



Foundations of EU-SAARC interregional institutional relations

Dr. Jayaraj Amin

Department of Political Science, Mangalore University, Mangalagangothri, Mangalore, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Interregional institutional relations have become part of international relations and studies. The EU is a forerunner in building and supporting inter-regional relations, and it has vibrant relations with Regional Organisations around the world. However, its relation with the SAARC is minimal, partly because of the political situation in South Asia, particularly the India-Pakistan conflicts, and partly because of acceptable programmes not coming forth from the EU, coupled with SAARC's inability to forge relations with external agencies on its own. Therefore, except MOU on administrative cooperation, which still serves as the foundation of EU-SAARC relations, other proposals and initiatives have not fructified. The EU has clearly shifted its focus from the SAARC to the bilateral relations with the countries of the South Asian region. Therefore, complementing bilateral relations, there is a need to go beyond the MOU and learn from the experience of each other and to strengthen institutional cooperation for the benefit of both. A regular dialogue along with joint working on commonly identified areas and principles could go a long way in promoting institutional, regional and national welfare goals of both the regions.

Keywords: Inter-regionalism, inter-institutional relations, mou, saarc, european union

Introduction

The development of Regional Organisations (ROs) is often conditioned by the regional situation, member states' domestic situation, perspective towards the region and their response to regional and global developments. Similarly, the ROs do have external postures and the nature of their relation with the outside world – countries, regions and organisations - depends upon the nature of their internal situation, relation and structure. This study in particular focuses on the relation between these two ROs, in the backdrop of an emerging distinct academic and diplomatic field – Inter-regionalism. Notwithstanding diverse interpretations, inter-regionalism refers broadly to the relations between the two distinct regions, besides bilateral relations of the member countries or through a multilateral forum ^[1]. The Inter-regional relation could be both formal and informal. This study focuses on inter-regionalism, effected through ROs or Inter-regional cooperation (IRC) that promote sharing of the experiences, knowledge, and resources for realising common objectives.

In this context, the study of the institutional relations between the two ROs- the EU and the SAARC- that best represent two diverse cases of the structure and success becomes significant. The EU is often hailed as a model for other ROs because of the depth of integration it has been able to achieve, encompassing a wide range of issues and having its own political/ legal personality and identity. The EU also has a bearing on the understanding of the concept and operation of nation-states, with elements of supra-nationalism conditioning its working, but without dislodging the sense of nationalism. On the other hand, is the SAARC, largely an inter-governmental organisation characterised by negligible power of action and with a low level of cooperation in the volatile region. Generally, the ROs with such a minimum level of intra-regional cooperation are unlikely to have an external posture, but SAARC does open up to the world and interact with the rest of the world. In its dealings, the level of interaction and collaboration may not be as high as it is in the case of the EU-ASEAN or EU-

Mercosur, etc., but it does reflect the willingness of the SAARC to learn from the experiences of others. Therefore, the study of the EU and SAARC inter-regional cooperation becomes pertinent.

EU support framework: The EU today is generally acknowledged as the most developed and most integrated RO. EU, therefore, has become a reference point, if not a model, to other ROs. On its part, the EU has also shown willingness to help those ROs that seek to learn from and share the EU's integration experience as well as benefit from the cooperation. The EU's support to the ROs could be traced back at least to the 1969 Yaounde convention, where it suggested extending preferential duty rates on imports from the African regional grouping ^[2]. Indeed, the EU's executive arm, the European Commission, supports the new regionalism based on the view that outward-looking or open regional integration is a complement or facilitator of multilateral trade liberalisation ^[3]. Such support is also an important part of the EU's development policy (distinct from member states'), particularly in those countries and areas that have shown special interest in receiving assistance from the EU. The development cooperation policy supports regional groupings through capacity building and institutional strengthening by way of technical assistance, training, etc., assistance to the private sector, and short-term balance of payment/budget support to meet the effects of the integration process ^[4].

SAARC and External Relations: The countries of South Asia have vibrant relations with EU member states. But at the EU organisation level, South Asia's direct contact with the EU began only in 1973 in the context of Britain's accession to the European Communities (EC), precursor of the EU. The traditional ties were strengthened by the conclusion of the EC's commercial cooperation agreements with countries of South Asia. The first of these agreements was concluded with India in 1973, followed by other countries ^[5].

Nonetheless, these bilateral relations and interactions have not complemented relations between the two regions at the organisational level. Partly it is because of the political situation that existed in South Asia at the time of its inception in 1985. When Bangladesh proposed institutionalised South Asian Cooperation, while India apprehended neighbours 'ganging up' against India in the proposed RO and proposal being supported by western powers with anti-Soviet disposition, Pakistan was apprehensive of India's domination [6]. Finally, the SAARC comes into existence with the stipulation (Article X) that the new organisation would avoid discussion on bilateral and contentious issues, and decisions would be taken on a unanimous basis [7].

Further, to avoid any external influence in the region through funding (Indian perspective), despite smaller countries' view to the contrary, it was provided in the financial arrangements (Article IX) of the SAARC charter that contributions by member-states for financing activities of the association would be voluntary and external finance may be mobilised in case internal resources are insufficient [8]. This was, despite the SAARC's stated objective (Article I (h) of the Charter), which sought to "Cooperate with international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes." The provisions reflected the aspiration not to be a closed system, but also a caution for relations on equal terms and refusal of sponsored cooperation.

But, with the change of the global situation with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the continuation of antipathy towards external factors became difficult. When most regions sought to strengthen their ROs to cope with emerging challenges, SAARC could not remain an exception to the trend for long with its marginal presence in global trade. In this changed context, opening up sufficiently to the outside world had become absolutely necessary, and external support/assistance for SAARC activities could no longer remain anathema. The general mood in favour of economic reforms for greater liberalisation and globalisation among the political elites of India and Pakistan- two bigger and important countries of South Asia – proved conducive for the changed approach of SAARC towards external factors and linkages. So the SAARC too now began to slowly consolidate its base by focusing on economic cooperation, although with hiccups. But given the resource constrain of the organisation and also certain expertise for institution building, progress required external support.

However, the move was extremely cautious. Therefore, when the question of dealing with external agencies, countries and organisations interested in SAARC was raised, SAARC's approach was based on the interim guidelines of the third session of the Council of Ministers in 1987 which suggested that, "The Secretary-General should inform the requesting organisation that all initiatives for such linkages, contacts or consultative status would come from SAARC itself [9]." In other words, SAARC was still sensitive to the issue of external linkages, and the guidelines became the standard criterion and approach of the SAARC in most of its subsequent dealings with external agencies. Nevertheless, not wanting to be a closed system and at the same time, not wanting to be dependent on outside powers, the third summit (1987) instructed the Standing Committee to have an 'examination' *inter alia*, on the aspect of establishment of relations with similar organisations' [10].

The mandate given by the Council of Ministers to the Secretary-General in its fifth session in 1988 on the question of contacting organisations with similar aims and purposes (in the lines of its third session) was endorsed in the fourth SAARC summit declaration in 1988 [11]. As a follow-up, the Standing Committee later in its thirteenth session (1990) authorised the secretariat "to share information and exchange reports, studies and publications with the EC and ASEAN to begin with, in the identified areas of cooperation", a recommendation which was accepted by the Council of Ministers in their eighth session on 18-19 November 1990 at Male [12]. The decision was accepted by the fifth summit in Male [13].

This was indeed an important step both in terms of opening up to the outside world and in the direction of the EC-SAARC relationship. Subsequently, the SAARC signed MOUs and agreements with a number of international and regional organisations, including the EU, but the cautious approach was not discarded. It was vigilant on proposals that projected restructuring of intra-regional relations or altered member states' domestic, bilateral or global positions/priorities. SAARC either preferred agreements on its own initiative or accepted agreements without conditionalities or imposition of obligations on member states.

Therefore, SAARC did not have many problems in having agreements/MOUs with UNCTAD, ESCAP, UNICEF, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), UNDP, ITU etc., which were beneficial to the region or in accepting SAARC-Japan Special Fund or Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which focused on broad activities such as culture, regular interaction and exchange of information, etc. But EC/EU's proposals, which reflected its larger concerns and thrust areas or which required restructuring of intra-regional relations, were being considered by SAARC with caution. SAARC accorded priority to certain areas of its concern in relation to the EU instead of blindly pursuing cooperation at any level. These call for the closer scrutiny of EU-SAARC institutional relations.

EC/EU-SAARC Institutional Relations

After the creation of SAARC, the European Parliament showed interest in SAARC and called upon the European Commission to contact SAARC to explore the possibility of cooperation [14]. However, SAARC was cool to the proposal. This was because the SAARC was still sensitive to the issue of external linkages, coupled with the consensus emphasised in the organisation and the lack of independent power to the secretariat to deal with such issues. India, in particular, was reluctant to deepen external linkages. It was still arguing that "SAARC will consider cooperation with other international/regional organisations on its own terms and in terms of its own priorities. This is in order to ensure self-reliance in the region" [15]. Against imprudent external assistance, India was suggesting (in the fifteenth session of the Standing Committee) that there should be identification of projects that cannot be financed before seeking collaboration from outside agencies, although Pakistan was in favour of accepting help from abroad given on 'honourable' terms [16]. Therefore, not until 1996 MOU between the EU and SAARC concrete progress in the relationship was evident between the two.

In giving a push to this cooperation, the EU's "Towards a new Asia strategy" (1994) became important. This strategy

was devised to increase the EU presence in the Asian region that was witnessing fast economic growth in the 1990s, prioritising, among others, support to ASEAN and SAARC, although South East Asia hogged the limelight^[27]. This support to ROs was shaped by its perception of complementarity between regional integration and multilateralism, and the EU's interest in an open, market-based global trading system. Earlier, the EU was willing to help SAARC if asked, but the mood in SAARC was not encouraging^[28]. But now that the SAARC was willing to explore cooperation areas in the changed context with the EU (as evident in the SAARC Council of Ministers decision in 1993), the EU had no reason not to cooperate with SAARC; instead, it was reciprocated and encouraged by the EU.

Giving effect to the changed scenario, a meeting of the Expert group consisting of SAARC member country representatives was convened at the SAARC secretariat (20-22 December 1994) to formulate a common position of SAARC member states on EU-SAARC Cooperation and to consider the draft "inter-institutional cooperation agreement" between the two organisations. The group, approving the draft, recommended that the Secretary-General might be authorised to sign the agreement. But it required a decision by the member states, which did not come forth immediately, thus delaying the agreement between the EU and the SAARC.

MOU on Administrative Cooperation

The draft inter-institutional cooperation was finally approved by the EC and the SAARC in the form of an MOU on Administrative cooperation on July 10, 1996, in Brussels. The MOU was valid for three years from the date of entry into force and was to be tacitly approved thereafter on an annual basis with provision for termination from both sides (Article 8). The MOU aimed to promote cooperation between the Commission and the SAARC by sharing their experience and providing mutual institutional support. It sought to focus cooperation on three areas - exchange of information on issues of mutual interest; staff training to strengthen the functioning of the SAARC institutions; and technical assistance, besides other areas jointly agreed by the parties (Article 2)^[19].

The MOU is a broad agreement between the EU and SAARC. Beyond cooperation in institutional relations, training and exchange of information, the MOU does not cover any significant areas. It does not even touch upon major areas of concern to SAARC, nor does it provide for any performance evaluation mechanism. Compared to the draft institutional cooperation, in the MOU, the provision for the creation of a Joint Consultative Committee consisting of Commission and SAARC representatives to increase inter-institutional dialogue and to promote and monitor cooperation activities initiated under the agreement (article 7) was notably missing^[20]. Instead, in the MOU, it was simply stated that to further activities, regular contacts will be organised between the European Commission and SAARC "through appropriate arrangements". This indicates the reluctance on the part of SAARC to accept the efficacy of the joint committee and implications following upon 'monitoring' of cooperation activities.

Nevertheless, the MOU represented: a). A first and a significant step in building EU-SAARC relations;

b). SAARC's willingness to gradually open up and to deal with others on beneficial terms; c). Desire of SAARC to enrich itself by sharing others' experience as well as strengthen its own organisation; d). EU's support to regional organisations and recognition of bloc-to-bloc relations; e). Legitimacy and encouragement to initiatives on future EU-SAARC relations. Thus, the MOU formed the foundation for an increased EU-SAARC relationship and interaction has come to witness many proposals, although some of them were not accepted or served limited purposes. This includes;

1. "Cechchini-Style Report": The proposal to draw up a "Cechchini-Style Report" (a study sponsored by the European Commission to estimate the effects of the Single Market in the EC) on the "Costs of not integrating South Asian economies" was made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the UK in anticipation of the support of the EU in 1997^[21]. It was expected that the report would give further impetus to trade liberalisation and regional cooperation, and drum up public support. However, the EU did not show interest in pursuing the project as it held that such a proposal would not address the existing problems of South-Asia, notably concerning Pakistan and India, and having limited time and resources^[22]. In the absence of the Commission's support, the initiative did not materialise, and in its failure, SAARC had no role. But considering the mood of the SAARC, it could be said that even if the EU were to support it, it was unlikely to be accepted by the SAARC, as SAARC was opposed to any sponsored study (without South Asian scholarship) with high media publicity.

2. EU-SAARC Special Fund: In formal consultations between the Troika of the EU and foreign ministers of SAARC, held on 23 September 1998 on the side lines of the 53rd UNGA in New York, the SAARC side proposed that to concretise EU-SAARC Cooperation, an EU-SAARC fund could be established to finance mutually acceptable projects. As the then Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Chairman of the SAARC Council of Ministers, opined that such a fund could help in areas such as training SAARC secretariat staff, diplomatic training and projects on environmental and coastal conservation^[23]. However, the demand for such an EU-SAARC special fund in the lines of the existing SAARC-Japan special fund was not considered feasible by the European Commission as it was of the opinion that cooperation between SAARC member states encouraged by the EC had very limited results with focus mainly on intellectual exchanges, and as seen in the SAARC-Japan special fund, donor have limited control/influence over the management of the fund that are not in accordance with the existing EU financial rules, and it would not add more value to the present cooperation instruments (MOU, budget lines) that are there at the disposal EU^[24]. The result is that there have been no breakthroughs in these matters and financing of activities outside the MOU, although the creation of such a fund on mutually agreed terms and conditions would have given a boost to EU-SAARC institutional relations. But it is also true that a special fund in which the EU would tightly control the finance and activities in the SAARC region would not have been approved by the SAARC.

3. SAREC-SP: In the context of the MOU between the EU and SAARC enabling the implementation of specific projects and programmes, the EC Commission sent a draft financing agreement between the EU and SAARC to implement a project entitled “South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign – Support Project (SAREC-SP)”. The Rinderpest, also known as cattle plague, was attempted to be eliminated by the Global Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (GREC) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in collaboration with the EU, which was the main donor.

The SAREC-SP proposal was a part of the EU’s new Asia strategy that could have increased its presence in South Asia. Additionally, it was envisioned that such a project would promote regional and sub-regional coordination in the veterinary field, thereby strengthening political ties between the countries of South Asia. But, unlike Africa, with the exception of Pakistan, the incidence of rinderpest was less in the SAARC region. Therefore, though the proposal was welcomed by the SAARC Standing Committee in its twenty-second session in 1996, it stressed at the same time that projects to be undertaken should reflect the region’s priorities [25]. The same was again stressed in the reports of the Eighteenth session of the SAARC Council of Ministers [26].

Hence, when the concurrence of member states was conveyed to the European Commission in January 1998 by the Secretary-General of SAARC, the agreement was noted as still not concluded “due to some additional comments/suggested changes to the proposed agreement by one member state” [27]. The parties have maintained confidentiality on the issue, but here the Standing Committee’s suggestion in its twenty-third session in 1997 becomes important. The Standing Committee while dealing with the note prepared by the SAARC Secretariat on the EU proposal on SAREC-SP (Document No. SAARC/SUMMIT.9/SC.23/12), suggested that the member states may examine the proposal in the light of the comments of Government of India and forward their view to the Secretariat to enable it to approach EU regarding the finalisation of the financing agreement [28].

Therefore, it can be deduced that the Indian government had reservations about the financial as well as the nature of the proposed project, which was not a priority area for SAARC. The financial proposition with ambiguities on its emphasis on private sector involvement, the nature of intra-regional coordination required, the nature of the EU’s commitment/participation in the project, and the stipulations amounting to control, etc., may not have appealed to the Indian government. Therefore, it appeared that differences over the financing of the project between the EU and SAARC could not be bridged, and the Standing Committee at its twenty-fifth session, considering the secretariat note on SAREC-SP and the Indian government’s comments, decided that “the proposal in its present form need not be pursued” [29]. Although the project was not outright rejected, it is still not permitted in SAARC, despite SAREC, supported by the FAO are being implemented at the national level.

4. Cumulative Rules of Origin: EU for the first time took an interest in giving effect to the EU-SAARC MOU spirit by authorising its Secretary-General in 1999 to negotiate with the European Commission in accordance with approved guidelines, “acceptable programmes” in economic

matters [30]. These issues were also addressed at the EU-SAARC meeting on the sidelines of the 54th session of the UNGA in 1999 as a means to strengthen cooperation. As a follow-up, in October 1999, modalities were finalised for implementing projects in four areas: i) Facilitating access to the single European market, including directives, official documents, etc. related to the single European market ii) Implementation of the EU-GSP scheme, including cumulative rules of origin. iii) Drawing on the EU Experience for the SAFTA process. iv) Evolving common standards and harmonisation with international obligations, including certification, testing, etc [31].

However, central to the economic cooperation between EU and SAARC countries was the EU’s GSP (which gave privileged treatment to LDC products) through which most of the trade between the two is structured. The GSP is subject to the strict conditions of the ‘Rules of origin’ [32]. In the trading pattern of South Asia, these rules of origin were important because of the considerable interdependence or value addition in certain common trading (export) items of the SAARC countries. Since under EC/EU’s ‘regional cumulation’ provisions, which aimed at encouraging regional integration among developing countries’ economies, derogation was permitted from strict condition of rules of origin, SAARC countries on 5th January 2000 presented a request to the EU through their Secretariat to be included in this regional cumulation of origin system having complied with conditions of inclusion in the GSP- members of regional group and ready for administrative cooperation with the EU through the Secretariat [33].

Hence, on 2nd November 1999, the EC member states approved the Commission’s proposal to include SAARC countries in the regional cumulation system. It was published in the Official Journal of the EC of 26 July 2000, giving effect to the proposal pending the initial obligation for administrative cooperation as required by the EU [34].

The extension of the GSP cumulative origin clause to SAARC countries was an important event in the otherwise limited EU-SAARC cooperation. As per provisions, in the transmission of the required undertaking by the SAARC member states regarding rules regulating trade, the involvement of the SAARC Secretariat was important since it gave an anchoring position to the Secretariat. The benefit of the cumulative origin clause is derived by the concerned member states, and the SAARC as an institution does not directly benefit. Yet, the extension of such a facility to SAARC member states, enabled by and through the SAARC, provided certain legitimacy to the SAARC and increased attention towards it by its member states, as well as by the EU. This, in effect, has increased the position of SAARC in its dealings with the EU for long.

Post-MOU stagnation: The intense moment that EU-SAARC institutional relations witnessed once began to recede gradually, as could be gauged by the mood of both organisations. The institutional relations tended to be low, with even the MOU focusing only on administrative cooperation without addressing the basic issues relating to economic cooperation or holding a regular ‘dialogue’ to evolve common perspectives. Partly it was because the SAARC did not evince much interest in the EU’s general support to ROs, and its reluctance, at times, opposition to external assistance in the initial years of its formation, made it difficult for the EU to extend a helping hand to support

regional projects to be executed by the SAARC. Supplementing this were the internal conflicts and lack of cohesion in South Asia that made it difficult for external powers to volunteer to sponsor any regional projects. SAARC, as an institution also in reality was not given autonomy to deal with others and unanimity principle for decisions complicated the issues in the backdrop of contentious issues and conflicts between member countries. On the other hand, the EU, which began to recognise the economic progress of the region, began to show interest in the region with the revisiting of the New Asia Strategy. Yet it had no concrete proposals/programmes for cooperation with SAARC for long. Moreover, once the importance of the region was recognised, unmindful of the peculiarities and sensitivities of the region, it was suggesting programmes/projects requiring restructuring of intra-regional relations or prescriptions that amounted to control of the project. This is evident in the EU's proposal, like SAREC-SP or in the context of demand for EU-SAARC special fund, the Commission objecting to the proposal, stating that the EU's financial instruments do not permit projects over which it has no control [35].

SAARC was sensitive and cautious about the external projects where it perceived 'strings attached' or projects that implied intra-SAARC restructuring or projects with political intentions, such as promoting democracy, human rights, etc. The EU's perception that restructuring of intra-regional relations complements global trading arrangements was also a concern in South Asia, where diverse opinions *inter alia* existed on the nature of global trading arrangements and their impact. It has taken a long time for SAARC to change this extremely cautious approach, but by then the global situation, as well as the priorities of countries of South Asia has changed with increased intra-regional conflicts almost immobilising the SAARC.

Today, the SAARC has several MOUs with other regional and international organisations, and it has benefited the SAARC at some level. But none of them call for a deeper or restructuring of intra-regional relations unlike the expectations of the EU. EU-SAARC MOU (1996) is an important step in strengthening relations between the two organisations. The EU's provision of information, expertise and technical assistance, training, etc. to the SAARC secretariat helps the latter in strengthening the institutional fabric of the organisation. But unfortunately, there are no activities outside the MOU or any other EU-sponsored regional projects at the command of the SAARC, and the MOU has not made much headway since its acceptance.

Therefore, the EU-SAARC institutional relations have not advanced, unlike the EU's relations with other ROs like ASEAN, Mercosur, etc., despite the EU being accorded observer status since 2006. The EU too has not taken concrete steps to further EU-SAARC institutional relations. The European Parliament in March 2015 stated that in the "Development Cooperation Instrument" (DCI), 2014-20, "SAARC is recognised as the main actor in the process of regional integration and dialogue in Southern Asia" and there is a willingness "to expand partnership relations with SAARC" [36]. In its Regional Indicative Programme, 2021-2027, the EU mentions that it will review how to strengthen ROs like SAARC to realise its objectives of its Asia-Pacific strategy [37]. But in its Indo-Pacific strategy, the EU does not mention the SAARC, although it gives a lot of importance to ASEAN as an organisation [38]. The European Parliament

Fact Sheet on South Asia states that in 2024, the EU and SAARC launched a joint programme to enhance regional connectivity and promote sustainable energy [39]. This is yet to take any concrete shape. In other words, except for casual expressions of intent in some places, there is no real progress on EU-SAARC institutional relations. The EU today prefers to deal with the region at the bilateral level without complementing it through the strengthening of inter-regional institutional relations.

Concluding remarks

At present, there is a good interaction between EU and SAARC members, and the latter have been the beneficiaries of the EU's development cooperation. India has also institutionalised dialogue with the EU. So there is no fundamental opposition to SAARC's increased relations with the EU, although, at times, the nature of such inter-institutional relations might be contested. But in the backdrop of significant conflicts and changes taking place at the global level, including tariff threats by the US, there is a need to restart the process for stability and direction in the relations between the two regions. There are many areas in which the EU could assist. These include formulating the programmes for capacity building of the SAARC institutions, to help those adversely affected by new developmental paradigms, overcoming regional disparities emerging from regional integration, infrastructural development, disaster planning and setting up of a Parliamentary forum for SAARC, etc. Hence, a regular EU-SAARC 'dialogue' and joint working out of modalities and forms of cooperation in the mutually accepted areas could go a long way in strengthening SAARC as well as establishing a synergy between the two. With increased interaction of SAARC with the EU (as well as with other organisations), it is hoped that there will be further improvement in the political atmosphere of South Asia and EU-SAARC relations.

References

1. In addition to pure interregionalism, which involves relations between ROs, other related categories involve, 'transregionalism', where both state and non-state actors cooperate across regional boundaries and, quasi-interregionalism where diverse regional entities such as ROs and regional powers interact. Consequently, interregionalism encompasses a range of interactions: both formal and informal, led by both state and non-state actors, with different degrees of institutionalisation and capacity. See, Andréas Litsegård & Frank Mattheis, "Broadening the concept of interregionalism: beyond state-centrism and Eurocentrism", *Third World Quarterly*, 2024; 45(7):1273–1290, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2023.2274829>; Heiner Hanggi, Ralf Roloff and Jurgen Ruland, eds., *Interregionalism and International Relations: A Stepping Stone to Global Governance?*, New York, Routledge, 2006; Fredrik Soderbaum & Luk van Langenhove, "Introduction: The EU as a Global Actor and the Role of Interregionalism", *Journal of European Integration*, 2005; 27(3):249-262.
2. Communication from the Commission, Regional economic integration efforts, II European Community support to integration efforts throughout the developing

- world, Development, collection, vol.2, 06/96-11/97, http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/recueil/en/en13/en131_2.htm.
3. Communication from the Commission, Regional economic integration efforts_Conceptual framework, Development, collection, vol.2, 06/96-11/97, http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/recueil/en/en.13/en131_1.htm.
 4. Regional economic integration efforts, n.3; Europa/Development- Regional integration, European Union supports for regional economic integration efforts among developing countries, http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/sector/regional_en.htm.
 5. See, Jayaraj Amin, "European Union-South Asia Development Cooperation with special development to India", Australian and New Zealand Journal of European Studies, (Special Issue: Strategic Dialogue between the EU and Asia),2011:3(2):50-63; Jayaraj Amin, "European Development Policy with Special Reference to India", in Gulshan Sachdeva ed., Challenges in Europe Indian Perspectives, (Singapur, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 321-39; European Parliament, Fact Sheets on the European Union, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/erpl-app-public/factsheets/pdf/en/FTU_5.6.7.pdf
 6. S.D. Muni and Anuradha Muni, Regional Cooperation in South Asia, (New Delhi, National, 1984, 31-33; Dawn (Karachi) 29 May 1980
 7. SAARC Secretariat, Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, <https://www.saarc-sec.org/index.php/about-saarc/saarc-charter>
 8. Ibid
 9. Report of the Third session of the Ministers (18-19 June 1987) New Delhi, Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), June,1987:33(6):221-22
 10. Kathmandu Summit, November 4, *Declaration and Joint Press Release* (SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu) Press release, 1987, 11.
 11. Islamabad Summit, 31 December, Declaration and Joint Press release, SAARC secretariat, 1988, 16.
 12. "Report of the thirteenth session of the Standing Committee, 16-17 November 1990, Male", and "Report of the Eighth session of the Council of Ministers, 18-19 November 1990, Male," SAARC Documents Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia (December-1988-July), SAARC Secretariat,1991:3:135, 154.
 13. Male Summit, 23 November, Declaration and Joint Press Release, SAARC Secretariat, 1990, 10.
 14. Resolution of the European Parliament on Economic and Trade Relations between the European Community and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), 26 October 1988, Community – SAARC relations, Doc. A2-212/88; Hindustan Times (New Delhi) 8 December, 1985, 8, 17.
 15. Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Foreign Affairs Record (New Delhi), December,1991:37(12):256.
 16. Times of India (New Delhi) 5 November, 1991.
 17. Communication form the Commission to the Council, Towards a New Asia Strategy, COM(94) 314 final, Brussels, 13-07-1994, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/asem/asem_process/com95.htm.
 18. See, The European Community and South Asia, Interview with Juan Prat, Director-General for North-South Relations in the Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, European Union, Delegation of the European Commission, (New Delhi) December, 1993.
 19. "Memorandum of Understanding on Administrative Cooperation between the European Commission and SAARC", European Commission, Brussels; MOU Documents, Press release on the occasion of MOU, European Union, Delegation of the European Commission in India, Information Service 23/96 Brussels, 16 July 1996.
 20. Draft Inter-institutional agreement between the European Commission and SAARC, Report of the 20th session of the Standing Committee, 27-29 April 1995, New Delhi, Documents, n.32, Annex-VII, pp. 123-24.
 21. Project Outline attached to the 'Note for the attention of Vice-President Marin' by European Commission, Directorate General I B, South and South East Asia, Brussels Ref: AT/vg-h:\public\0632, dated 14-07-1997, para 4.
 22. 'Meeting Report' on Cechchini-style report for South Asia; visit of Mr. Marshall, UK Foreign and Commonwealth office, 14 July 1997, European Commission, Directorate-general IB, External Relations, South and South East Asia, Brussels, 15 July 1997, Ref: AT/vg-h:\public\0652 IB/c/1
 23. <http://www.webpage.com/hindu/daily/981004/03/03040006.htm>, dated 19/09/01; The Island, 1st October 1998, <http://www.is.lk/spot/sp0315/clip9.html>, dated 6/15/01; http://www.lanka.net/fm/press/1st_Oct_1998.html.
 24. Note to Michael Mc Geever, Head of New Delhi Delegation of the European Commission, Directorate-General IB, External Relations, South and South East Asia, Brussels, DG IB/CI/UA/vcD.9811409, 11 November 1998 and note, Ref: UA/vc\981014 dated 23 October 1998.
 25. "Twenty-second session, Report of the Standing Committee at New Delhi 16-18 December 1996", SAARC Documents: Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia, vol.VI, August 1995-July 1998 (SAARC Secretariat) October 1998, Part XVII (ii) para 43, p.80.
 26. "Eighteenth session of Council of Ministers, Male, May 10-11, 1997", SAARC Documents: Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia, vol.VI, August 1995-July 1998 (SAARC Secretariat) October 1998, part VIII (ii) para 11,12 pp. 144-45.
 27. "Report by the Secretary-General at the 25th session of the Standing Committee, Colombo, July 25-26, 1998", SAARC Documents: Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia, vol.VI, August 1995-July 1998 (SAARC Secretariat) October 1998, Part VIII, para 6, pp. 357-58.
 28. "Twenty-third session Report of the Standing Committee at Male, May 8-9, 1997", SAARC Documents: Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia, vol.VI, August 1995-July 1998 (SAARC Secretariat) October 1998, Part XIII (ii) para 29, p.127

29. "Twenty-fifth session, Report of the Standing Committee, Colombo, July 25-26, 1998", SAARC Documents: Milestones in the Evolution of Regional cooperation in South Asia, vol.VI, August 1995-July 1998 (SAARC Secretariat) October 1998, Part XIII (iv) para 30, p.217.
30. SAARC News letter (SAARC secretariat), March-April,1999:10(3, 4):2
31. SAARC New letter, vol. 10, nos. 9 and 10, September-October 1999, <http://saarc-sec.org/newslet/Sep-Oct99.htm>.
32. See, Council Regulation 2913/92 (EEC) *Official Journal of the European Communities* L302, dated 19-10-1992. The definitions of origin of products is particularly important in the case of two or more countries being involved in the production of a particular product.
33. Info flash, European Commission, External Relations Directorate General, Directorate Asia, Brussels, ERH3/MF/vcD (2000), 13 March 2000, Under the regional cumulation as the then Article 72a Stated that subject to condition, when goods originating in a country which is a member of regional group are worked or processed in another country of the same regional group they shall have the origin of the country of the regional group where last working or processing was carried out. "Commission regulation (EU) No. 1602/2000 of 24 July 2000, amending regulation (EEC) No. 2454/93 laying down provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/12 establishing the Community Customs Code", *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L 188, vol. 43, 26 July 2000.
34. Info flash, *ibid.*; *official Journal*, *ibid.*, Article 72(1), 72(3d), 72a, 72b.
35. Note to Michael McGeever, n.24.
36. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/551313/EPRS_ATA\(2015\)551313_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/551313/EPRS_ATA(2015)551313_EN.pdf)
37. Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/mip-2021-c2021-9251-asia-pacific-annex_en.pdf
38. European Commission, "The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific", Brussels, 16.9.2021 JOIN(2021) 24 final, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_2021_24_1_en.pdf
39. European Parliament, Fact sheets on European Union, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/erpl-app-public/factsheets/pdf/en/FTU_5.6.7.pdf