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A challenge for daydreaming Europe
Knowledge migration and the migration of knowledge
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European countries are facing enormous difficulties in finding skilled labour today. Norway has difficulty in filling up 40 percent of its skilled labour force (New Europe 12/5); countries like Belgium and Germany face similar shortages. One of the solutions, as proposed by the **OECD**, is to attract a highly educated labour force from elsewhere. India is one of the very few countries that have such highly educated human resources who are also willing to relocate to other parts of the world. However, is European society ready to accommodate large numbers of these knowledge immigrants? And what is more, are Indians willing to fill up the shortage of labourers in Europe? Highly skilled Indians often do not feel attracted to Europe. This has not only to do with language barriers. Rather, an explanation must be sought in how Indians look at Europe. For them, Europe does not represent the 'land of milk and honey,' but is rather a conservative, socially and culturally protectionist region that is plagued by racism. In other words, Europe confronts a very negative image in India. The response that we, Europeans, generally offer to this negative perception remains limited to promoting our positive self-image. In our eyes, Europe is the rich culture that has brought forth the sciences, the Enlightenment, democracy, the principles of equality and tolerance, the Human Rights, etc. However, even though this image contains truth, the repetition of this self-image has an adv - erse effect: the image of Europe as racist, ethnocentric and pretentious is reinforced. Where does the negative perception of Europe in countries like India it come from and why do attempts at turning it around actually reinforce the existing image? The positive self-image of Europe has been wellknown in the world for centuries. It is the same image as the one that the colonial powers spread about Europe. It showed a superior European culture where peace, equality and tolerance ruled, and which should be emulated by the colonised. This image of Europe was, at the same time, brutally contradicted by the daily realities in the colonies. Nevertheless, it is this positive image that Europe still promotes today as the ideal example that should be followed by the rest of the world. Europe talks about human rights and toleration, about equality and religious freedom, and moralises about underdevelopment, poverty, superstition, inequality, corruption, etc. in other cultures. Of course, Europe does have a lot to offer: it has institutions such as the International Court of Justice, systems of social security, and it can follow an independent course of action that may offer a counterweight against the politics of the US or China, etc. The problem, however, is that this image still does not tally with reality: besides its valuable characteristics, Europe faces challenges that it does not have solutions for: a growing unease to deal with plurality; increasing racism and violence; etc. Is it then so surprising that rising powers like India feel that Europe's self-description sounds quite hollow? Therefore, if Europe wants to change this negative perception of being racist and pretentious and become an attractive destination for Indians to live and work, it will need to challenge the self-representation that it has promoted for centuries. In order to provide an alternative to Europe's PR story, it will have to start to seriously reflect on the 'blemishes on its shining armour,' such as colonisation, intolerance, or its attitude of superiority towards other cultures.

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