

No longer distant friends

Here's why you should binge-watch *Damaged*, India's first show about female serial killer

Europe and Asia have never been so close. Our economies and cultures are interconnected; and our security is connected. We face the same challenges, confront similar threats, and share an interest in preserving peace in our regions and international cooperation on a global scale.

This week, the foreign ministers of the European Union's 28 member states decided to enhance security engagement in Asia and with Asia, as part of a more comprehensive EU-Asia strategy. The time when Europeans and Asians could consider themselves distant friends is over. To preserve and strengthen our economic exchanges we must also work together on global security.

In Asia, as elsewhere, the economic face of Europe is the one that people are most familiar with. It is linked to our role as the world's biggest trading block, the fact that we are the number one or two investor in most Asian countries, and that we are by far the world's biggest donor of development assistance.

But it is striking how joint work on security has become the biggest area of growth in terms of our expanding cooperation with Asian partners. This increased engagement on security matters reflects two changes. First, that our partners in Asia increasingly look to the EU to be present and engaged in the region. Our added value stems from our experience with cooperative security and regional approaches to crisis management — and this kind of expertise is in high demand. Second, the EU itself has taken ambitious steps to strengthen capacities in the field of defence. We are not only a reliable trade partner and a pillar of multilateralism: The EU is also a security actor in its own right.

The EU currently has 16 civilian and military missions around the world. We train the armed forces in Mali, advise the Ukrainian and Iraqi authorities on reform of their civilian security sectors and fight piracy in the Indian Ocean. Recently, together with EU member states, we have launched a "permanent structured cooperation" on security and defence. Our member states have committed to investing on practical projects — from rapid response against cyber-attacks to innovative systems for maritime security and a European training centre for our troops who intervene in case of natural disasters. I have also proposed to set up a new fund, outside the EU budget, to help strengthen our partners' security capabilities.

Collectively, the EU and its member states have the second largest defence budget in the world. We have taken important steps over the past year, reflecting the fact that European citizens as well as people across the world increasingly count on a EU that protects. And this will continue.

Since our first engagement to accompany the Aceh peace process in Indonesia, almost 15 years ago, we have expanded our security cooperation in Asia and with Asia to a great extent. We are working together on cyber-security, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, as well as in support of peace processes across the region, from Afghanistan to Mindanao to Myanmar. We have had concrete contributions from several Asian partners to tackle piracy off the coast of Somalia. In the context of [ASEAN](#), we are working together with Vietnam and Australia on maritime security. We also have increasing military contacts with countries in Asia, and have posted security experts to several EU embassies across the region. In recent years, the EU and India have stepped up security cooperation, specially to tackle non-traditional threats such as terrorism and cyber-attacks.

Perhaps the most pressing matter for EU-Asia security cooperation at this time is de-

nuclearisation. We share an interest to save the Iran nuclear deal and to support de-nuclearisation talks in the Korean peninsula. The EU is already fully engaged with Asian partners on both these pressing issues. All of Asia has a major stake in making sure that the nuclear deal with Iran is preserved and the Korean peninsula is de-nuclearised. Global peace requires a global effort.

Going forward, the EU will expand its cooperation with Asian partners into areas such as capacity building, training programmes — including on UN peacekeeping — and joint exercises. The EU, after centuries of conflicts that ripped the continent apart, has realised that cooperation is essential for peace, and that peace brings prosperity. But in today's world, too often unilateral instincts prevail over the search for common ground. Too many players seek confrontation to achieve their short-term goals, instead of building sustainable solutions through mediation. Against this background, those who believe in a multilateral global order have a duty to join forces. Europe and Asia, together, can be the engine of a more cooperative approach to world politics.

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com