

## Europe's image

One of the main challenges for the future will undoubtedly be the migration of a highly skilled workforce from Asia (see for instance, "Globalisation and Labour Markets: Policy Issues Arising from the Emergence of China and India", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper No 63, November 2007, [www.oecd.org/migration](http://www.oecd.org/migration)).

Is European society ready to accommodate large numbers of these knowledge immigrants? And what is more, are south Asians willing to make up for the shortage of labourers in Europe?

Highly skilled Indians, for example, do not always feel attracted to Europe and not only because of language barriers. We need to find out how Europe is experienced by them. A recent report from the European Commission shows that, at a time when international relations between Asia and Europe have significantly increased, the mutual awareness between both continents remains unchanged. Stereotypes on both sides still represent Europe as introspective and old-fashioned, and Asia as a remote and exotic continent that brings more challenges than opportunities.

Many there think of Europe not as a land of milk and honey, but rather as conservative and plagued by racism. In other words, Europe needs to confront a very negative image in Asia. Therefore, we need to think about how to find the key to changing this view. Asia has been learning from Europe for decades, but has Europe ever asked whether it can learn from another culture, such as India's?

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Belgium Forthcoming conference: "Europe and South Asia: Going Beyond the Stereotypes", Ghent, May 2008, details at [www.cultuurwetenschap.be](http://www.cultuurwetenschap.be).

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