

## India – EU Bilateral Relations

The relationship between India and the European Union (EU) is based on shared values and principles such as democracy, rule of law, rules based international order and multilateralism. The ties are multifaceted and cover a broad spectrum of topics including trade, investment, climate change, science and technology, digital, connectivity and agriculture.

India-EU bilateral relations date back to the early 1960s with India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in 1962. The Joint Political Statement signed in 1993 coupled with the Cooperation Agreement signed in 1994 opened the way for strengthening the bilateral ties.

The multi-tiered institutional architecture of cooperation is presided over by the India-EU Summit since 2000. The first India-EU Summit took place in June 2000 in Lisbon, and it marked a watershed in the evolution of the ties. The relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' during the 5th India-EU Summit held in 2004 in The Hague. As on date, 15 Summits have been held between India and the EU.

Following the European Parliamentary elections in June 2024, Prime Minister Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen briefly met on the sidelines of the G20 Rio Summit in November 2024. PM spoke telephonically with European Council President Antonio Costa in January 2025. There are regular high-level interactions between the leaders. Prime Minister Modi met the then President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Nov 2024; New Delhi, Sep 2023; Rome, Oct 2021), and on the sidelines of the G-7 meeting (Hiroshima, May 2023; Germany, Jun 2022) and COP28 (Dubai, Dec 2023).

On 27-28 Feb 2025, President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen along with the College of Commissioners (21 Commissioners) paid a landmark visit to India. This was the first visit of the College of Commissioners outside the European continent since the start of their new mandate and also the first such visit in the history of India-EU bilateral ties. Apart from PM's interactions with President von der Leyen, there were intensive engagements at the level of Commissioners/Ministers. 20 bilateral meetings were held between EU Commissioners and their counterpart Indian Ministers leading to productive discussions in diverse areas. The two sides discussed ways of intensifying cooperation in trade and de-risking of supply chains, investment, emerging critical technologies, innovation, talent, digital and green industrial transition, space, disaster management, defence and people-to-people contacts.

The bilateral relationship is guided by the 'India – EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025' adopted at the last Summit in July 2020. At the Leaders' Meeting in May 2021, both sides inter alia announced the resumption of negotiations for a balanced and comprehensive free trade and investment agreements and an agreement on Geographical Indications and launched an ambitious and comprehensive 'Connectivity Partnership'.

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen paid an official visit to India on 24-25 April 2022. During her meeting with Prime Minister, they announced the establishment of an India-EU Trade and Technology Council as a strategic coordination mechanism to tackle challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology, and security, and thus deepening cooperation in these fields. The second India-EU Trade and Technology Council was held during the visit of College of Commissioners to India in Feb 2025 fostering deeper collaboration and

strategic coordination in the fields of DPIs, e-signatures, semiconductor supply chains, AI, 6G, joint research cooperation focusing on areas of EV recycling, marine plastic litter and waste-to-renewable hydrogen, market access, screening of Foreign Direct Investments, multilateral trading system.

There are regular and frequent interactions at Ministerial / Commissioner-level between India and the EU. External Affairs Minister had a telephonic conversation with EU High Representative / Vice President of the European Commission (HRVP) Kaja Kallas in December 2024. He also met Ms. Kaja Kallas on 21 Feb 2025 on the sidelines of G20 FMM in Johannesburg. EAM had met the then EU HRVP Josep Borrell in Vientiane in July 2024 and regularly on the sidelines of ASEAN meetings, G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting and Munich Security Conference. EAM participated in the informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers (Gymnich) in Slovenia in September 2021 and addressed the EU Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels in February 2020. He also met European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen in Varanasi (2023), Paris (2022) and Rome (2021).

Commerce and Industry Minister visited Brussels in January 2025 for discussions with European Commissioner for Trade Maros Sefcovic. The High Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment is co-chaired by the ministers. They also meet regularly on the sidelines of WTO Ministerial Conferences and the World Economic Forum. Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw visited Brussels in June 2022.

Other ministerial visits include the following:- European Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski visited India during 7-9 December 2023, leading a business delegation of more than 50 EU company representatives from the agrifood sector. Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans visited India during 25- 26 May 2023. European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson visited India in September 2022 and participated in the first India-EU Hydrogen Forum. During India's Presidency of the G20 in 2023, there were regular visits of EU Commissioners for G20 ministerial meetings in India and bilateral meetings with their counterparts were held on the sidelines. These visits include that of European Commissioners for Economy Paolo Gentiloni, International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit, Energy Kadri Simson, Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius, and Equality Helena Dalli.

Regular parliamentary exchanges are an important facet of the strategic partnership and pave the way for continuous dialogue between the two sides. A delegation with Members of the European Parliament from the Internal Market Committee (IMCO) visited India in January 2025 while those from the Delegation for Relations with India (D-IN) and Security and Defence (SEDE) Committee visited in December 2023 and participated in the 15th India-EU Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM). The then Vice-President of the European Parliament Ms. Nicola Beer represented the European Parliament in the P20 Summit hosted by the Parliament of India during in October 2023 under the theme of 'Parliaments for One Earth, One Family, One Future'.

In FY 2023-24, Bilateral trade in Goods with the EU stood at US\$ 135 billion (with exports to EU at US\$ 76 billion and imports from EU US\$ at 59 billion) making EU the largest trading partner for India in goods. Bilateral Trade in Services in 2023 stood at US \$ 53 billion (comprising Indian exports worth US \$ 30 billion and imports worth US \$ 23 billion) registering the highest ever trade in services. EU investments in India are valued at over US\$117 billion with around 6,000 European companies present in India. India's investments in the EU are valued at around US\$40 billion.

India and EU have bilateral institutional dialogue mechanisms at Secretary-level viz. Foreign Policy and Security Consultations, Strategic Partnership Review, Energy Panel, Macroeconomic Dialogue and the Science and Technology Steering Committee. Other dialogue mechanisms at senior official level include those in the areas of Security and Defence Consultations, Maritime Security, Cyber, Counterterrorism, Non-proliferation and Disarmament, Renewable Energy, Energy Security, Energy Efficiency, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture, Plant and Animal Health, and Ayurveda. Several other dialogue mechanisms have been subsumed under the TTC mechanism.

India and the EU conducted a joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea on 24 October 2023. Indian Navy participated in a Maritime Partnership Exercise in August 2022 with the EUNAVFOR Atalanta. The first India-EU Joint Naval exercise was held in the Gulf of Aden in June 2021. The EUNAVFOR (Operation Atalanta) and Indian Navy cooperated in escort operation for humanitarian assistance near the coast of Somalia in December 2018 and 2019. EAM participated in the EU Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm (2023) and Paris (2022). Following an invitation by PM, EU announced its decision to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) in 2023. EU is also a dialogue partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) since October 2023.

India – EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP) established in 2016 focuses on clean energy and climate-friendly technologies with a detailed work programme covering renewable energy, energy efficiency, smart grids and energy markets, energy security and other cross cutting issues. Green Hydrogen, offshore wind energy, development of gas infrastructure in India, and reduction of methane emission are emerging areas of cooperation. EU is a partner organisation to the International Solar Alliance since 2018. EU joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in March 2021 focusing *inter alia* on climate-smart infrastructure in South Asia and on trilateral cooperation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

India - EU Connectivity Partnership launched in 2021 is focused on outlining the norms, standards and principles that underpin the approach of India and the EU to connectivity as a whole. It also outlines various areas of cooperation on connectivity including cooperation in third countries. The focus areas are transport, digital, energy networks, and flow of people, goods, services, data and capital. On the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September 2023, leaders of India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US announced an MOU committing to work together to develop a new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

India-EU Water Partnership (IEWP) adopted in 2016 discusses latest developments on water policies in the EU and India. The 6th EU-India Water Forum was held in New Delhi in September 2024 with a focus on research projects on water, waste water treatment and drinking water purification.

Bilateral science and technology cooperation is carried out within the S&T Cooperation Agreement signed in 2007. A Joint Steering Committee oversees and advances scientific cooperation projects in areas such as smart grids, water, vaccines, ICT, polar science and mobility of young scientists working with European Research Council. An agreement for R&D cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy was signed between Department of Atomic Energy and EURATOM in July 2020. India joined CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, as an associate member in 2017. India and EU are both signatories to the ITER Agreement and participate in the construction of the experimental fusion reactor facility.

India –EU cooperation in space dates back to the 1980s when Indian satellites used Europe’s Ariane launchers. Earth observation, cross-support arrangements, and operation support for key space missions are some areas of ongoing cooperation. ESA’s Proba-3 Mission was successfully launched by ISRO’s PSLV-XL in December 2024.

India–EU Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) provides a framework for cooperation on joint objectives, recommendations and actions with a focus on promoting regular migration at relevant skill levels, cooperation on social security issues, and combating irregular migration.

India – EU bilateral ties have expanded to include a wide range of topics including political and security issues, trade and investment, climate change and clean energy, digital transition, critical and emerging technology, sustainable urbanization and environment, information and communications technology, research and innovation, space and nuclear, health, agriculture and food security and education and culture.