

REGIONAL PROGRAMME SAARC  
KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG

SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE  
HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE**  
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**„SOUTH ASIA AND EUROPE: AN INTERACTION ON REGIONAL  
INTEGRATION AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT“**

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## INTRODUCTION

South Asia has reached a pivotal point in time. Comprising the states of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and home to more than one-fifth of the world's population, the region has witnessed tremendous changes in the recent decades. The entire subcontinent is in transition and has reached a crossroads.

Despite a shared colonial past, the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have progressed along widely diverse paths of statehood. This finds its most visible expression not only in the tremendous variety of types of political systems, but also in the Subcontinent's struggles with a variety of challenges ranging from international terrorism and religious fundamentalism to large socio-political movements. On top of this, several states faced the challenge of liberalising their economies in order to enhance socio-economic development. Having this in mind, it does not come as a surprise that South Asia is home to persistent encounters between different notions of institution- and state buildings and normative foundation of nations. Furthermore, intra- as well as inter-state conflicts, poor infrastructure and a lack of cross-border connectivity hamper regional cooperation and integration considerably, rendering South Asia one of the least integrated regions in the world.

Nonetheless, today one can state that there is a greater awareness of the necessity for interstate rapprochement and regional cooperation to unleash new dynamics in the direction of a more integrated South Asia. This process is undoubtedly enforced through voices from within the region which are increasingly advocating a break with past trajectories in order to achieve security, economic development and public welfare, and the complex identity crises of the South Asian states. But what could the driving forces for regional cooperation be?<sup>1</sup>

Together with the South Asia Institute (SAI) of the Heidelberg University, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) endeavours to identify those driving forces and the common denominators for enhanced regional integration and political development in South Asia through a dialogue both within and between South Asia and Europe. By bringing together senior experts and practitioners from all over South Asia and leading scholars on South Asia from Germany, SAI and KAS hope to contribute to the common goal of an enhanced mutual understanding, deeper regional integration and closer cooperation between both world regions.

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<sup>1</sup> modified excerpt from *Siegfried O. Wolf et. al., South Asia at a Crossroads* (forthcoming)

## KEY QUESTIONS

- 1) According to the SAARC Charter of Democracy “all the Member States [have] evolved into multi-party democracies.” How do you assess this declaration in the light of the political developments in the states of South Asia between 2008 and 2013?
- 2) Foreign Policy and bilateral relations in South Asia are oftentimes discussed against the notion of Indian bilateralism versus the regionalism of its neighbouring states. How do you assess the challenges and synergies arising out of this purported relation?
- 3) The numerous security issues South Asia is facing are oftentimes deemed as a bottleneck for the opening up of bilateral and regional relations. How – in this light – do you assess the notion of a Regional Security Complex and its implications for more regional cooperation?
- 4) SAARC and the regional integration of South Asia are sometimes compared to similar processes at a later stage, notably the ASEAN or the European Union. Considering this, is there a South Asian way for regional integration?

## PROGRAMME

<b>Monday, 16 September</b>	<b>Conference "South Asia and Europe: An Interaction on Regional Integration and Political Development"</b>
Venue	Library South Asia Institute, Heinrich-Zimmer-Saal
09:30 – 10:00 hrs.	Registration and Tea
10:00 – 10:15 hrs.	Introductory Note by <i>Prof. Dr. Hans Harder</i> Acting Director, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University <i>Prof. Subrata Mitra, PhD (Rochester)</i> Chair, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute <i>Tomislav Delinic</i> Representative, Regional Programme SAARC, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
10:15 – 12:00 hrs.	<b>Session 1: South Asia Quo Vadis? Elections, Political Development and Democracy – A Strategic Assessment</b>
	<i>Dr. Nishchal Nath Pandey</i> Director, Centre for South Asian Studies, Kathmandu <b>Transition and Democratization in South Asia – A Reflection on Transformation Processes in the Region</b>
	<i>Prof. Delwar Hossain</i> Professor, University of Dhaka, Dhaka <b>Political Upheaval and Regression in South Asia – A Critical Account of Partisan Politics in the Region</b>
Chair	<i>Prof. Dr. Hans Harder</i> Acting Director, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University
12:00 – 13:00 hrs.	Lunch Break
Venue	Restaurant Bellini Im Neuenheimer Feld 370 69120 Heidelberg
13:00 – 14:45 hrs.	<b>Session 2: South Asian Bilateral Relations in the light of Foreign and Security Policy – A Critical Assessment</b>
	<i>Dr. D. Suba Chandran</i> Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi <b>India's Role in South Asia – The Afghanistan-Pakistan-India and the Nepal-Bangladesh-India Security Complexes</b>

	<p><i>Dr. Mallika Joseph</i> Executive Director, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo <b>South of South Asia – Maritime Cooperation and the India-Sri Lanka-Maldives Security Complex</b></p>
Chair	<p><i>Tomislav Delinic</i> Representative, Regional Programme SAARC, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung</p>
14:30 – 15:30 hrs.	<p><b>Session 3: When Theory meets Area: Approaches to Democracy and Security in South Asia</b></p>
	<p><i>Kai Fürstenberg</i> Lecturer/Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute <b>Institutionalization in South Asia</b></p>
	<p><i>Marian Gallenkamp</i> Lecturer/Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute <b>Approaches to Democratization and Democracy Measurement: The Example of Bhutan</b></p>
	<p><i>Dr. Siegfried O. Wolf</i> Lecturer/Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute, Director of Research, South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF), Brussels <b>Democracy and Civilian Control: The Case of Pakistan</b></p>
	<p><i>Dr. Jivanta Schöttli</i> Lecturer/Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute <b>Strategic Narratives and Critical Geopolitics: An Analysis of India's Policy on the Sino-Indian Border.</b></p>
Chair	<p><i>Prof. Subrata Mitra, PhD (Rochester)</i> Chair, Department of Political Science, South Asia Institute</p>
15:30 – 16:00 hrs.	Tea Break
16:00 – 17:45 hrs.	<p><b>Session 4: Regional Cooperation and the Political Integration of the SAARC Region – A Guiding Conclusion</b></p>
	<p><i>Dr. Faramarz Tamanna</i> Director General, Centre for Strategic Studies, Kabul <b>Afghanistan in South Asia – Regional Cooperation from the Viewpoint of an Emerging Player</b></p>

	<p><i>Arshi Saleem Hashmi</i> Assistant Professor, National Defense University, Islamabad <b>Pakistan-India Relations and Regional Cooperation – Challenges and a Roadmap for Change</b></p>
Chair	<p><i>Dr. D. Suba Chandran</i> Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi <i>Dr. Nishchal Nath Pandey</i> Director, Centre for South Asian Studies, Kathmandu</p>
<p><b>End of Conference</b></p>	

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