

PARTNERSHIP WITH A DIFFERENCE

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The writer is High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission

Europe's partnership with India has never been stronger. We are the world's two largest democracies. We share the idea that a multipolar world needs multilateral governance; that internationally agreed rules are protection against conflict and chaos. We stand on the same side of global politics: Our partnership can make a difference for peace, security and sustainable development in our respective regions and all around the world.

For this reason, we Europeans are now putting forward a new strategy for our relations with India, a roadmap to make our partnership even closer — to serve our citizens' interests and to contribute to global peace.

India has impressed the world over the last decades with a tremendous drive towards modernisation and sustainable development. And through the years, the European Union has accompanied and supported such change. India is the world's fastest-growing large economy, with the potential to become a global growth engine if it harnesses its full demographic potential. The EU is India's first trading partner and one of its largest sources of investment. Close to 6,000 EU companies are present in India: They create good jobs for over 6 million people, and invest in the Indian people's skills and creativity. Our cooperation is already making a positive difference to the lives of millions of European and Indian citizens, and our new strategy includes concrete proposals to contribute to each other's growth, work towards sustainable modernisation, and jointly promote global peace and security.

We work together on climate change and clean energy — a crucial issue for India's sustainable development and for improving the quality of life for ordinary Indians. This is what we are working on through cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable sources, so that the country's growth can rely on sources that do not impact on India's environment and are truly sustainable in time. We support the Clean Ganga initiative to remove waste from the holy river and its banks: The Ganga is the heart of India's history, culture and economy, and the river's health is also vital to the country. With our new strategy, we commit to expanding our support to India's sustainable modernisation, for instance through strengthened cooperation with India's cities — so that their growth can come with better services for their citizens, better public transport, a healthier environment and better services for business.

Innovation will continue to be central to our partnership. Indian and European researchers are already working together on pioneering projects for water conservation and on new vaccines that will prevent the next major epidemic. Our Horizon 2020 programme — the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever — is co-funding projects with the Indian government. Every year, almost 50,000 students from India travel to 4,000 European universities. And we want to invest even more in these exchanges and mobility opportunities.

In recent years, India has not just become a stronger and more prosperous country. India is also looking beyond its immediate neighbourhood, as a more confident global power and a reliable partner in global affairs. Our cooperation on security issues is close and constant — from

Afghanistan to the fight against piracy off the Horn of Africa. We are working together to preserve the nuclear deal with Iran, and our collaboration spans from counter-terrorism to cyber-security. We Europeans see India as an indispensable interlocutor in our work for global peace and security, and our new strategy charts the way for a broader and deeper cooperation.

Europe and India see the world with the same eyes. That's why we are committed to coordinate even more in all multilateral frameworks — including the United Nations, the G20 and the World Trade Organisation. Together we can support young democracies across Asia and the world. We can make multilateral institutions stronger and more representative of all peoples on our planet. We can work to fight inequalities and injustice in our own societies and worldwide. We can shape the century ahead of us — for two billion citizens in our countries, and for the whole world.

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