

The lack of uniformity in foreign policy among member states, particularly regarding conflicts in the Middle East, was discussed. Developing a common EU foreign policy was deemed complex, requiring significant changes to the distribution of foreign policy powers. Financial contributions from economically stronger member states to support cohesion and the internal market were emphasized, referencing historical practices of countries like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

Irina Von Wiese offered valuable lessons applicable to South Asia's regional integration efforts. She stressed the need for a gradual and inclusive integration process, economic equality among core member states, clear membership rules, and mechanisms for potential expulsion. Clear rules aligned with specific project objectives, creating irreversible economic interdependence, were deemed essential.

External pressures, exemplified by the Ukraine war, were highlighted as drivers of cooperation. Irina discussed the role of the climate emergency and global challenges such as migration in fostering regional and global cooperation. She addressed the changing landscape of global trade, with supply chains realigning based on geopolitical affiliations.

Expressing her personal perspective on Brexit, Irina hoped for the UK to rejoin the EU, acknowledging the complexity of such a process. She expressed willingness to engage in further discussion and answer questions on these topics, underlining the importance of ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

PRIORITIZING HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA: LESSONS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi

***Associate Professor, School of Politics and International Relations,
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad***



Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi conveyed gratitude for the warm introduction and extended thanks to Dr. Riaz Shad for hosting the conference on the European Union's integration model. He also congratulated the organizers for orchestrating such a significant event,

underlining the importance of exploring lessons that South Asia can draw from the European Union. During his talk, Dr. Siddiqi outlined three key questions he aimed to address. He initiated the discussion by delving into the conceptual and theoretical aspects of human security. Traditional international relations, he noted, often focus on state-centric, military-oriented security. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 prompted scholars, including South Asian experts like Mehbub Ul Haq and Amartya Singh, to challenge this perspective. They argued for a broader understanding of security, encompassing economic, cultural, and social dimensions, and contended that security is not solely provided by the state but, in many cases, denied by it.

The second question he tackled concerned human security indicators in present-day South Asia and associated issues. Dr. Siddiqi likely discussed specific challenges and concerns related to human security in the region. The final part of his speech involved extracting lessons that South Asia could glean from the European Union in terms of human security and integration.

Dr. Siddiqi emphasized a shift from traditional security paradigms to a more holistic view of human security, crediting South Asian scholars for contributing to this discourse. His speech aimed to illuminate the relevance of human security in South Asia and how the region could benefit from the European Union's experiences. He posed critical questions about the focus of security, including prioritizing the state, the people, or society, the threats human security should address (such as poverty, malnutrition, underdevelopment), and the means to achieve it through political systems, democratic participation, and power-sharing.

He highlighted two broad conceptualizations of human security: one from the 1990s, encompassing seven areas of human threats, and a narrower definition focusing on three essential freedoms: freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity.

Dr. Siddiqi asserted that achieving human security is feasible in an interdependent world, citing the European Union as an example of how economic cooperation can replace conflict. He provided a snapshot of the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings in South Asia, revealing disparities within the region.

The core of Dr. Siddiqi's speech emphasized the importance of redefining security to encompass human well-being and provided insights into the challenges and opportunities in South Asia, drawing lessons from the European Union's model of

cooperation. He highlighted a structural human security deficit in South Asia, addressing socio-economic inequalities, a widening rich-poor gap, and challenges in redistribution, job creation, and women's participation in the labour force.

Dr. Siddiqi emphasized the importance of women's labour force participation, particularly in South Asia where historically low rates persist. He also underscored the discrimination and marginalization faced by linguistic, ethnic, religious, cultural, and caste minorities in the region.

Providing examples of systematic discrimination and marginalization, such as the Taliban's restrictions on women's education and mistreatment of Christian minorities in Pakistan, Dr. Siddiqi highlighted the lessons that South Asia could draw from the European Union. He acknowledged Europe's developed status but cautioned against overlooking its own social, political, and economic challenges, including democratic erosion and the rise of far-right political movements.

Dr. Siddiqi's speech aimed to shed light on the structural issues affecting human security in South Asia, urging caution when comparing the region to Europe due to their unique challenges. He concluded by sharing two essential lessons for South Asia:

Institute the Rule of Law: Dr. Siddiqi stressed the importance of establishing the rule of law, citing the example of Belgium's stability during a two-year political deadlock. He recommended prioritizing the rule of law, democracy, political participation, federalism, and power-sharing to maintain security and stability.

Transcendence: Dr. Siddiqi explained the concept of transcendence, urging South Asia to transform its current reality marked by conflict, violence, and geopolitical competition. Drawing from Europe's post-World War II transformation, he emphasized the need for

South Asia to focus on economic interdependence and a shared future, addressing issues like poverty, healthcare, education, malnutrition, and socio-economic deprivation.

In summary, Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi highlighted the imperative for South Asia to embrace these lessons, fostering human security and promoting stability and well-being across the region.

GIVING PRIMACY TO ECONOMIC INTERESTS: LESSONS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dr Vaqar Ahmad

***Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute
(SDPI), Islamabad***



In his address, Dr. Vaqar Ahmad underscores the significance of the European Union's economic integration and cooperation model, emphasizing its potential as a valuable template for South Asian countries to follow. He highlights key aspects of the EU's approach that can serve as instructive examples for South Asia's regional development and economic collaboration. The EU's integration model, marked by its achievements such as a single market and the adoption of the euro currency, has proven resilient over time, transforming Europe and shaping its global interactions.

Dr. Vaqar Ahmad suggests that the consolidation of economic power in the EU, particularly through the promotion of free movement of goods, services, capital, people, and resources, has been instrumental in creating a formidable economic union. The deep intertwining of European nations' interests has provided stability to economic relations in the region.

One notable outcome of the EU's integration model is the tangible economic benefits it has delivered to various segments of European societies, including the middle class, marginalized populations, and the poorest segments. Early migration patterns from wealthier to less affluent EU countries facilitated trade gains, resulting in economic growth, increased trade, job creation, and infrastructure improvements. The success of this approach is evident in the subsequent reverse migration as infrastructure in formerly poorer EU countries improved.

Addressing trade dispute resolution, Dr. Vaqar Ahmad highlights the European Commission's role as a noteworthy example. South Asian countries can draw inspiration from the EU's mechanism and consider establishing similar institutions to enhance cooperation and effectively resolve conflicts.

Moreover, the EU's emphasis on investment cooperation and creating an attractive investment climate provides crucial lessons for South Asian nations. Efforts to reduce bureaucratic hurdles, minimize corruption, and strengthen the rule of law can foster an environment conducive to attracting foreign investors and promoting economic cooperation.

In conclusion, Dr. Vaqar Ahmad's insightful perspective suggests that South Asian countries should derive inspiration from the European Union's successful economic integration model. By emulating the EU's experience, South Asian nations have the potential to resolve trade disputes effectively, enhance investment cooperation, and improve their investment climates. These actions, mirroring the European Union's journey, can ultimately lead to economic growth, job creation, and improved infrastructure, benefiting not only the middle class but also marginalized and underprivileged segments of society.

PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Prof. Dr. Amna Mehmood

International Islamic University Islamabad



Prof. Dr. Amna Mehmood expressed her gratitude in her speech, extending thanks to Dr. Riaz Shad, faculty members, and the students present at NUML University for their active participation in the enriching debate on the European Union. Dr. Amna stressed the importance of

understanding the historical background of the European Union to comprehend the prospects for peace. She highlighted the various wars and conflicts in Europe that led to the formation of the European Union as a preventive measure against future conflicts.

Dr. Amna acknowledged the unique challenges faced by South Asia, particularly in the context of India-Pakistan relations. While emphasizing that South Asia extends beyond India and Pakistan, she recognized the significant influence and responsibilities these two nations hold in the region.

She spoke about the aspiration for South Asian regional integration, drawing parallels with the European Union. However, she acknowledged the deep-seated scars and internal conflicts in the region due to historical invasions. Dr. Amna emphasized the pivotal role of elites in driving regional integration, drawing from the European Union's

success story, which she attributed in part to an enlightened elite working towards prosperity and peace.

Addressing the issue of over-securitization in South Asia, Dr. Amna argued that an excessive focus on security hasn't yielded significant benefits. She suggested a shift from excessive security spending towards human resource development, food security, and addressing issues like malnutrition and illiteracy. Dr. Amna emphasized that a nation's international relevance is determined by its national strength, with peace being a fundamental need.

Discussing Pakistan's global relevance, Dr. Amna urged the country to look beyond its traditional alliances, especially in the changing global landscape. She highlighted the importance of offering value in international relations, such as trade options, to create mutually beneficial relationships.

Dr. Amna advocated for balanced relationships within South Asia and beyond, suggesting a departure from traditional rivalries and promoting stronger ties with neighboring countries facing similar challenges. She emphasized the role of the private sector in driving trade even during politically strained times.

On the importance of rule of law and institutionalization, Dr. Amna stressed their significance for stability and continuity. Drawing lessons from the European Union, she advised patience in the process of regional integration and a focus on maintaining national strength.

Dr. Amna argued that economic strength should support military power and cautioned against overinvesting in the military at the expense of development sectors. She introduced the concept of minimum deterrence, emphasizing the importance of human security, food security, and non-conventional security.

Highlighting economic development as a key driver for peace, Dr. Amna concluded by emphasizing the need for self-development, making Pakistan relevant on the global stage, and exploring new avenues for cooperation. She underscored the importance of good diplomacy and equality in building sustainable international relationships.

While acknowledging the European Union as a model, Dr. Amna emphasized the need for South Asia to evolve its unique model for cooperation and conflict resolution, with a focus on finding solutions through political will in day-to-day affairs.

FINDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad

Jean Monnet Chair

Professor Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad succinctly outlined the key findings and recommendations emerging from the conference:

Regional Differences:

- Europe and South Asia recognized as distinct regions with differing historical, political, economic, and social trajectories. These differences influence approaches to regional cooperation and integration.

Importance of Political Will:

- Emphasis on the crucial role of political will in resolving disputes and fostering political cooperation.
- Drawing lessons from Europe's successful experiences in overcoming regional challenges.

Economic Capacity and Trade:

- Recognition of the need for South Asia to develop its economic capacity for increased trade and market complementarity.
- Highlighting Europe's success as a model for economic empowerment and regional growth.

Transition to Human Security:

- Europe's shift from traditional security to human security noted as an essential social lesson.
- Adoption of the rule of law and a move from a realist to a liberal political approach highlighted.

Gratitude and Encouragement:

- Professor Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad expressed gratitude to conference speakers, faculty members, students, and attendees.
- He encouraged students to use insights gained during the conference in planning their futures and applying knowledge practically.

VOTE OF THANKS

Dr. M. Zubair Iqbal

Pro-Rector Research & Strategic Initiatives (R&SI) Division

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Greetings and Good Afternoon,

We gather here today to celebrate the culmination of the One Day International Conference, a milestone event that has significantly added to our achievements. I extend sincere thanks to each one of you for your invaluable contributions to the success of the Conference on

"European Union as a Model for Regional Integration: Lessons for South Asia." The seamless organization of this event was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Jean Monnet Chair and the Department of International Relations at NUML, Islamabad.

The inaugural session was distinguished by the esteemed presence of our Chief Guest from the EU delegation to Pakistan and the thought-provoking keynote address delivered by the former Ambassador to the EU. Our academic sessions were enriched by the expertise of notable figures, including an associate professor from Durham Law School, UK, a dedicated PhD scholar from NUML's IR Department, and an expert in economic affairs. We were also honored to host a former member of the European Parliament among our distinguished speakers.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to all participants, particularly the guest speakers, students, and faculty. Your insightful contributions on regional integration, drawing parallels from Europe and aspiring for South Asia, formed the core of this conference. Each perspective shared has propelled this gathering into a platform for unique learning and understanding.

The journey of exploring the EU model of regional integration and extracting insights for our South Asian context has been truly enlightening. The in-depth discussions, ranging from the comparison of regional integration frameworks to the role of SAFTA in promoting regional cooperation, were both enriching and eye-opening.

I express my deep appreciation to the organizers of this conference, the IR department, the Jean Monnet Chair, and especially Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz Shad. The successful culmination of this significant event is a testament to your tireless efforts behind the scenes.

In our commitment to disseminate knowledge, we look forward to publishing the conference proceedings and ensuring that our discoveries reach the appropriate audiences.

With optimism, I believe that today's discussions will inspire further research and foster deeper collaborations on regional integration. A sincere thanks to all for your enthusiastic participation, contributing to the lasting memory of this event.

JazakAllah Khair. May Allah bless our endeavours. Ameen.





