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From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

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To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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HIGH REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE UNION FOR  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
SECURITY POLICY

Brussels, 17.9.2025  
JOIN(2025) 50 final

**JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE  
COUNCIL**

**on a New Strategic EU-India Agenda**

## JOINT COMMUNICATION ON A NEW STRATEGIC EU-INDIA AGENDA

The visit of the College of Commissioners to India in February 2025 laid the foundation for a new chapter in EU-India relations. During this landmark visit – the first of its kind to the Indo-Pacific – both sides committed to **raising the Strategic Partnership to a higher level** to boost shared prosperity, strengthen security, and tackle major global challenges together.

This Joint Communication sets out a comprehensive strategic agenda that deepens, broadens, and better coordinates EU-India cooperation – delivering **mutually beneficial and transformative outcomes** for both partners and for the wider world.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EU-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

India, the world's largest democracy and fastest-growing major economy, is a **vital partner for the EU**. The EU welcomes India's rise as a global power, which creates new opportunities for strategic cooperation. India's success benefits the EU, just as the EU's success benefits India.

With over one billion people of working age and a median age of 31, India is set to become the **world's third-largest economy by 2030**. A rapidly expanding manufacturing and technology hub, it hosts 45% of global capability centres and invests heavily in frontier technologies. India is a **key stakeholder in multilateralism and global governance**. It is a leading United Nations (UN) peacekeeping contributor and the world's top vaccine producer. The third largest greenhouse gas emitter, it has already reached 50% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources. India is also assuming a growing security role in the Indian Ocean and wider Indo-Pacific.

In an increasingly complex geopolitical and geoeconomic environment, **closer EU-India cooperation is more important than ever**. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, along with recent violations of the Union's airspace, poses an existential threat to European security. It is of utmost importance to the EU that any enablement of the war be curtailed.

**Europe and the Indo-Pacific are deeply interconnected**, confronted by imperial ambitions and regional tensions – including in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea and the Red Sea – that threaten the rules-based international order, as well as the security and prosperity of both regions. This is especially relevant as the **EU has a geographic presence in the Indo-Pacific** through its outermost regions<sup>1</sup>. The weaponisation of dependencies, unilateral trade practices, and widening economic asymmetries further undermine global stability.

In this fragmented global landscape, the EU and India are **natural strategic partners** committed to strengthening cooperation across a wide spectrum. Together, both represent nearly a quarter of the global gross domestic product and population and have the **capacity and responsibility to shape global outcomes**: defending democratic values and human rights, countering illegal territorial expansion and hybrid threats, promoting inclusive growth,

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<sup>1</sup> Outermost regions of La Réunion and Mayotte, and the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, and French Polynesia.

advancing climate and biodiversity action, global food and health security, and accelerating progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Raising the EU-India Strategic Partnership to a higher level is a strategic priority.** The EU and India have the potential and determination to shape one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century. While the EU and India may not align on every issue, this partnership is underpinned by **converging interests, complementary strengths, and shared political will**, and can deliver real impact for people in both regions and beyond.

The EU and India are pluralistic democracies committed to strategic autonomy, economic resilience, and international stability. Like-minded and trusted partners, both **support a rules-based international order** anchored in respect for sovereignty, effective multilateralism, and open, predictable cooperation. As major trading partners, both have an interest in working together to address global trade distortions, reduce overdependence on any single partner, and promote trade diversification.

The EU and India are **mutually enabling partners**. Europe's strengths in trade, capital, and innovation complement India's demographic advantage, market dynamism, and technological capabilities. Together, the EU's *Competitiveness Compass* and India's *Atmanirbhar Bharat* initiative provide a solid foundation for deeper cooperation on trade, economic security, and the green and digital transitions. Through regulatory expertise, single market access, and joint innovation, the EU supports India's inclusive and sustainable growth – aligning with India's vision of becoming a developed country by 2047. The EU's *Global Gateway* and India's growing role as a development partner can amplify the impact of investments in third countries.

Sixty years after establishing diplomatic ties – and building on more than 30 years of EU-India cooperation and 20 years of Strategic Partnership – both sides remain committed to elevating the partnership. India is a **clear foreign policy priority for the EU and its Member States**. Recent milestones, including the visit of the College of Commissioners, underscored the EU's ambition to work more closely and effectively with India as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific. The visit also delivered concrete agreements as reflected in the Joint Leaders' Statement<sup>2</sup>.

The Joint Communication focuses on **deepening cooperation** in established areas, **broadening engagement** across new sectors at both bilateral and multilateral level, and **improving coordination** to ensure stronger guidance, effective implementation, and greater consistency.

The Commission and the High Representative propose structuring the new strategic EU-India agenda around the below five pillars.

1. **PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY:** boosting trade and investment; strengthening supply chains and economic security; and advancing the clean transition and resilience.
2. **TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION:** supporting critical emerging technologies; advancing a conducive digital environment; and promoting research cooperation.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/mt/statement\\_25\\_647](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/mt/statement_25_647)

3. **SECURITY AND DEFENCE:** deepening engagement on regional security; countering traditional and hybrid threats; and boosting defence industrial cooperation.
4. **CONNECTIVITY AND GLOBAL ISSUES:** strengthening regional connectivity; promoting cooperation in third countries; and shaping effective global governance.
5. **ENABLERS ACROSS PILLARS:** expanding skills mobility; promoting mutual understanding; involving business communities; and reinforcing institutional architecture.

## 1. PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

In the face of global economic uncertainty, supply chain vulnerabilities, and pressure on the rules-based trading system, closer EU-India cooperation is vital. Together, both partners can drive growth, job creation, industrial development, and economic security while advancing decarbonisation, circularity, and a fair clean transition to tackle climate change, increase energy and food security, reduce pollution, and protect biodiversity. India can boost the EU's competitiveness and resilience, while the EU can support India's manufacturing and regional development ambitions, ensuring that prosperity and sustainability go hand in hand.

### a) Boosting trade and investment

The EU is **India's largest trading partner**, while India is the **EU's largest one in the Global South**. In 2024, bilateral trade in goods reached EUR 120 billion – an increase of nearly 90% over the past decade. Trade in services adds another EUR 60 billion. **Around 6 000 European companies** operate in India, directly employing 3million people and supporting millions more jobs indirectly, making the EU one of India's top investors. EU foreign direct investment in India reached EUR 140 billion in 2023 – almost doubling in five years – while Indian companies are expanding their presence in the EU, including through investments in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Despite this progress, **significant untapped potential** remains. India accounts for less than 2.5% of the EU's trade in goods and services, and Indian investment in the EU totals only EUR 10 billion. Key barriers in India include high tariffs, and internal measures that restrict import competition, limit foreign direct investment, and constrain business opportunities on both sides. Strengthened regulatory convergence and transparency, legal certainty, fair trade practices, product safety, and corporate sustainability would help create a more conducive business environment. A key priority is generating decent job opportunities, particularly for women.

An EU-India **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** substantially reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers would unlock major trade and investment flows, ranking as one of the largest agreements of its kind globally. It would ensure that Indian and European businesses can reap the benefits of stable, rules-based exchanges, more integrated supply chains and new export outlets, supporting trade diversification. The FTA should combine improved market access with clear, simple, predictable, and enforceable rules, as well as robust sustainable development provisions. Both sides aim to **conclude negotiations by the end of 2025**.

The EU and India should aim to swiftly conclude an **Investment Protection Agreement (IPA)** providing high standards of protection for investors on both sides. In parallel, the EU will engage with India to promote stable, resilient, and well-integrated international **financial markets**. This includes strengthened cooperation on financial supervision – where a Memorandum of Understanding between the respective independent authorities on **clearing** would be an important tool to maintain financial stability – as well as on promotion of internationally agreed anti-money laundering standards. Together, these initiatives would help promote a conducive investment environment, cross-border investment flows and the mobilisation of sustainable and digital finance.

The EU also proposes to upgrade the bilateral **Macroeconomic Dialogue**.

The conclusion of an **Agreement on Geographical Indications** would improve trade opportunities and boost economic development by ensuring effective protection of names of iconic products in both parties' markets.

As India is the fastest growing among the world's largest civil aviation markets, a **Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement** would deliver economic and consumer benefits. This would include more direct flights, lower airfares, stronger tourism and trade links, a more level playing field, and closer cooperation on sustainability and green aviation. A **Dialogue on Aviation** should be set up to explore ways to deepen market cooperation.

The EU is committed to scaling up investments in India through **Global Gateway**, by de-risking private-sector investment with guarantees and blended finance. The Team Europe Global Gateway investment portfolio in India already exceeds EUR 15 billion spanning sectors such as renewable energy, water, urban transport and digital infrastructure. Future projects could expand into other strategic sectors to support India's modernisation, green and digital transitions, and strategic value chains, as well as to promote connectivity in the region. The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** will remain a key player in advancing this agenda.

#### **b) Strengthening supply chains and economic security**

Closer trade relations are essential to securing and diversifying value chains. As economic security gains importance, the EU and India are becoming indispensable partners in **de-risking efforts** and in building **resilient, trustworthy supply chains**. The EU's advanced industrial capabilities and India's expanding manufacturing base are complementary, and closer coordination can strengthen both partners' positions in global value chains.

Through the Trade and Technology Council (TTC), the EU and India will deepen collaboration in key sectors to ensure supply chains that can withstand global disruptions. Priorities include full implementation of the **EU-India Semiconductor Agreement** (November 2023), cooperation on **green technologies** such as **solar energy** to reduce over-reliance on subsidised third-country suppliers, early warning systems for **active pharmaceutical ingredients (API)**, and contingency planning in **food supply chains**. Looking ahead, cooperation could expand to **advanced manufacturing** and **biotechnology**.

The EU and India should also **jointly assess external vulnerabilities** and strategic trade opportunities to identify other priority sectors. Building on this, targeted collaboration in strategic value chains – covering technical and sustainability standards, regulatory

improvements, innovation, skills development, and investment facilitation with active private-sector involvement – could deliver tangible results. To operationalise this, the EU proposes the **creation of Blue Valleys** as dedicated platforms for selected value chains, designed to **accelerate private-sector engagement** through investment facilitation, standard alignment, and structured business collaboration.

A secure supply of **critical raw materials** remains a strategic priority for sustainable and resilient industrial ecosystems. India's endorsement of the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan reflects alignment on key principles, including sustainability, diversification, and market transparency, and provides a basis for practical cooperation.

The EU is also ready to engage with India in a **Dialogue on Energy Import Diversification** with the goal of securing reliable and affordable sources.

Finally, discussions on economic security should be broadened within the TTC to other issues such as screening of **foreign direct investment**, strengthening **research security**, and preventing **technology leakage**.

### **c) Advancing the clean transition and resilience**

Building on shared commitments – such as the EU's 2050 and India's 2070 net-zero pledges – and technological capabilities of both sides, the EU and India can accelerate their clean transition, advance decarbonisation, and strengthen global leadership. They can contribute substantially to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Continued cooperation in renewable energy, energy storage, smart grids, energy efficiency, and renewable fuels will support India's role as a clean energy and technology supplier. Ensuring resilience is also essential, including through improved circularity, protected biodiversity, and strengthened food and health security.

The Clean Energy and Climate Partnership has become a key platform and could be further strengthened, including to drive forward the deployment and market uptake of **green and clean energy technologies**. The EU will promote EU-India cleantech business exchanges and deepen cooperation in key sectors.

On **offshore wind**, the EU and India will advance cooperation through EU-India Offshore Wind Business Summits to exchange best practices and facilitate B2B engagement, as well as through expanded expertise exchanges on technology transfer, know-how, and auction design. Joint efforts will also focus on research and innovation on technologies suited to local conditions, while both sides will explore continued support for testing and demonstration facilities, with the aim of boost competition and lowering costs.

Furthermore, the creation of an EU-India Task Force on Green Hydrogen provides an impetus to deepen and broaden cooperation. It will support efforts to decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors, while strengthening trade and economic relations. The Task Force will bring together business, industry, academia, and think tanks to foster innovation, knowledge sharing, and technological cooperation on **green hydrogen production, storage, and distribution**, as well as on best practices and successful case studies. The EIB, as a member of the India Hydrogen Alliance (IH2A), stands ready to support financing and trade links.

In parallel, cooperation on strengthening **power markets** – through instruments such as contracts for difference, smart meter analytics, and offtake agreements – can increase investment certainty, reduce energy prices, and accelerate large-scale deployment. Joint efforts to facilitate offtake agreements and advance technology cooperation in areas such as electrolysers, fuel cells, and storage technologies, supported by the exchange of know-how and best practices, will further strengthen competitiveness and economies of scale across the clean energy value chain.

Building on the development of green hydrogen production capabilities, the EU and India could cooperate to accelerate the **decarbonisation of heavy industries**, particularly by developing **low-carbon steel and cement** in India. The EU’s work on demand-side measures and product labelling can help scale up this still nascent market, while ensuring a level playing field and addressing global overcapacity.

Cooperation could also deepen on **sustainable mobility**. India’s strong aviation market, renewable energy growth, and biogenic waste potential make it a key partner for **sustainable aviation fuels (SAF)**. Advancing cooperation – including through the EU-funded ACT-SAF project – can boost production of SAF and position both partners as global standard-setters. Further collaboration on vehicles’ energy certification methodologies and **e-mobility**, including knowledge exchange and harmonisation of electric vehicle charging standards, could also be pursued.

The EU and India could deepen cooperation on **sustainable urbanisation** through existing partnerships, with a focus on cities, businesses, and civil society. Collaboration also includes the Global Covenant of Mayors and the International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme, which fosters city-to-city exchanges.

The EU and India have an opportunity to cooperate on developing a domestic **carbon market** to cut emissions and generate funds for the clean transition. India’s Carbon Credit Trading Scheme is advancing rapidly, and the EU can share lessons from its Emissions Trading Scheme on monitoring, reporting, verification, and sectoral benchmarks. A carbon price effectively paid in India will be deducted under the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) financial adjustment, which, being based on carbon content, will favour Indian exporters decarbonising their CBAM goods. This mechanism is also being simplified to benefit small businesses.

The EU and India should also advance collaboration on **sustainable finance instruments** – such as green bonds – to channel private capital into India’s clean transition. As a priority country under the EU’s Global Green Bonds Initiative, India will benefit from scaled-up EU green credit lines and pipelines of bankable projects, supporting its emergence as a regional hub for green capital.

Under the EU-India Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Partnership, the EU and India should strengthen dialogue and cooperation on **circular economy**. By exchanging best practices and policy approaches, and developing business solutions – particularly in textiles, electronics, e-vehicles and batteries, ship recycling and plastics – both partners can accelerate the transition to **resource-efficient systems** that reduce waste and create jobs. Ongoing



initiatives could pave the way to further collaboration around critical raw materials recycling. The EU will explore options to resume the EU-India Environmental Forum to facilitate exchanges between government and business stakeholders.

The EU will strengthen cooperation with India on the **bioeconomy**, including forestry and innovative material uses. Building on the India–EU Water Partnership, both sides should continue to deepen dialogue and collaboration on river basin management, **water resilience and security**, floods and droughts, water reuse, and water efficiency.

The EU is ready to deepen cooperation with India on **sustainable agriculture** by scaling up climate-resilient farming practices, improving soil health and ecosystem productivity, reducing stubble burning, promoting bio-waste use, and boosting competitiveness through green technologies and inclusive innovations. Building on the Vision for Agriculture and Food, an **Agrifood Policy Partnership Dialogue**, and cooperation on the combination of technological innovation with agricultural scale and diversity, could advance global food security and foster sustainable agrifood systems

Taking a One Health approach, the EU is committed to collaborating with Indian disease control centres to strengthen prevention, preparedness, and response to current and emerging health threats, while supporting **sustainable and resilient health systems**. Building on initial engagement in vaccine manufacturing and wastewater surveillance, the EU-India partnership will expand to strengthened data sharing, with strong public-private collaboration playing a key role in driving innovation and scalability.

Given the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters aggravated by climate change, the EU and India will deepen cooperation on **climate adaptation**, focusing on preventing and reducing climate risks, improving disaster preparedness and response capacities, and strengthening infrastructure resilience. This includes concluding an Administrative Arrangement on closer cooperation on **disaster management** with India's National Disaster Management Authority through policy dialogue, technical engagement, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building in early warning systems and emergency response.

## 2. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The long-term prosperity, competitiveness, and sustainable growth of the EU and India depend on leadership in emerging technologies. Both sides share ambitions for open, secure, and human-centric innovation. The EU contributes world-class research and digital infrastructure, strong industry, robust regulation, and expertise in green and digital technologies, while India offers a skilled workforce, vast datasets, a growing digital economy and electronics sector, a vibrant startup ecosystem, and expertise in frugal innovation. Cooperation on critical emerging technologies, research, and a conducive digital environment will bring tangible benefits to the public on both sides.

### a) Supporting critical emerging technologies

The EU and India should adopt a **value chain-wide approach** to cooperation on critical emerging technologies, covering research and innovation, production, standardisation,

regulation, market uptake, skills development, and investment facilitation. As part of the TTC architecture, the EU proposes setting up a limited number of **EU-India Innovation Hubs** – dedicated platforms on key technologies bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, startups, investors, and experts to identify shared priorities and catalyse innovation.

These hubs would support dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint projects in critical emerging technologies. As they mature, promising technologies from early-stage collaboration could be advanced through Blue Valleys to promote industrial deployment and accelerate private-sector engagement. Initial cooperation could focus on digital technologies, building on the EU's network of European Digital Innovation Hubs.

Stronger linkages between European and Indian SMEs, incubators, and startups—including deep-tech—are essential. The EU proposes an **EU-India Startup Partnership**, in collaboration with the European Innovation Council, Start-up India, and Member States, to promote cross-border investment, co-creation, and high-potential ventures, leveraging India's vibrant startup ecosystem and EU innovation tools.

Opportunities for cooperation include joint research and development, reciprocal talent exchanges, and strategic joint ventures on **advanced semiconductors**, focusing on design and prototyping for artificial intelligence (AI) applications, leveraging Indian chip design expertise and European research infrastructures under the Chips Act.

The EU and India are committed to developing **advanced, trustworthy, sustainable, and human-centric AI**. Cooperation will focus on strategic AI domains, including large language models, multilingual natural language processing datasets, AI training datasets, and AI solutions for public goods such as healthcare, agriculture, and climate action. Collaboration between the European AI Office and India's National AI Mission will be strengthened, as well as cooperation with the India AI Safety Institute to expand AI safety, testing, and evaluation.

Under the EU-India Administrative Arrangement on **High-Performance Computing (HPC)**, collaboration in biomedical research, weather modelling, and natural hazard prediction has been launched between the respective stakeholders, with potential expansion to shared HPC capabilities and hybrid **quantum-HPC systems**. Joint activities could include reciprocal access to facilities, common benchmarking standards, co-developed applications in simulation, optimisation, and machine learning, researcher exchanges, joint doctoral programmes, and co-funding to accelerate hybrid workflows from proof-of-concept to production.

As key players in space technology, the EU and India will deepen cooperation on earth observation, satellite navigation, space surveillance, and communications. A **Space Dialogue** will be launched to advance collaboration and explore space security

The protection of critical technologies must be a shared priority. The EU and India should implement robust measures to **prevent the unauthorised transfer or misuse of sensitive technologies and knowledge**, ensuring their responsible use in support of global stability, democratic values, and strategic autonomy.

## **b) Advancing a conducive digital environment**

Based on future EU-India digital trade rules, the EU aims to deepen cooperation with India to create a **trustworthy, secure, fair, and interoperable digital ecosystem**. This includes strengthened **regulatory collaboration** on data governance, platform regulation, digital markets, and cybersecurity – guided by reciprocity, international standards, and human rights.

The EU and India should also work together to promote **fair digital markets, secure e-commerce, online privacy, and child protection**, while combating illegal content and systemic risks. Sharing best practices will help balance innovation with responsibility, promote digital literacy, and uphold democratic values, freedom of speech and human dignity in the digital age.

Trusted **cross-border data flows** are vital for trade, innovation, reliable AI, and cooperation in law enforcement and digitisation of justice. There is potential to better connect EU and Indian data ecosystems in a secure and compatible manner. The EU will engage with India to promote a robust **data protection framework** and promote convergence in its implementation.

The EU and India both recognise the importance of deploying secure **digital infrastructure**, particularly secure and trusted 5G/6G networks and submarine and terrestrial cables. The EU is ready to share its experience in this area, drawing on instruments such as the 5G Toolbox or the recent Communication to strengthen the security and resilience of submarine cables. The Memorandum of Understanding between India's Bharat 6G alliance and the EU's 6G Smart Networks and Services Industry Association serves as an example of mutually beneficial collaborative efforts to develop secure and trusted telecommunications ecosystems, paving the way for the creation of resilient and reliable **6G networks**.

Collaboration on **digital public infrastructure** – leveraging India's experience with large-scale, inclusive platforms and the EU's leadership in global standards – can support financial inclusion, digital identity, and efficient public service delivery. Both sides aim to enable **technical interoperability**, such as between the European Digital Identity Wallet and India's Aadhaar system, to facilitate cross-border trade, travel and data exchanges. They also aim to jointly promote DPI in third countries.

## **c) Promoting research cooperation**

Cooperation under **EU research and innovation programmes** provides opportunities for researchers and innovators in areas such as digital technologies, clean energy, water management, food and agriculture, health, and emerging technologies such as semiconductors, biotechnology and advanced materials, while ensuring women have equal access to these opportunities.

Joint research cooperation under Horizon Europe – the EU's flagship research and innovation programme – already exists through exceptional coordinated calls with India, such as on marine plastic litter and waste-to-renewable hydrogen. However, India could consider becoming **associated with Horizon Europe**. This would open the door to deeper and more structured scientific cooperation, enabling Indian researchers and institutions to participate on an equal footing in collaborative projects across a wide range of fields. It would also improve access for Indian researchers to world class European research infrastructures.

Building on the Euratom-India agreement for research and development cooperation, both partners should promote collaboration on the **peaceful uses of nuclear energy**, covering nuclear reactor safety, radioprotection, radioactive waste management, nuclear security, safeguards, nuclear science applications, and fusion. The EU and India should also deepen their cooperation in the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor**, of which they are both members.

### 3. SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The growing complexity of global security threats, rising geopolitical tensions, and rapid technological change underscore the need for closer EU-India dialogue and cooperation in security and defence. Pressures on global sea lines threaten freedom of navigation, while new risks are emerging in cyber, hybrid, and space domains. Emerging disruptive technologies, such as AI, offer strategic advantages while raising challenges with respect to transparency, accountability, and compliance with international law.

EU-India security and defence cooperation has recently gained momentum, including through the **Strategic Dialogue on Foreign and Security Policy** launched in June 2025. Regular thematic dialogues address security and defence matters, maritime security, cybersecurity, counterterrorism and non proliferation. India is also a key partner in the EU project ‘Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia and the Indo-Pacific’ (ESIWA+).

The EU and India are now exploring the creation of an **EU-India Security and Defence Partnership**. This partnership would further deepen strategic consultations and enable closer cooperation and joint initiatives on shared priorities such as crisis management, maritime security, countering cyber and hybrid threats, and counterterrorism. It would also facilitate defence industrial cooperation.

The two sides are also launching negotiations on a **Security of Information Agreement** that will facilitate the exchange of classified information and stronger cooperation in areas related to security and defence. This could also pave the way for India’s participation in EU security and defence initiatives in line with EU Treaty-based frameworks.

#### a) Deepening engagement on regional security

The EU’s increasing strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific – especially its support for regional partners in comprehensive security areas – aligns closely with India’s role as a key pillar of regional stability and its deepening cooperation with partners including the US, Japan, Australia, and ASEAN member states. The two sides should improve coordination and exchange views on the **links between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions**, particularly the connection between the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean as key interfaces between the two.

The **EU’s participation in the India-launched Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative** reflects its readiness to increase cooperation on shared priorities such as maritime ecology, marine resources, capacity-building, disaster preparedness, maritime security, and transport.

As a **Dialogue Partner of the Indian Ocean Rim Association**, the EU is also well placed to build synergies with India on regional priorities. In 2024, the EU and India agreed to launch dedicated Indo-Pacific consultations to improve coordination on common strategic challenges.

The EU promotes peace and security based on respect for international law and will further **engage with India on all aspects of countering Russia's military aggression against Ukraine**. In that context, the EU will continue exploring ways of preventing re-export of battlefield items of EU origin to Russia and sanctions circumvention, including through Russia's shadow fleet and other energy measures. This includes the ongoing dialogue with the EU Sanctions Envoy and practical capacity-building initiatives with the private sector.

Engagement with India on **crisis management**, in areas of mutual interest, is important, and the EU would welcome India's participation in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy **civilian and military missions**. The EU and India should engage in exploring the appropriate arrangements for it, in full respect of their respective decision-making processes.

#### **b) Countering traditional and hybrid threats**

Maritime security is a cornerstone of regional and global security. As both sides are relying heavily on maritime transport for trade and connectivity, it is vital to secure sea lines of communication, protect critical infrastructures and curb the activities of shadow fleet. The EU and India are united in their commitment to a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based maritime order, including in the Indo-Pacific, in conformity with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The EU and India committed to increasing engagement on **maritime domain awareness** to promote shared assessment, coordination and interoperability, requiring synergies at many levels.

The EU seeks to deepen cooperation with India in support of **regional maritime security frameworks**, helping to strengthen the capacity of coastal states to address shared challenges. This includes joint work on maritime domain awareness and strengthened support for regional information-sharing platforms such as the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar. The EU and India could also work more closely together on **capacity-building** projects for Indian Ocean countries.

Building on existing collaboration, including through the **naval operations EUNAVFOR ATALANTA and EUNAVFOR ASPIDES**, the EU aims to expand operational cooperation with the Indian Navy. This could include further joint exercises, building on the June 2025 naval drill focused on advanced counter-piracy operations, interoperability, tactical manoeuvres, and secure communications. Such exercises could involve other Indo-Pacific partners. The EU will seek to conclude arrangements between the EU naval operations and the Indian Navy to facilitate greater information sharing and cooperation in the western Indian Ocean. In addition, the EU and India could pursue joint sea activities in other areas of common interest such as the Gulf of Guinea.

Future cooperation should also focus on protecting **critical maritime infrastructure**, particularly in the face of rising hybrid threats. Engagement through regional structures such as the Indian Ocean Commission will be key to addressing these changing security challenges. The EU and India should also continue to cooperate on maritime safety, including tackling the

threats to the environment and to safe navigation posed by substandard shipping and risky navigation practices.

The EU proposes deepening collaboration with India on **cybersecurity** and building resilience to **hybrid threats**, notably through the EU-India Cyber Dialogue, including in areas such as security-related research, securing ICT supply chains and favouring trusted digital technologies and vendors. Cooperation could be strengthened in the areas of mutual legal assistance and cybercrime, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

The EU and India both face serious **terrorist threats**. The Pahalgam attack in April 2025 was a tragic reminder of terrorism's human cost. Both partners confront challenges linked to terrorism's connections with organised crime, as well as the need to combat terrorism financing, online propaganda, and risks posed by emerging technologies. The EU is committed to further strengthening **counterterrorism** cooperation to assess global threats, counter extremism and terrorism financing, and strengthen collaboration through capacity-building efforts, joint projects, and law-enforcement partnerships.

On **transnational organised crime**, the EU aims to strengthen judicial and law enforcement cooperation with India. It aims to implement the Working Arrangement between Europol and the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation, which allows both sides to exchange non-personal data, such as criminal methodologies, trends, and other relevant intelligence. This includes India's connection to Europol's Secure Information Exchange Network Application. Similarly, the EU and India could develop cooperation with Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor Office. This cooperation could be extended to cover the prevention of diversion and trafficking of drug precursors used in the illicit manufacture of illicit drugs and new psychoactive substances.

### c) **Boosting defence industrial cooperation**

Strengthening cooperation between the EU's and India's defence industries – in line with shared security priorities and with due safeguards against technology leakage – can help strengthen respective **production and technological capabilities**, bolster the security of supply chains, and stimulate innovation and competitiveness. The EU's expertise in defence research, development, and manufacturing can support India in strengthening its defence industrial base and in diversifying reliable supply chains, while India's manufacturing capacities could help the EU increase arms supply in specific sectors.

To advance this cooperation, an **industry-led EU-India Defence Industry Forum** could be set up to bring together businesses from both sides to share best practices and identify opportunities for cooperation. EU and Indian officials would participate as observers.

## **4. CONNECTIVITY AND GLOBAL ISSUES**

As major global players in the G20, the EU and India should strengthen cooperation to defend shared interests, address pressing global challenges, and counterbalance unsustainable development models promoted by others. Both partners are well-positioned to jointly advance

secure and sustainable regional connectivity, development cooperation with and in third countries, and effective global governance.

#### **a) Strengthening regional connectivity**

Both the EU and India have ambitious international **connectivity agendas**. The EU's Global Gateway mobilises EUR 300 billion globally to support energy, digital and transport infrastructure, while India advances initiatives such as MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth). In 2021, both partners also concluded the EU-India Connectivity Partnership. Leveraging these platforms, both partners are well-positioned to cooperate on strengthening connectivity between Europe, India, and the broader region, upholding high standards while unlocking new commercial opportunities for EU and Indian businesses alike.

A flagship example of this strategic collaboration is the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**. This project seeks to revive historical Eurasian trade routes by integrating maritime, rail, digital, energy, and clean hydrogen infrastructure. IMEC aims to diversify trade routes, reduce strategic dependencies, promote regional integration, and future-proof supply chains, unlocking new economic opportunities across Europe, India, Africa, and beyond.

The EU is committed to playing a leading role in IMEC, investing through Global Gateway and coordinating with Team Europe partners, including the EIB, to support projects ranging **from feasibility studies to infrastructure development**. The EU is willing to cooperate with India to promote the regional deployment of secure and sustainable **digital infrastructure**, including secure trusted 5G networks, submarine, and terrestrial cables and satellite connectivity.

In the framework of IMEC, the EU is advancing the **EU-Africa-India Digital Corridor**, including the 11,700 km Blue Raman submarine cable system connecting Europe to India via the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Eastern Africa. This EU initiative will provide ultra-high-speed, secure, and diversified data connectivity resilient to disruptions caused by natural disasters or acts of sabotage.

Additionally, the EU and India are collaborating to develop **Green Shipping Corridors**, which will strengthen sustainable maritime connectivity, reduce dependency on carbon-intensive routes and assert joint leadership in shaping global trade and transport standards.

#### **b) Promoting cooperation in third countries**

Through the **EU-India Administrative Agreement signed in June 2025**, the partners endeavour to jointly invest in projects supporting economic growth, jobs and sustainable development in third countries particularly in Africa and South Asia. This collaboration will harness the complementary strengths of the EU, India, and their private sectors to maximise the impact on the ground and seek to develop innovative market-based financing mechanisms. It could **involve other like-minded partners**. Such cooperation is increasingly crucial in the face of shifting aid landscapes and the rise of alternative development models.

Future **trilateral cooperation projects** could focus on mutually identified sectors such as clean energy infrastructure, green mobility, and digitalisation. The EU and India have also agreed to

jointly deploy digital public infrastructures in third countries that work smoothly with EU and Indian systems.

Ongoing initiatives show how EU-India cooperation can deliver tangible benefits for partners. For example, the EU and India share the aim of making solar energy technology more accessible and affordable worldwide through the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. The EU is supporting ISA's programme on structuring an international network of Solar Technology and Application Resource Centres (STAR-C), which will help improve infrastructure quality and promote markets for solar energy products and services especially in the least developed African countries.

The EU will continue to engage with the India-led **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** to help build infrastructure systems that can withstand climate shocks in small island developing states across the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Another new regional initiative will use **Copernicus satellite tools** to support disaster risk management in South Asia.

A new **EU-India Partnership on Humanitarian Assistance** based on internationally recognised humanitarian principles would allow both sides to better coordinate their actions on the ground.

### c) **Shaping effective global governance**

The EU and India recognise that effective global institutions are necessary to address common challenges and advance shared goals of sustainable and inclusive growth, human rights, and peace and security. At a time when these institutions face growing pressures, **improved EU-India coordination in the UN, G20 and other fora** – including through regular consultations ahead of major events – would strengthen our collective impact.

Both partners support **reforming multilateral institutions** to make them more representative and fit for today's challenges. The **UN80 initiative** provides a platform to advance UN reform and revitalisation, while upholding its principles and implementing the Pact for the Future. India's forthcoming chairmanship of BRICS will provide an opportunity to India to promote international law, norms and values in international fora.

The EU and India share an interest in an open, predictable, and rules-based global trading system. The EU and India should therefore work together towards meaningful **World Trade Organization (WTO) reform** to set up a more effective governance and an updated trade agenda with the view to better address economic distortions and growing fragmentation. As both partners share concern over the financing gap for achieving the SDGs, there is an opportunity to join forces in building a **more inclusive and efficient international financial architecture**, mobilising resources from all sources while advancing Multilateral Development Bank reforms and implementing the Seville Commitment action plan.

The EU and India should cooperate to implement the **Paris Agreement**, including successive commitments made by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and further raise their decarbonisation ambition through economy-wide, greenhouse-gas-inclusive nationally determined contributions. The EU welcomes the expression of leadership in India's intention to host COP33 in 2028. Building on the G20



agreement under India's chairmanship to triple global renewable energy capacity, the two partners should jointly accelerate multilateral action on the **clean energy transition**, including in the framework of the Global Energy Transitions Forum, the Leadership Group for Industry Transition and the Global Biofuels Alliance, and drive multilateral initiatives aimed to **phase out fossil fuels**.

The EU will also engage with India to ensure full implementation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** and the Global Water Agenda, promote the adoption of a binding **Global Plastics Treaty**, and exchange on combatting environmental crime, including on illegal waste shipping. The EU and India have expressed willingness to cooperate on the implementation of the **International Maritime Organization Net-Zero Framework** to decarbonise international shipping.

The EU seeks increased cooperation with India on ocean governance, including through an **Ocean and Fisheries Dialogue**, to promote sustainable resource management, protect marine biodiversity, and advance ratification and implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement, as well as the designation of new marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Southern Ocean. The EU would also welcome joint efforts in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, India's potential accession to the Port State Measures Agreement on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU), and finalising additional rules under the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.

The EU and India will continue to support the World Health Organization (WHO), work together to achieve universal health coverage and cooperate on the **EU's new Global Health Resilience Initiative**. They will also deepen cooperation to address **global hunger and food insecurity** through multilateral initiatives such as the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.

By coordinating closely in global **AI governance** platforms, the EU and India could more effectively defend a responsible, human-centric approach to AI. The EU stands ready to work with India for a successful AI summit hosted by India in February 2026.

The EU looks forward to continued engagement with India on human rights matters bilaterally and in the multilateral context. The EU welcomes India's pledges as a candidate for membership of the **UN Human Rights Council**. Cooperation with India in the UN and other multilateral fora should further deepen on **stability in cyberspace**, the implementation of the UN framework of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, and a human rights-based approach to **counterterrorism**. The EU will further coordinate with India on transparency and confidence-building measures in **outer space**, within the framework of the UN Open Ended Working Group on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. It will keep engaging with India on upholding the multilateral **non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control framework** and will encourage India to accede to key treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the Arms Trade Treaty.

## 5. ENABLERS ACROSS PILLARS

Enablers across pillars are essential. These include skills mobility, knowledge exchanges, business engagement, and institutional cooperation, to maximise interaction, promote mutual understanding, and ensure greater consistency and impact across economic, technological, security, and global initiatives. Serving as the connective tissue of the partnership, these enablers will make it more integrated, resilient, and capable of addressing present and future challenges.

### a) Expanding skills mobility

Mobility between India and the EU has expanded steadily, strengthening economies, tourism, and people-to-people ties. In 2023, 825 000 Indian citizens lived in the EU, the largest group receiving EU Blue Cards and intra-corporate transfer permits. Indians are also a major group of students, researchers, and Erasmus Mundus scholars. Travel has become easier, with nearly one million Schengen visas issued in India in 2024, many as multiple-entry short-stay visas.

Both partners aim to **manage migration sensibly** – tackling illegal flows while supporting balanced talent mobility that serves India’s development priorities and the EU’s economic needs, as outlined in the EU-India High-Level Dialogue and the Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility. Better data, information sharing, skills development and matching, along with newcomer support will help build a durable network of talent.

The EU is collaborating with India to launch the **first pilot European Legal Gateway Office** in India, a one-stop hub to provide information and support the movement of workers to the EU, starting with the ICT sector. The Commission is coordinating with Member States and industry to ensure a swift, market-aligned launch. The initiative tackles operational barriers, responds to strong demand, and may expand to digital skills in AI, data, quantum, and supercomputing.

Alongside the trade and investment framework that the FTA is expected to create, the EU and India, involving interested Member States, could develop a **comprehensive framework of cooperation on mobility** to streamline legal migration, support skills development, compare skills and qualification frameworks and ease the movement of skilled workers, young professionals and seasonal workers in shortage sectors. The **EU’s upcoming visa strategy** will also present actions to facilitate the mobility of top students, researchers, and skilled workers.

The EU and India can expand **exchanges of students, academics and researchers** through initiatives like the Union of Skills, Erasmus+, including Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), along with Indian funding programmes. New initiatives like the ‘Choose Europe for Science’ pilot and the co-funding mechanism of the Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research will boost collaboration. The EU will also organise **study fairs** in India through the ‘Study in Europe’ initiative.

Indian institutions could join **Erasmus+ Centres of Vocational Excellence** as associated partners, while EU participants should gain easier access to Indian mobility, scholarship, and education programmes. In the field of work-based learning, the EU could share its experience with the European Alliance for Apprenticeships as a type of initiative to promote high quality standards for **apprenticeships**.

To make European education more attractive to top Indian students, closer cooperation is needed between institutions to facilitate **recognition of qualifications** and learning periods abroad. This will support systemic collaboration in higher and vocational education, enabling joint programmes, satellite campuses, and language training in India.

The EU will initiate an **Education and Skills Dialogue** at the political level that will bring together policymakers, quality assurance authorities, education institutions, and training businesses from both sides, promoting a seamless flow of talent to sectors with a shortage of workers. The EU is also exploring legislation to establish common rules for the recognition of third-country qualifications and skills.

#### **b) Promoting mutual understanding**

Mutual understanding among institutions, policymakers, and the wider public should be promoted through initiatives in the domains of policy research, educational outreach, and cultural diplomacy.

Promoting **research on contemporary India in Europe and on the EU in India** will help deepen knowledge, inform better decision-making and strengthen public awareness. The **Jean Monnet actions** under the Erasmus+ programme are an important instrument to promote teaching, learning, research and debates on various aspects of the EU.

The EU will set up a new dedicated **Jean Monnet network for India** under Erasmus+, bringing together higher education institutions and other relevant bodies. Further initiatives – such as Horizon funded projects or annual meetings of European academics and experts on India – could be envisaged to help promote European understanding of India.

The creation of **collaborative platforms** to pair **leading think tanks and academic institutions** – covering both regions – would provide structured opportunities for dialogue on the new strategic agenda. Such collaborations could generate regular roundtables and produce policy briefings to support evidence-based policymaking. Both partners should commit to regular high-level participation in **Track 1.5 Dialogues**.

**Professional expertise** could be strengthened through exchanges between early-career diplomats and new initiatives for **young people** to promote contacts between emerging leaders and young professionals.

Finally, **cultural and language-based diplomacy** remains a cornerstone of mutual understanding. Both partners could expand initiatives such as the EU Film Festival and the Long Nights of Literature, featuring authors, artists, and interactive cultural exchanges.

#### **c) Involving business communities**

The private sector plays a critical role in creating a pro-business, pro-trade environment and driving closer relations between the EU and India. This requires stronger interaction between EU and Indian companies, and between companies and policy makers.

The **Federation of European Business in India (FEBI)** was set up in 2024, serving as a single voice of EU business in India with the aim of improving the ease of doing business through policy recommendations and advocacy with EU and Indian business and government

stakeholders. The role of FEBI and its Indian association counterparts should be further strengthened.

In this regard, setting up an **EU-India Business Forum** could provide valuable business perspectives to inform pro-growth policymaking. Regular annual meetings – held ahead of bilateral summits and key EU-India fora – as well as greater consultation of companies within the TTC work strands, would maximise the market uptake of EU-India initiatives.

**Industry delegation visits** involving private-sector associations should also be encouraged.

#### **d) Reinforcing institutional architecture**

The institutional architecture of EU-India relations should be strengthened to support this new comprehensive strategic agenda.

The **EU-India Summit**, providing the highest-level oversight over the joint strategic agenda, should be held annually. A **joint implementation committee** at senior officials' level would report to leaders ahead of the annual Summit to support delivery on joint commitments.

The **Trade and Technology Council (TTC)**, meeting annually at ministerial level, would oversee prosperity, economic security and sustainability, as well as technology and innovation affairs, in pillars 1 and 2, and the **Strategic Dialogue** will oversee cooperation on security and defence, and regional and global issues, in pillars 3 and 4.

The TTC has provided a coordination platform to address key trade, technology and security challenges. To ensure that the TTC has an effective steering role in advancing a broader strategic agenda, the EU and India should consider **upgrading it by expanding participation**, introducing a senior officials' process to prepare ministerial sessions and **incorporating a business dimension**.

**Dedicated ministerial mechanisms** provide strategic guidance in specific sectors covered by the strategic agenda, while both partners could establish **new dialogues** in areas such as agrifood policy, aviation, energy import diversification, education and skills, ocean and fishery, and space. Members of the Commission are committed to increasing **bilateral contacts** with their Indian counterparts, including in international fora.

The EU and its Member States – as far as possible within a Team Europe approach including the business community – should also broaden **outreach to India's 28 states and eight union territories**.

## **WAY FORWARD**

This Joint Communication sets out a positive and ambitious political vision. Building on the 2025 Joint Leaders' Statement, it presents a substantial package of concrete proposals and initiatives that can raise the partnership to a higher level and have a mutually beneficial and **transformative impact**.

Building on these proposals, the EU stands ready to work with India on **developing a Joint EU-India Comprehensive Strategic Agenda** which could be adopted at the next EU-India

Summit. The EU looks forward to India's engagement and concrete steps in this process, ensuring that it is **driven by shared priorities**, concrete actions, and measurable outcomes.

The European Parliament and the Council are invited to support the new strategic agenda presented in this Joint Communication.