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NOTE

From: European Commission
To: Delegations

Subject: Joint Statement on the establishment of the EU-India Trade and
Technology Council

Delegations will find in the annex Joint Statement on the establishment of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council and the related Terms of Reference.

Joint Statement on the establishment of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council

President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, and Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, agreed to launch the EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) on 25 April 2022.

Rapid changes in the world's geopolitical environment highlight the need for deeper strategic engagement between the EU and India as vibrant democracies, particularly in the fields of trade and technology. The TTC is a high-level coordination platform to take this common work forward. It will allow the EU and India to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security, and to deepen their bilateral relationship and help implement political commitments in these fields.

With this Joint Statement, the EU and India establish their TTC and its three Working Groups:

1. Working Group on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance and Digital Connectivity;
2. Working Group on Green and Clean Energy Technologies; and
3. Working Group on Trade, Investment and Resilient Value Chains.

The Working Groups will now start preparing for the first meeting of the TTC, which will take place before the next EU-India Summit.

Terms of Reference for the EU-India Trade and Technology Council

Rationale

Rapid changes in the world's geopolitical environment highlight the need for deeper strategic engagement between the European Union (EU) and India. As vibrant democracies, the EU and India share fundamental values and have a common interest in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multi-polar world. Both partners also face a challenging global political, economic and security landscape. This is true particularly in the trade and technological domains.

Therefore, structured high-level engagement is needed to provide political steer, operationalise political decisions, advance technical work, and report to the highest political level in areas that are critical for the sustainable economic growth of the EU and India.

Aim of the TTC

The EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) is a high-level coordination platform, which will allow the EU and India to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security, and to deepen their bilateral relationship in these fields. It should help ensure political commitments are implemented on the ground.

Format

The TTC will be co-chaired on the EU side by the Executive Vice-Presidents (EVP) of the European Commission in charge of digital technology and trade.

The TTC will be co-chaired on the Indian side by the Ministers in charge of external affairs, commerce & industry, and electronics & information technology.

Both sides will invite other Members of the College/Ministers to contribute to TTC meetings depending on the issues discussed. When issues to be discussed at the TTC fall under the competences of the High Representative/Vice-President the HRVP will participate in the relevant meeting. Meetings of the TTC will take place at least once a year, with the venue alternating between the EU and India. Meetings of the TTC could take place in person or virtually.

The TTC will rely on the work of the working groups identified below, which will be established specifically for the TTC, in addition to which pre-existing bodies in these areas can be considered to be integrated into the TTC and reformatted as necessary. The TTC may decide to establish additional thematic working groups. They will meet as often as necessary.

The TTC will be designed to be results-oriented. Each working group will be asked to create the necessary technical work strands to best deliver on the objectives that will be agreed at Ministerial level. Structured and proactive stakeholder outreach – including private sector and civil society – will be ensured at all levels.

Coordination of the working groups and preparations for TTC meetings will be entrusted to a coordinating entity to be determined by each side.

Working Groups:

- 1. Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance and Digital Connectivity:** This may include cooperation on data governance and human-centric digitalization. The working group would ensure effective implementation of the digital connectivity component of the EU-India Connectivity Partnership. This could cover research, rules and regulation, and joint scientific and technical capacity building in the following areas of mutual interest: 5G/6G, AI (could absorb the EU-India Joint Task Force on Artificial Intelligence), High Performance & Quantum Computing research and development, semiconductors, Cloud systems, cyber security, digital skills, digital platforms, start-ups etc. This could also serve as an overarching platform to exchange views on the strategic, political and security implications of new and emerging technologies, and discuss critical and emerging technology standards and certification. It could subsume the India-EU Joint ICT Working Group.

- 2. Green & Clean Energy Technologies:** This WG should focus on green technologies, including investment and standards, with emphasis on research and innovation, identifying areas of mutual interest for collaboration and implementation (e.g. clean energy, waste management, plastic and litter in the ocean, circular economy etc), cooperation between EU and Indian incubators, SMEs and start-ups working in this area, and building human resource capability and capacity in such technologies.
- 3. Trade, Investment & Resilient Value Chains*:** This WG could promote access to critical components, energy, and raw materials. This WG could absorb the planned JWG on resilient supply chains. In addition, it may also address issues of market access by working towards jointly resolving identified trade barriers, global trade challenges by promoting multilateral cooperation in relation to the WTO, G20 and other fora, and investment screening. It may also work towards promotion of international standards and cooperation on addressing global geopolitical challenges. It could subsume the existing Senior Officials' Dialogue on WTO.

* The TTC will receive a report on the state of play of the bilateral trade, investment and GIs negotiations that will proceed along a separate track

The High-level Trade & Investment Dialogue will also be held in parallel, and will remain the principal organ for the above mentioned ongoing negotiations.

The planned EU-India High-level Digital Investment Forum (DIF) will be organized on the margins of a TTC Ministerial meeting, and could be followed by regular sectoral activities of the DIF.