

SHAPE OF A PARTNERSHIP

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: European Union (EU)

© 2018 The Indian Express Ltd.
All Rights Reserved

On December 10, the 28 member states of the European Union endorsed a strategy which will take the EU's ties with India to a new level and help our relations reach their full potential. This new strategy is unique as it is the first time the EU and its member states have developed a holistic, long-term strategic vision covering security, trade, investment, environment, research and people-to-people contacts. The strategy was elaborated in a broad consultation with stakeholders from governments, businesses, think tanks and civil society organisations, both in the EU as well as in India.

There is no doubt that we have achieved a lot together since we first established the EU-India Strategic partnership in 2004. Most notably we have witnessed a remarkable transformation in our cooperation from a focus on assistance to broader and deeper security, trade, sustainable development and research and innovation ties. For example, two-way trade in goods and services exceeded €100 billion in 2017 (making the EU India's largest trade partner) and our € 70 billion in cumulative foreign direct investment provide over 6.5 million direct and indirect jobs in India.

However, we are all well aware that more needs to be done. In the past few years, the world has seen important transformations which coincide with challenges to multilateralism, and tremendous economic growth coupled with environmental degradation and climate change. During the last decade, the EU — adding to its standing as the world's largest economy — has also become a more robust global actor on foreign policy and security issues while India has become the world's fastest growing economy and has played an increasingly prominent role on the international stage.

It was high time that we gave a new long-term vision to our partnership and that we backed this vision with a clear agenda capable of scaling up our engagement. The new strategy does just that. It's well-timed, ambitious, concrete and, yet, achievable and within reach.

Faced with increased instability in world affairs, the EU and India have remained staunch defenders of a rules-based global order centred on effective multilateral institutions. Given our common values and objectives, the EU and India, working together, will have a greater impact on shaping global political and economic governance. To this end, we will strive to step up consultation and coordination with India in multilateral and regional fora.

The EU and India have been working together on the most acute global challenges such as climate change and environmental protection, promotion and protection of human rights and gender equality, as well as international security. While strengthening these, we are seeking to further expand our cooperation on biodiversity, ocean governance, humanitarian and disaster relief and outer space safety.

India's steady economic growth, demographic advantage and modernisation initiatives call for greater bilateral collaboration. Science and technology will be further leveraged to accelerate sustainable development both in India and the EU. As we share common challenges related to sustainable modernisation, we are ready to strengthen our cooperation with India in a number of critical areas such as sustainable urbanisation, promotion of renewable energy, water

management, resource efficiency, innovations and ICT. Moreover, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has a rapidly growing portfolio financing projects in India, helping to address issues such as transportation, energy and access to credit for SMEs.

We are also keen to advance an ambitious common agenda on economic, trade, investment, and regulatory cooperation, including a comprehensive agreement on trade and investment. And, as demonstrated at the last G-20 meeting in Buenos Aires, the EU and India are working together in the defence of the multilateral trading system, and they plan to intensify such joint endeavours.

We also intend to step up our bilateral security cooperation with India to effectively tackle terrorist threats, to develop global norms for a free, secure, stable, and peaceful use of the cyberspace, to maintain freedom of navigation and to secure lines of communications. Moreover, as we enhance the joint development of defence capabilities within the EU, we are also keen to develop military-to-military relations with India.

The EU and its member states have a strong relationship with India and this joint approach will help to pool effectively the efforts and resources to deepen cooperation in all fields. We are convinced that both sides have much to gain from strengthening this partnership and to realise the full potential of our relations. We are all committed to moving forward collectively with this agenda, building on each other's strengths and seizing the opportunities of joint actions.

The European Union and its member states are determined to implement this strategic vision to achieve concrete, meaningful and relevant results in full partnership with India.

Download the Indian Express apps for [iPhone](#), [iPad](#) or [Android](#)

© 2018 The Indian Express Ltd. All Rights Reserved

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com