



STRENGTHENING THE EU-INDIA  
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
THROUGH RESEARCH

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THINK TANKS  
TWINNING INITIATIVE

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# Foreword

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## Strengthening the EU-India Strategic Partnership through research

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It is with great pleasure that I introduce '*Strengthening the EU-India Strategic Partnership through research*', a compilation of joint research papers on EU-India relations produced under the **EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative (TTTI)**, a project supported by the EU Delegation to India.

Since its launch in 2015 the **EU-India TTTI** has brought together think tankers from Europe and India to research current issues of relevance to both sides in the fields of foreign and security policy, global governance and international affairs. They have jointly explored original ideas and new perspectives on how to further strengthen the EU-India strategic partnership. This current compilation comprises a wealth of original research produced by leading European and Indian Think Tanks joined in consortiums under the initiative.

I trust that this research will help stimulate discussion, foster further study and academic discourse and provide policy analysis useful to decision-makers in India and Europe. We also hope that the findings and recommendations will help enrich dialogue and academic discussion in the run-up to the next EU-India Summit in 2020.

In the light of increasing uncertainty in world affairs, it is undisputably more important than ever for the EU and India to work together and strengthen their strategic relationship and to contribute to addressing global challenges. The EU and India are staunch believers in multilateralism, a cooperative approach to international relations and a rules-based world order. Our relations are already strong, as they are built on nearly 60 years of cooperation to reduce poverty, prevent disasters, expand trade and enhance global security. Today, our shared strategic interests have vastly expanded, ranging from the fight against climate change, the greening of the economy and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, to connectivity and maritime security.

I hope that this compilation will inform the debate on how best to make EU-India cooperation even more effective and successful. It features summaries and recommendations of research papers<sup>1</sup> on strategic topics such as connectivity, emerging technologies, Indian Ocean commerce, and security and defence cooperation. I am sure that it will prove a useful resource for practitioners and experts working to further promote and strengthen EU-India relations.

## **Ugo Astuto**

Ambassador of the European Union to India and Bhutan

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<sup>1</sup> Full research papers available on the TTTI website  
<https://euindiathinktanks.com>

# Introduction

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## EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative

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In the context of the EU Public Diplomacy in India through Policy and Outreach Partnerships (EUPOP), the EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative (TTTI) was launched with the support of the EU Delegation to India in 2015 to promote better understanding and stimulate joint research between leading Indian and EU Think Tanks.

TTTI aims to foster such interaction through joint projects including research publications and events. The initiative feeds into the EU-India strategic relationship by suggesting concrete ideas and recommendations on how the EU and India can further strengthen their cooperation in the fields of foreign and security policy and global governance. Such synergy helps generate better understanding and awareness of the EU in India and India in Europe.

Since 2015, TTTI has provided innovative research on EU-India cooperation in a number of areas, including; Perspective on BRI, cooperation in connectivity, maritime security, counter-terrorism, defence, urbanization, crisis management to counter natural disasters, space, cyber security and data protection, peace building and global governance, and in other regions such as Central Asia, Africa, West Asia and Afghanistan.

This book is a presentation of the executive summaries and recommendations generated between 2018–2019.

All papers are available at:  
[www.euindiathinktanks.com](http://www.euindiathinktanks.com)

### EU-INDIA THINK TANKS TWINNING INITIATIVE 2018–19

Between 2018 – 2019, the EU supported Five EU-India think tank consortiums engaged in joint research. Below the composition of the Consortiums and title of their research:

- **Clingendael – Netherlands Institute of International Relations with the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.**

- 'EU & India as continental partners: beyond bilateralism'
  - 'Seizing the Momentum: Avenues for EU-India Maritime Cooperation in a Connectivity Context'
  - 'Development Cooperation Partnerships: Forging an EU-India-Japan Trilateral in Africa'
- **Federal Trust UK** (in collaboration with the Global Policy Institute, UK) with **Jawaharlal Nehru University – Centre for Europe Studies**, New Delhi.
    - 'Developing EU and Indian Cooperative Responses to the Belt & Road Initiative.'
    - 'Prospects for EU-India Cooperation in Central Asia'
    - 'EU-India and The Russian Federation'
- **Chatham House the Royal Institute of International Affairs**, UK, in Association with **European Union Institute for Security Studies**, (EUISS), Brussels, with **Observer Research Foundation**, (ORF), New Delhi.
    - 'The Indian Ocean: Opportunities for EU – India engagement.'
    - 'Prospects for strengthening EU-India engagement in the field of natural disasters'
    - 'Emerging Technologies: what areas of EU-India Cooperation'
- **Global Public Policy Institute** (GPPI), Berlin, with **Carnegie India**, New Delhi,
    - 'Charting EU-India Cooperation on Connectivity.'
- **Centre for International Relations**, Warsaw, with **Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal Academy of Higher Education**, Manipal.,
    - 'Cooperation between EU and India on China/ One Belt One Road Initiative – EU and Indian responses.'
    - 'India-EU Cooperation in Africa: Challenges and Prospects'
    - 'EU-India Security and Defence Cooperation in the Twenty First Century: Challenges and Prospects'

These papers were discussed amongst the participating think tanks and other experts and officials at workshops held in Delhi (13 September 2018, 07 November 2019) and Brussels (02 April 2019). Inputs received at the workshops were used by the authors to finalise the respective papers.

The three workshops were followed by public events in which senior officials from the two sides participated.



## EU-INDIA THINK TANKS TWINNING INITIATIVE 2015 – 17

Four consortia of think tanks from the EU and India were supported under the EU Public Diplomacy and Outreach in India and in the SAARC project during 2015-17, and they carried out the research work as follows:

- a. **ORF, Chatham House and EUISS** produced three Background Papers covering West Asia, Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism and Countering Radicalisation. The consortium also held a Workshop and a Public Event in New Delhi in September 2016, as well as a final Public Event in Brussels in November.
- b. **GPPi and Carnegie India** produced four policy papers charting EU-India cooperation on global governance and security, on Regional Connectivity in Asia, Securing Afghanistan, Global Conflict Management, and Securing the Indian Ocean. The consortium organized two policy dialogues in Brussels and New Delhi respectively, which brought together policy makers, academics and think tankers from Europe and India. Supported by structured facilitation, the participants mapped out challenges and opportunities for EU-India cooperation in selected policy fields. In order to disseminate these findings to a broader audience, the consortium organized a large public event in New Delhi attended by European ambassadors, Ministry of External Affairs, India, think tanks and media. Another public event was organized at Vrije University, Brussels. All four policy papers were also published as an edited monograph.
- c. **IAI and Gateway House** delivered an Expert Discussion in Mumbai, a Seminar in Rome and a Concluding Presentation in Brussels between November and December. Publications were produced on “EU-India Defence Cooperation: A European Perspective”, “EU-India Cooperation on Cyber Issues: Towards Pragmatic Idealism?”, “EU-India: Starting a More Adventurous Conversation”, “Maritime Security and Freedom of Navigation from the South China Sea and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: Potential and Limits of EU-India Cooperation”, “EU-India Cooperation on Space and Security”, “Potential and Challenges of India-EU Space Cooperation”, “Maritime Security and Freedom of Navigation from the South China Sea and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean”, “India-EU Cooperation on Cyber Security and Data Protection”, and “India-EU Defence Cooperation: The Role of Industry”.
- d. **GRF and FES India** delivered a Seminar on “EU-India Cooperation on Sustainable Urbanisation” in Pune, India, in September 2016, and produced a Policy Brief on “Charting a Sustainable Future: EU-India Platforms on Energy

and Climate Change and Urban Development”, as well as one on “Indias View on Human Security: Citizens First, Holistic Urbanisation and Cooperation with the European Union”.

### **Public diplomacy project**

The EU Public Diplomacy in India through Policy and Outreach Partnerships (EUPOP) has been launched as part of the EU's efforts to enhance the visibility of the European Union as a whole, to promote a better understanding of EU's actions and positions and exert a positive influence on how the EU is perceived in partner countries.

The overall objective of the project is supporting the achievement of EU foreign policy objectives by strengthening the EU's ability to engage meaningfully with targeted audiences and stakeholders in India through Public Diplomacy. It should contribute to re-position the EU and its Member States as a reliable, useful and effective partner for India in both bilateral and global issues.

More information at:

[www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india)



# China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): India's and EU's Perspectives

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This study presents India's and Europe's perspectives on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), identifying both convergences and divergences between the two on Beijing's infrastructure and connectivity project.

The concept, or vision, of the BRI presented in autumn 2013 by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping, came as a surprise even in China, which had been following a low-profile strategy proposed by the 'father of reforms' Deng Xiaoping for the two previous decades. Simultaneously, it came as an even bigger surprise to the outside world, including USA, Japan, India and the European Union (EU), its institutions and member states.

No one seemed to be ready to accept a new, assertive and expansive China, proposing its new role as a power centre, like it was for centuries, up to the upheaval of Opium Wars (1839-60) and the following disasters of internal instability and external pressure. China treats the era from 1839 till 1949, which is till the proclamation of People's Republic of China – PRC, as the 'one hundred years of national humiliation'. Using the term “making justice to history”, and the



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slogan of 'return to its proper place on global scene"', China wishes to settle accounts with the previously stronger states and simultaneously to be placed at the centre of the world again.

The BRI, combined with the ambitious aims of Xi Jinping's administration (''fifth generation of leaders') on domestic scene known as 'two centenary goals', present a new, assertive China, ready to be one of the major global centre of powers, if not the centre alone. Especially after achieving a second goal that is known as 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation', which - inter alia - requires a peaceful reunification with Taiwan.

Other major powers – including the United States and Japan - have shown their apprehensions on China's ascendancy through this connectivity project and the BRI might institutionalise a China-centric regional order.

Through an examination of India's and Europe's perspectives on China's BRI, this research paper finds that India strongly believes that China shall follow international norms and respect territorial sovereignty of other countries. India's approach to BRI, by and large, is being guided by the concerns emanating from CPEC – the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor which is a collection of infrastructure projects that are currently under construction throughout Pakistan – India's traditional enemy.

The EU has differing perspectives on BRI. There are countries like Greece, Hungary, Poland and many others in the EU, which have shown a high degree of enthusiasm in China's BRI. Others like Germany and France are sceptical of the BRI's success and raise serious doubts on the nature of the funding for the connectivity project.

The differing perspectives between India and the EU on China's BRI are evident and explained in the paper. Whether China will commit to the institutional norms remains a major part of the challenge. China has found a great support from the Southeast and the Central Asian countries in addition to the South Asian countries minus India.

The final section of the paper presents recommendations that could help both EU and Indian policymakers fashion a joint response to China's infrastructure and connectivity project. In particular, the study recommends that India be pro-active

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was finalised before the publication of the document by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *EU-China – A Strategic Outlook* (JOIN/2019/5), 12 March 2019.

in maintaining its strategic influence independent of China's entry in its vicinity as well as its extended neighbourhood. India shall intensely think of stepping up all its efforts in promoting connectivity with its neighbours. The blueprint of BRI should have been written by both India and China. There is a dominant view that if the BRI has to be successful, then India has to be a part of it.

As per the EU perspective, it must be emphasized here that the BRI was never properly defined, even by the Chinese, who claim that it is rather 'a vision' than a mere infrastructure programme. The West, including the EU, up to now is accepting it as a kind of development strategy focused on connectivity and – mainly economic – cooperation of the Eurasian states. The EU needs to build a solid understanding of the BRI, combined with an urgent – and strongly neglected – task of preparing a common strategy towards China and its new global role.<sup>1</sup>



# European and Indian Perceptions of the Belt and Road Initiative

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It is becoming clear that China's ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) linking Asia and Africa with Europe through a network of various transportation corridors could fundamentally reshape the geo-economics and geopolitics of the whole Eurasian region and beyond. These developments have huge implications both for the European Union (EU) and for India. The BRI is not a formal policy but a broad evolving geopolitical strategic framework with wider economic, foreign policy and cultural implications. Although the scope of the BRI is still taking shape, it has already started affecting many countries in Europe and Asia. As a result, the BRI has also attracted attention during bilateral discussions between Indian and European policy makers and academia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was finalised before the publication of the document by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *EU-China – A Strategic Outlook* (JOIN/2019/5), 12 March 2019.



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The main focus of this paper is to capture evolving European and Indian perceptions of China's BRI. The findings of the paper are based on desk research, discussions, as well as a series of in-depth interviews held both in Europe and in India. The paper covers wider perceptions, which go much beyond official narratives. As the EU and India are close strategic partners, this understanding may help in formulating possible responses and avenues for cooperation.

In the context of changing scope of the BRI, perceptions are evolving. Until 2017, European perceptions were mainly shaped by national views. Since then a more coordinated European approach is evolving. These perceptions have been partly shaped by the importance of the EU-China bilateral relationship as well as European plans towards Asian connectivity. Europe's developing strategic approach towards Eurasia has also affected these views. The EU greatly welcomes Chinese initiatives of increasing investments in cross-border infrastructure with the view that it should adhere to market rules, international financial and environmental norms.

Through BRI, China has focused more on Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region. Some of the projects have led to concerns over the possibility of diluting European political unity or investments rules. There is, however, much room for greater political coordination amongst European countries, notably by being more proactive in promoting for example the infrastructure projects which the EU has already financed in Central and Eastern Europe and by generally seeking to promote the EU-Asia connectivity plans.

The sovereignty related issues concerning the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and broader geopolitical implications within the Indian Ocean region have overshadowed other aspects of the BRI in the Indian narrative. Despite a major BRI focus on Europe and Central Asia, there is a relatively little Indian assessment of developmental implications within this wider region.

Broader India-China ties have affected BRI discussions. A broad consensus seems to have emerged that the BRI is primarily a Chinese initiative and that it is difficult for New Delhi to endorse the CPEC. India's participation in the AIIB, SCO and BRICS had relatively little impact on New Delhi's perception of the BRI. In fact, the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, which was graduated to Track I in 2013 has rather become victim of the BRI geopolitics. Although a large number of independent analysts have argued for a selective participation in the BRI, this has hardly been reflected in government policy.

As the BRI progresses, the Indian focus is more on perusing its own connectivity plans (individually or with other partners) and also on showing how some of the

BRI projects are creating difficulties for recipient countries. From earlier geopolitical and developmental aspects of the initiative, the focus is now shifting towards a political economy analysis of participating countries. Increasing difficulties faced by BRI projects in terms of debt trap, corruption, political controversies, negative environmental implications and overall sustainability of projects are also being analysed in India.

Overall, both European and Indian perceptions have shown the importance of BRI connectivity projects and their relevance in understanding economic opportunities and strategic challenges. Initially, Europeans focused more on the developmental aspect of the initiative, as integration and connectivity have been major objectives of the European integration project itself. In contrast, Indian policy makers have been very cautious towards the initiative from the beginning.

Compared to Europe, official Indian narrative on the BRI is still largely negative. Wider Indian perceptions, however, favour some selective engagement. These developments indicate possibilities of a meaningful common understanding between the EU and India through wider consultations on the subject.





# Charting EU-India Cooperation on Connectivity

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While initially a response to the massive infrastructure deficit in Asia, today the term 'connectivity' is laden with strategic and political implications. This is largely a result of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its very visible political, financial, and environmental impact across Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup>

With its new Communication on Euro-Asian Connectivity, the EU aims to position itself as a global player in connectivity, looking to increase its engagement in Europe and Asia through building networks and new partnerships. It aims to re-shape the narrative around connectivity by focusing on sustainability, transparency, international standards, and building partnerships.

India too is similarly realising the importance of connectivity, as a way to implement long delayed regional integration. Focusing towards its East, India believes that connectivity must be based on 'universally recognized international

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was finalised before the publication of the document by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *EU-China – A Strategic Outlook* (JOIN/2019/5), 12 March 2019.



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norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality, and must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity'.

This paper examines the normative convergence between the EU and India's approach to connectivity and explores what this means for their cooperation on the ground. It argues that connectivity is a new avenue for strengthening the EU-India political partnership. While neither India nor the EU can match the funds brought to the table by China's BRI, by partnering together they can provide alternatives to smaller countries in Asia. As both focus on soft connectivity – in terms of standard setting, capacity building and technical assistance – they would fill an important gap in the connectivity needs in Asia.

The paper finds that as India continues to shape its connectivity strategy, it is placing significant importance on the role of partnerships. Delhi sees value in collaborating with like-minded countries in maintaining a rules-based order while addressing an inherent gap in infrastructure requirements in the Indo-Pacific. While Japan has emerged as a key partner in India's connectivity approach, the convergence in New Delhi and Brussels' approach to infrastructure development creates a greater scope for collaboration between the two.

There is tremendous potential to work together on connectivity projects in South Asia, where India, in partnership with neighbouring countries, can profit tremendously from EU's experiences of implementing projects in its own neighbourhood. The EU could pool financial resources with that of its Member States and with multilateral organisations like the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to present alternative financing options. These partnerships could strengthen a rules-based multilateral approach to connectivity that benefits all.

We argue that both EU and India have a clear normative convergence on what connectivity projects should look like. They should be transparent, sustainable, with a level playing field and following international rules and norms. Like the EU, India could consider developing its own strategy on connectivity which will make it easier for third partners to explore this normative convergence further in practice.

## **Policy Recommendations**

Both EU, its Member States and India should consider joint projects and partnerships in third countries as a testing ground for cooperation. A few promising areas include:

Countries and regions where both India and Europe are active – particularly Southeast Asia and within the ASEAN framework, and Indian Ocean island

countries. BIMSTEC member states – a group of countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal including: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan - could be another promising venue, the EU is already working on improving liquefied natural gas (LNG) connectivity within BIMSTEC countries. The Indian Ocean Region and Africa could be other potential areas where EU and India could find converging interests and opportunities to support ongoing projects. Blue Economy, digital connectivity and capacity building are key areas where India and EU could explore joint projects in the above-mentioned regions.

Sectors where both are active – both EU and India focus on soft infrastructure projects including standard setting, capacity building and trainings for building local capacity. While this is different from the hard infrastructure focus of China's BRI projects, it does fill a critical gap in infrastructure needs in Asia. Streamlining customs procedures, digitalization of networks for example would lead to huge improvements in connecting South Asia.

# East Africa, India and Europe: Norms to enhance Indian Ocean commerce

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The paper seeks to identify key trade linkages in Indian Ocean littoral states in East Africa along with Indian Ocean island states as a means of understanding the scope for India and the EU to cooperate in establishing transparent rules-based norms for supply chains in the region.

Both India and the EU are key trading partners for the African nations analysed in this paper, and as the region develops economically, the trade regime in the Indian Ocean will witness substantial changes. The paper sources data on the trade in



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commodities between India and the EU with eight African nations in the Indian Ocean, and analyses the data to reveal key commodities traded between them.

The motivation for this paper emerges from three economic and strategic factors: (i) Africa is poised for an economic take-off, driven by its youth bulge and the prospects for energized internal and external trade; (ii) The Indian Ocean and its littoral states are going to be a major focus for great power competition in the decades to come; (iii) India and Europe have a shared stake in creating and sustaining supply chains that nurture their economy while simultaneously ensuring that an open, transparent and rules-based trading, maritime and investment global order is maintained, particularly given the launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which extends to Eastern Africa, and the expansion of Chinese economic activity across the African continent.

At the intersection of these three requirements lies co-operation between India and the EU in the African states that abut the Western Indian Ocean. What form, however, could this co-operation take? India is generally unwilling to open up its bilateral relationship with any other developing country; and Europe's stakes in East Africa have differed historically compared to India's. Any possible scenario for Indo-EU collaboration in the area must therefore be informed by the actual structure of the economic engagement between India, Europe, and East Africa. To that end, this paper collates and analyses recent trade data between these entities, to examine the existing structure of supply chains, and questions whether cooperation can take advantage of these existing economic ties or must rise above them. The paper therefore bases its conclusions on what the figures reveal. The numbers are not presented from an Indian nor from an EU perspective. It is the trade volumes and values revealed, as well as the composition and durability of trade which allow for neutral and shared conclusions to be drawn.

This study has thus three main objectives. The first is to enable EU-India cooperation in developing an integrated and sophisticated supply chain for commodities, with minimal trade barriers, in the Western Indian Ocean. The second aim is to identify key pressure points in the Indian Ocean trade regime related to Africa, and if there is any scope for the EU and India to collaborate in those areas. The third aim behind the data collection is to better understand how trade figures in the calculus of countries in East Africa along with Indian Ocean island states.

The analysis of available trade data suggests that there are considerable differences in the pattern of trade that East Africa has with the EU and with India. Based on these findings, the paper presents in the conclusion some policy

recommendations, presenting them in the form of three alternative scenarios of India-EU co-operation in the Western Indian Ocean, to see which is likely to create buy-in among all stakeholders given the pre-existing pattern of trade.

**(i) The wide-angle scenario: Building trade infrastructure:**

In many cases, the greatest institutional resistance to co-operation on trade in the Western Indian Ocean is likely to come from the Indian side. This is for understandable historical reasons. India is seeking to build up its influence in Africa more broadly and also in the Indian Ocean littoral states; thus unless there are strong and compelling reasons for it to seek synergies with another country or grouping, it will not want to dilute its influence and work bilaterally. Yet there are also reasons to suppose that this traditional resistance is no longer as tight a constraint as it was earlier. The Indian government's commitment to the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, which is essentially a bilateral project with the government of Japan, is a useful and relevant example of this relaxation. The AAGC's focus is clearly on extending both countries' influence in the Indian Ocean Region. India has enthusiastically sought avenues for co-operation with Japan in the Indian Ocean, with an eye more on a strategic convergence between the two countries than on immediate results; the question is whether there could be any rationale for a similar engagement with Europe in the region.

**(ii) The focused scenario: Governance, health and regional development:**

Both India and the EU have expressed a clear interest in enabling governance effectiveness in Africa. The question that emerges from an analysis of trade patterns is whether there is a specific and common direction that could be imparted to governance assistance in such a way that the private sector is turned into a stakeholder in Indian and European efforts in East Africa. One possibility, in particular, is in the healthcare sector. India is rapidly developing expertise in providing health care of reasonable quality with a cost structure that is appropriate to African conditions. Meanwhile, both India and Europe export pharmaceuticals to the countries studied above. While in general pharmaceuticals have been a source of competition, especially in the trade field, there are also spaces that could be found here for cooperation.

**(iii) The long-term scenario: Building shared norms:**

In many cases, the greatest space for co-operation between India and the EU is in the creation and development of shared norms, informed by a common heritage as liberal democracies with private sector-led economies and a “partnership” view of development assistance. The norms underlying trade and those that determine the nature of infrastructure investment are the two broad fields in which the Western Indian Ocean could transform co-operation between India and the EU.



# Managing Connectivity Conflict: EU-India Cooperation and China's Belt and Road Initiative

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Connectivity initiatives are the latest geopolitical tool for advancing influence in international relations and diplomacy. Against the backdrop of an emerging connectivity conflict, the responsibility is on likeminded countries and organizations to promote initiatives that embody transparency and universalism in connectivity projects and that benefit citizens in the long term. The EU and India are two important actors in this regard.

This paper analyses the scope of cooperation in the field of connectivity between the EU and India, arguing that they are two important strategic poles of the current world order with shared interests. Europe and India are key actors of the western and non-western democratic liberal, both aiming to strengthen an “open, transparent and rules-based system of international politics and economics.” Realizing this potential requires candid and engaged strategic and economic exchange between the two sides.



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Responding to the need for both hard and soft infrastructure systems, many governments have factored connectivity as the lynchpin of their foreign policy. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is only one of these, but it is the most developed of these initiatives by far. It could become the arch of the 21st-century world order. What is clear, is that this Chinese initiative challenges the current open and transparent rules-based system of international politics and economics advanced in the 20th century. Seen as a "manifestation of China's re-globalization ambitions," the BRI raises expectations of economic and political opportunities at one level while inviting scepticism and doubt over its operational mode at another.<sup>1</sup>

Set against this context, the US, Japan, India, Australia and the EU have started their own counter-initiatives to balance the Chinese outreach under the BRI. By and large, these "likeminded" actors are yet to add real projects and funds to their proposed initiatives. Also lacking is a consensus on how to interrelate their connectivity propositions, which now largely run parallel at best and cross-purpose at worst. Obviously, there is dearth of substantive engagement about one another's strategic thought.

The EU and India are particularly affected by the ambitions of China's BRI, as Beijing is enhancing its political and strategic influence in Europe and around India's neighbourhood. This provides strategic momentum and political imperative for the two sides to bind forces and promote sustainable connectivity as their overarching connectivity narrative. That means commercially viable and transparent, guaranteeing a level-playing field for businesses, a respect of labour rights and environmental standards, and avoiding financial dependencies.

We argue that if India and the EU are to capitalise on the political momentum for increased cooperation that exists today, a focus on geo-economics must take place. This means devising a framework for cooperation that bridges the political and economic fields, while incorporating a long-term vision with concrete action points for collaboration.

Sustainable connectivity - as per the EU's new Connectivity Strategy and discussed in this paper - makes for such a vision, as it addresses a field where both sides really share interests, approaches and prioritization. Much needed now, is practical on-the-ground cooperation within this framework. This can be pursued in each of the

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was finalised before the publication of the document by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *EU-China – A Strategic Outlook* (JOIN/2019/5), 12 March 2019.



three connectivity pillars to deliver local, visible and quicker solutions to practical challenges.

Regarding economic connectivity, enhanced cooperation on the ground in Africa appears to have great potential. Moreover, the EU and India can draw lessons from the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) as the approach to concrete projects. What should also be taken from the AAGC is its strength in adding interregional focus, explicating where the partners complement each other.

The main hindrance to EU-India joint partnerships in connectivity seems to be the limited economic engagement between the two entities, especially in comparison to the EU's trade with China or the US. For the EU and India to jointly undertake overseas projects, there needs to be an increase in their strategic trust and economic weight, which can come about only through increased trade and investment with each other. Both should increase their investments in strategic and economic cooperation to take their relationship forward.

France can lead the way for Europe since it has already achieved a niche for itself in the Indian set-up, through its extensive cooperation with the Indian defence forces. There are opportunities for other EU states as well, such as the Netherlands which can invest in India's blue economy as well manufacturing industries. The EU can also collaborate with Japan to explore the dynamics of investing in India.

For people-to-people connectivity to increase between the two continental actors, dialogue at all levels should also be enhanced to deepen mutual understanding and identify avenues for joint collaborations. Recent dialogues have revealed a growing convergence between European and Indian stakeholders on issues of promoting a rules-based international order, strengthening a multipolar Asia, and prioritizing connectivity. Now is the time to capitalize on this momentum.



## Prospects for EU-India Cooperation in Central Asia

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Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the five Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - are witnessing significant changes in their economic and political systems. Despite having a very complex legacy, they have made progress in economic and political transformation with varying degrees. The Soviet era leaders in more or less non-competitive regimes tried to pursue economic stability while securing their own dominance in the new political system. They also learnt a few lessons from the Chinese model of development. After a decade of recession and difficulties, these countries witnessed strong economic performance till 2014. During this period, Central Asia's trade and investment links with neighboring economic centers increased significantly. China, Russia, and the European Union (EU) became their main export destinations and sources of imports, FDI and remittances. Slowdown in all these markets and declining oil, gas and commodity prices have pushed



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Central Asia for diversification. Significant political changes are also taking place in two of the largest countries in the region Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Overall, the region has been relatively stable in recent years. Central Asia is also the main focus of engagement for both the Russian and Chinese integration and connectivity plans. Moreover, deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan has created security uncertainty in the region.

The geopolitical environment within and around the Central Asian region is changing significantly. These developments may lead to greater regional cooperation and connectivity. Although both the EU and India had previously supported the US New Silk Road (NSR) project - an initiative to link Central Asia with South Asia through Afghanistan, the NSR, as then proposed by the US, never really took off. Due to its disengagement in Afghanistan, the US focus on Central Asia is also likely to decline over the coming years. At the same time, the Russian influence in the region is still significant and the Chinese profile is expanding fast. Since, in the five Central Asian countries, European and Indian activities are mainly in the field of development and capacity building, they are less likely to be seen through a geopolitical angle. Central Asians may not feel threatened by EU-India further engagement through joint efforts, nor should other strategic players in the region such as Russia and China. India has worked closely with Russia and is now also a member of the SCO.

Central Asia is in fact part of both the EU's and India's extended neighbourhood. The EU's new India strategy clearly highlights that Indian and European interests converge in the security and stability of the region. Intensifying dialogue on Afghanistan and Central Asia has also been proposed as one of the key possible actions under the current strategy. Both India and the EU do share the principles of sustainable development based on effective multilateralism and a rules-based order. In addition, they believe that enhanced security, regional cooperation and connectivity will help Central Asia and its bilateral engagement with each of them. The EU has also confirmed its interests in working with India in third countries to help consolidating democratic processes and support transitioning regimes through capacity building for electoral and parliamentary institutions. This could be thought as a sharing of experiences to benefit the resilience and long-term stability of countries and societies, a common objective also of Central Asian states. Moreover, Europe and India increasingly share approaches to connectivity as a sustainable, comprehensive, and rules-based framework. These shared principles could be a basis for closer dialogue between India and the EU to support a prosperous and stable development in Central Asia to the benefit of all.

Moving from these broad generalisations to specific areas of cooperation in Central Asia is however not simple. Major powers like Russia, the US and China are,

as we have seen, active in the region and have their own understanding about European and Indian engagement. The Afghanistan situation is still unfolding. The main positive factor in favour of EU-India cooperation is their positive image in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Overall, EU-India cooperation in Central Asia should not be comprehended as a geopolitical game but rather as an attempt to increase synergies for regional dialogue and promote sustainable development. If India and EU are convinced that they are useful partners in Central Asia, they could increase their exchanges through each other's dialogues. A few projects/activities could be considered in the following areas:

1. Exploring the possibility of joint implementation of some new development cooperation projects in the areas of capacity building, renewable energy and agriculture.
2. Joint training and technical assistance in strengthening institutions of democracy (elections, media, civil society).
3. EU-India, Central Asia dialogue on Afghanistan and connectivity.
4. Joint EU-India technical assistance projects supporting private sector, capacity building and innovation for small and medium enterprises.
5. EU-India joint mobility programmes for Central Asian students and teachers to cover a wider spectrum of educational levels and field of studies.



# Seizing the Momentum: Avenues for EU-India Maritime Cooperation in a Connectivity Context

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In recent years, rising competition in the maritime spaces have pushed many actors to critically rethink their policies towards the security and governance of the high seas. In the Indian Ocean Region, China's Maritime Silk Road (MSR) as part of the broader Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been central to this growing sense of competition.

New, and potentially conflicting connectivity approaches are the result of this changing dynamic in the maritime domain. This has made it imperative to understand how the competing narratives are feeding into the existing policies and actions at the national, regional and global level. Amidst the growing strategic competition, the EU and India are exploring various options to not only strengthen their cooperation to tackle security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), but also to take the relationship forward based on mutually shared norms on connectivity.



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In this backdrop, this paper analyses how the evolving policy approaches of the EU and India with regard to connectivity in the IOR affect potential maritime cooperation and initiatives, and which potential avenues for cooperation open up in this changed policy context. For this purpose, the paper employs a two-pronged approach by looking at avenues for cooperation in the economic and security field through bilateral and institutional lens.

For the EU, working through the existing maritime security governance mechanisms and forging new cooperative ventures currently is the most workable way of achieving balanced cooperation with its partners in Asia, including India. Security cooperation with relevant maritime actors can strengthen the EU's profile as a promising and reliable security actor in the region especially if more coordination at sea in the IOR amongst EU Member States can be set to gain clarity in India's perception of the EU's action. The recent EU-China maritime exercise shows Brussels' involvement in engaging with China – the EU's engagement with India should not lag behind.

Boosting cooperation with like-minded countries in the region is especially potent at a time that the US commitment to Asia under President Trump is either unclear or diverging from the EU's interest. This makes the EU's current momentum in proactive policy-making towards Asia even timelier, not to say more sustainable in the medium to long run. EU policymakers realise the current vulnerability of the international order obliges them to strengthen their security profile and support partners in the region that sync with the EU's norms and interests. Although the EU being an extra-regional power in the IOR ultimately limits its options in the maritime security domain, there is more than sufficient scope to continue working on the EU's visibility, partnership profile and expanding cooperative maritime ventures.

India has responded positively to the EU Strategy on India, and although developments are going slowly and incrementally, the two actors are on a more positive track now than they have been in quite a while. On the EU side however, Brexit and the EU Parliamentary elections in May 2019 are crucial in how the room for manoeuvre in CSDP, and with that its (maritime) cooperation with India will develop. As the UK is one of the largest navies of the EU Member States, Brussels is worried that Brexit will weaken the EU as a maritime (security) actor.

Considering India's strong historic link with the UK, New Delhi is still exploring how to perceive and deal with the EU after Brexit, also in the maritime domain. India's ambition to become a net security provider and preeminent power in the IOR

however pushes New Delhi to forge new partnerships and be proactive in supporting regional organizations, platforms and initiatives.

At the regional institutional level, in addition to strategic issues, several other maritime and marine issues are resonating in the joint statements and merit attention. The EU has surfaced as a more likely partner than before in this context, and EU-India maritime cooperation has become more advantageous to both actors. Both countries recognise the prospects for the development of Blue Economy, which demand newer ways to manage oceans and the seas through technology, skills and entrepreneurship.

Building on existing convergence in governance norms as well as connectivity approaches in the IOR, many concrete activities can be undertaken between the EU and India. In a multilateral order that seems more fragile than expected, this might turn out to be much needed.

### **Recommendations:**

- Broaden the scope of CSDP engagement, namely Atalanta, to expand from the core of counter-piracy;
- Strengthen visibility of the EU as security actor in the IOR. Observer status or membership of the EU in IORA and/or IONS would be a useful step;
- Work towards a joint MSA, through a (semi-) permanent EU-representative at India's IFC-IOR and Indian visit to the MSC-HOA and IORIS platform;
- Initiate a joint exercise in counter-piracy in HADR or SAR in the Mediterranean Sea/ Indian Ocean Region;
- Invite India to cooperate and coordinate in capacity building initiatives under MASE in the Seychelles and Madagascar and/or EUCAP Somalia;
- Medium to long term: work towards a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) with India as 'third state' in the context of cooperation in crisis response.

# Prospects for Strengthening EU-India Engagement in the Field of Natural Disasters

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In the past few decades, the approach to natural disasters has been transformed: rather than simply reacting, it is understood that better preparedness coupled with better early-warning systems can help mitigate their impact. Moreover, the frequency and impact of weather-related natural disasters appears to be increasing,<sup>1</sup> potentially as a result of climate change and certainly as a result of population increases and environmental degradation.

South Asia is susceptible to cyclical disasters such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, avalanches and cyclones. A 2018

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<sup>1</sup> "Weather-related Disasters Are Increasing", The Economist, August 29, 2017, <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2017/08/29/weather-related-disasters-are-increasing>; Université catholique de Louvain, "EM-DAT: The Emergency Events Database", [www.emdat.be](http://www.emdat.be).



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study by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) calculates that India suffered economic losses equivalent to \$80 billion in the two decades between 1998 and 2017 as a result.<sup>2</sup> These risks are compounded by population growth, unplanned urbanisation and environmental degradation.

Following the 1999 Orissa Super-Cyclone and the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, and notably since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, India has taken wide-ranging steps to improve its capacity along the disaster cycle – improving its predictive capabilities through the development of early warning systems and its response following disasters and its mitigation efforts through, for instance, the construction of cyclone shelters. These capacities have also been extended within its neighbourhood, with Indian forces assisting, for example, in the response to the catastrophic 2015 Nepal earthquake. Substantial progress has been made, though capacity does vary by state – correlating not with levels of development but with vulnerability to disaster.

The EU has a number of instruments at its disposal to fund disaster relief efforts. The European Commission's proposal to strengthen the Union's collective response to natural disasters, known as rescEU, entered into force in March 2019. This upgraded the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) – coordinated by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), an instrument which although focused on Europe, can be activated worldwide. The EU has also supported New Delhi in the development of its disaster-related capacities, engaging with state and district level and with civil society through a number of programmes since the 1990s.

As entry points for greater engagement, our research explored those areas in which EU capacities and Indian needs converged. This precludes some issues: for instance, India has made clear its objection to foreign assistance in response to disasters *within* India.<sup>3</sup> In similar vein, India is confident in its ability to act as first external responder to disasters within South Asia.

One area which appears to hold untapped potential for greater cooperation in the event of natural disasters could be in the use of satellites. While efforts have been undertaken by specialised organisations such as the World Meteorological

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<sup>2</sup> Pradeep Thakur, "Disasters Claimed Economic Losses Worth 80 Billion in India Between-1998-2017: UN Report", Times of India, October 10, 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/disasters-claimed-economic-losses-worth-80-billion-in-india-between-1998-2017-un-report/articleshow/66154037.cms>.

<sup>3</sup> Amy Kazmin, "India's Rejection of \$100m Foreign Flooding Aid Sparks Anger in Kerala", Financial Times, August 27, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/86e4bb4e-a785-11e8-8ecf-a7ae1beff35b>.

Organisation (WMO) in this area - including the availability of satellite imagery in support of predictive weather patterns ahead of potential disasters through the Global Observing System (GOS)<sup>4</sup> – the EU has also demonstrably developed its own satellite capacities in recent years.<sup>5</sup> The Copernicus Service in Support to EU External Action (SEA), a 'European geointelligence service which assists the EU and its Member States in its operations and interests outside EU territory' is one such development.<sup>6</sup> With the EU Satellite Centre (SatCen) as the 'Entrusted Entity' for its operational management, Copernicus SEA has proven to be an effective tool in supporting EU external action, including humanitarian aid and disaster relief: as a response to Hurricane Irma, the EU activated both the Copernicus satellite system to assist populations in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 2017, for example. A tool to distribute such products is the geospatial portal developed by the SatCen in a collaboration project with European Defence Agency (EDA). It can be used internally within the EU and also be opened to external partners, e.g. in situations of humanitarian distress. Immediately following the Nepal earthquake on 25 April 2015, SatCen activated this portal for international support to international operations.<sup>7</sup>

Although India has signed up to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – and, to that end, released a National Disaster Management Plan in June 2016<sup>8</sup> – the fact remains that much of the hard work involved in building resilience and resistance will have to take place at the state level in India. Few states have put in the required effort to create a comprehensive plan – as was tragically made clear in the recent floods in Kerala, one of India's best-managed states. Paradoxically, Bihar - generally short of capacity produced the first comprehensive state-level plan.<sup>9</sup> The EU's engagement with state governments should focus on capacity and expertise. States are trying to improve their analysis of community needs ('Post Disaster Needs Assessment', or PDNA) on the basis of the 2008 joint declaration

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<sup>4</sup> World Meteorological Organisation, Global Observing System (GOS), <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/www/OSY/GOS.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the EU also cooperates in its own right with the WMO, as do a plethora of intergovernmental bodies. For more, see: <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/how-we-do-it/partnerships/agreements-and-arrangements>.

<sup>6</sup> Copernicus SEA, <https://sea.security.copernicus.eu/about-copernicus-sea/>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see: [www.satcen.europa.eu](http://www.satcen.europa.eu).

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "India Pus Sendai Framework into Operation", June 1, 2016, [www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org).

<sup>9</sup> Government of Bihar, "Roadmap for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030", [disastermgmt.bih.nic.in](http://disastermgmt.bih.nic.in).

between the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the EU, and the World Bank on post-crisis assessment. The 2008 declaration explicitly committed the EU to 'mobilise our institutions and resources to harmonise and coordinate post-crisis recovery frameworks'. This has traditionally been activated at the national level. The PDNA framework – in particular, training under the PDNA – could be made available directly to state governments.

For India within its neighbourhood, the sense that India would wish to gain credit and recognition for its bilateral support is likely to remain strong.<sup>10</sup> Disaster preparedness – in particular early-warning systems – is therefore likely to provide an easier area in which to explore synergies than response. There are several initiatives intended to develop better early warning systems within South Asia, and the EU has supported several initiatives intended to boost the connectivity of early warning systems. In addition there is scope for trilateral EU-India-ASEAN cooperation in the field of disaster management.

## Recommendations

- While the EU and India have agreed to engage more comprehensively in relation to disasters, there are limits to potential cooperation. For instance, as India transitions from aid recipient to donor it is increasingly reluctant to accept foreign assistance in disaster response.
- Domestically, some Indian states lack the capacity to enforce standards and regulations in relation, for instance, to the construction industry. The EU could explore the possibility of extending support for specific disaster-related training initiatives.
- The use of satellite imagery could be explored through EU-India crisis-simulation workshops spanning the disaster cycle, from early-warning to response. This could provide a means of better understanding respective capacities, and of how satellite data is utilised by the EU and India.
- The potential for engagement with regard to disaster response in third countries might be higher outside of South Asia. Regional early warning systems and triangular engagement with ASEAN offer alternative avenues to explore.

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<sup>10</sup> While not the focus of this paper, this is equally true for evacuation from conflict situations: India has taken a leading role in evacuating its own citizens, other South Asians and in some cases Europeans and North Americans from several conflict zones in the Middle East and again, appears unlikely to want to dilute the credit it receives for doing so.



# India-EU Cooperation in Africa: Challenges and Prospects

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European Union (EU) and India have been consistently making a sustained effort in improving their overall cooperation with Africa. With increasing economic engagement, the prospects for EU-Africa and India-Africa cooperation would depend not just on quantitative factors such as trade and investment, but also a strategy that convinces the African people that economically engaging with EU and India would be mutually beneficial.

The research study has outlined issues and challenges Africa has been confronting with and what EU-India cooperation would mean to Africa. EU-India cooperation in Africa will create a positive atmosphere across all dimensions including political, economic, diplomatic and strategic. These will basically be completely independent of China's growing profile in Africa. In addition to these multifaceted dimensions, India and EU together can help improve the overall status of Africa in all the major multilateral institutions. Among the African nations, the East African region has the largest number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and inter-governmental bodies.



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The research paper has made a modest attempt in understanding the complexities of multidimensional problems being confronted by Africa and how EU and India together can help Africa in overcoming the larger issues impacting development. It will also map the areas of cooperation and analyse the emerging trends by taking certain specific country level perspective. An assessment on how India and EU can work together to optimise the tangibles in Africa has also been done.

This research paper also analyses the dynamics, nature and scope of changes taking place in Africa. On the one hand, the essence of the phenomenon of Africa as a prospective market is presented, on the other hand, it is depicted as a continent of challenges and threats. Against this background, the conditions and rationale for India's and the EU's involvement in this continent are assessed and how their cooperation together would help address the issues in Africa. It also examines the main focus of EU and India's engagement towards Africa in terms of development aid and trade cooperation.

The European (EU) and Indian perceptions of the opportunities and threats related to the African continent seem, despite some differences, to converge. However, this does not translate into joint action by both sides in Africa. Each of them realizes their own postulates towards this part of the world. Although political consultations between the EU and India have expanded and deepened considerably over the last few years, African issues have so far been marginal.

The move towards closer EU-India cooperation in Africa is part of the European Commission's and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy's Joint Communication and its objectives, such as "join forces to consolidate the rules-based global order, based on multilateralism with the UN and the WTO at its core; develop a shared approach at the multilateral level to address global challenges; seek common responses to security threats and regional issues". The main challenge in EU-India relations in Africa is to ensure synergy and coherence of their activities on the African continent.

## Recommendations

- There should be a concerted effort on part of EU and India to work closely and deepen the economic and trade relationship with Africa through investment and job creation;
- Both EU and India should boost investment and also attract private investors, support education and skills development;
- EU and India should work together in Africa to boost the trade and improve the business climate;

- EU and India together need to intensify in enhancing trade cooperation by having improved conditions for more economic partnership agreements. India has offered duty free market access to Africa's LDCs. But, India's trade with Africa remain far below potential;
- Both India and EU should help develop infrastructure in Africa. India and the EU can leverage their soft power potential by improving standards in educational institutions and health facilities;
- India and EU will have to work together for achieving sustainable modernisation in Africa.



# Improving EU-India Understanding on Russia

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This paper aims to identify a few areas where the EU, India and Russia could potentially increase understanding and exchange further, despite different dynamics in EU-Russia, EU-India and India-Russia relations. The study provides the reader with an examination of the three bilateral relations in the last decades, outlining some potential areas for EU-India cooperation on Russia in the conclusion.

During the Cold-War, Europe and India engaged with the Soviet Union at very different levels. On many occasions they found themselves supporting the opposite side. Western Europe was part of the American-led western alliance. India, however, had very close strategic and economic ties with the USSR. Despite the collapse of the USSR and termination of special bilateral trade relations in the 1990s, India and Russia have maintained excellent political relations institutionalised through a 'special and privileged strategic partnership' in 2010.



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Both the EU and Russia also devoted a lot of time and energy in the 1990s to build a strategic partnership. Geographical proximity, mutual interdependence in the energy sector, trade and investment linkages and global ambitions helped the EU and Russia to engage with each other strategically in Europe and elsewhere. However, a number of frictions also emerged: NATO's integration of some of the former countries of the Soviet Union as well as the war in Georgia and the 'secession' of Abkhazia and South Ossetia contributed to worsen relations between the West and Moscow.

Notwithstanding areas of tensions, Russia was a natural partner for the EU to tackle some of the key global and regional challenges, due to its position in the United Nations Security Council; its international linkages as well as its influence in the EU's neighbourhood. The EU-Russia strategic partnership was thus built through carefully constructed institutional mechanism involving many dialogues, committees and agreements. This was also the time when India's relations with the EU were strengthening, particularly after 2004 when both signed a strategic partnership. Although established independently on their own merits, strategic partnerships between EU and Russia; EU and India; as well as India and Russia have been useful for all three players to better understand some of the key cross-cutting security and economic issues including Afghanistan, Iran, Eurasian integration and energy security.

Overall, EU-Russia relations have been dominated by mutual dependence in the energy sector and geo-strategic developments in the EU's neighbourhood. On the other hand, India-Russia ties are more influenced by bilateral defence and energy deals as well as evolving security architecture in Asia. In these circumstances, if EU-India-Russia can work together in specific areas, some useful results could be achieved. They have many common agendas related to energy security, climate change, connectivity, Africa, Middle-East, Central Asia and Afghanistan. All three have their respective strengths in these areas. Actions in one partnership may affect the other pair. For instance, the pace of development in EU-Russia relations until the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 was very useful for India not only for a multipolar world but also to resolve some of the key issues in the Middle East, Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Some of the ongoing tensions in EU-Russia ties may create some complications for India in the post-Soviet space. On Ukraine, India has broadly supported Russia. On abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, Moscow has thrown its weight behind India. On the Iranian nuclear issue, all three are for a negotiated settlement. On Afghanistan, their positions will be evolving in the coming months. Other major powers, such as the US and China have diverging policies and agenda



with regards to EU, Russia and India, notwithstanding their own strategies in Eurasia and the Middle East. On the basis of the above discussions as well as the broader analysis contained in the paper, the following recommendations are offered to EU and Indian policy makers.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- Consider exchanging notes and establishing a dialogue mechanism on Russia. Within various EU-India strategic partnership institutional mechanisms, frank conversations about Russia may improve Indian and EU perceptions and understanding about Moscow.
- Consider exchanging on shared analysis of Russia's strategy in Afghanistan within the framework of EU-India discussions on peace-making and peace building efforts. These exchanges could focus on ways to reduce drugs, trade and cooperation in the region and the role that Russia could play in this respect.
- Strengthen dialogue between the EU and India on climate change and Russia's role in it. This could be done by including long-term analysis of climate changes threats and Russia's developing position as a response to it. This area would be of great significance for the future of EU-Russia ties and India could also have an interest in taking part.
- In the long term, consider creating a trilateral (EU-India-Russia) consultative mechanism to improve understanding of their respective connectivity plans in Eurasia. The three powers have serious plans concerning Eurasian integration and are engaged with each other at various forums and projects.



# EU-India Security and Defence Cooperation in the Twenty First Century: Challenges and Prospects

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The EU-India cooperation in the security and defence sector has witnessed a major transformation especially in the last decade. During the 13th European Union-India summit held in March 2016 in Brussels, both sides endorsed the EU-India Agenda for Action 2020 as a common roadmap to jointly guide and strengthen the bilateral strategic partnership, including security and defence cooperation. This study examines EU's and India's perspectives on these issues, including an assessment of their degree of convergence – or divergence - regarding their bilateral approaches to security and defence cooperation. We argue in favour of increased collaboration between the two partners on a number of major security issues, including terrorism and the question of refugees. Furthermore, we assess the role of the EU in fighting piracy and promoting security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and discuss the prospect for India-EU cooperation in fighting piracy.

The EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) emphasised closer cooperation among Member States in the areas of defence. They agreed to



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intensify efforts in developing defence capabilities by increasing investment and enhancing coordination among themselves. This perhaps has been the main aim of the Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and defence (PESCO) whose main objective is to jointly develop defence capabilities and make them available for EU military operations.

Third states may exceptionally participate in PESCO projects. Since EU and India have agreed to strengthen cooperation and work towards tangible outcomes on shared objectives such as counter-piracy, counter terrorism - including counter radicalisation - and cyber security, India's cooperation in PESCO projects would undoubtedly bolster the EU-India strategic partnership.

India believes that the EU is an important partner on security and defence issues. The articulation of India's threat perceptions are, by and large, similar to the threat perceptions developed by the EU. Both partners hold similar views on the risks emanating from terrorism, migration, cyber security, and maritime security.

The potential for a deeper bilateral engagement on these issues exists. Moreover, the EU-India Agenda for Action 2020 clearly mentions counter terrorism cooperation. India and the EU are currently in the process of developing a shared approach at the multilateral level for addressing global challenges and increase coordination.

In the maritime domain, both the EU and India have come a long way in understanding each other's role and how they can work together and protect their mutual interests. The new Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region in New Delhi (IFC – IOR) has recently linked up with the Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSC – HOA) established by the EU NAVFOR Atalanta. The cyber domain is also an important area for EU-India security cooperation. It will help each other in protecting IT related infrastructure in addition to their critical infrastructure such as power grid, nuclear infrastructure, banking and finance, and railways. Overall, India and the EU would greatly benefit from working together in PESCO projects as part of their increased security and defence cooperation. However, both sides have not harnessed each other's potential. The following recommendations are offered to EU and Indian policy makers in view of boosting their strategic partnership.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- India and the EU could enhance their mutual understanding by constituting frequent dialogues on areas relating to security and defence cooperation.
- Following up on the recent EU's India strategy document, India should also

come up with its strategy on the EU, with a greater focus on security and defence cooperation.

- The EU and India should intensify efforts in the counter terrorism cooperation and begin discussion on sharing intelligence information at a later stage.
- The EU and India could consider closer collaboration in the context of PESCO.
- Both the EU and India would benefit from sharing their experiences in addressing issues related to migration and borders management.
- The EU and India could work together to create maritime situational awareness with a greater focus on building human and technological capacity on information sharing, maritime surveillance, search and rescue missions and data collection.
- Cyber security cooperation should be given priority by the EU and India. The protection and security of critical information infrastructure would profit from their bilateral cooperation. The EU Cyber Security Act can be taken as an example for the evolution of India's cyber law which is under preparation and is expected to be released in 2020.



# Development Cooperation Partnerships: Forging an EU-India-Japan Trilateral in Africa

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This paper explores a tripartite mode of cooperation in Africa between India, the EU and Japan as development partners. Such a partnership could be built drawing on the liberal values that the three actors hold in promoting development cooperation on the continent. We argue that this tripartite cooperation is attractive strategically, leveraging the strengths of each of the partners – for example, in presence, funds, and competitive edge – while ensuring that limited capabilities are effectively spent.

All three actors have been active on the African continent for some time now. For instance, India is fast emerging as an economic actor in the region that Africa could benefit from. Through the establishment of a Pan-African network, India had provided access to lines of credit of around US\$ 8 billion for numerous projects in 44 African countries by April 2017. Likewise, the EU has a strong presence in the continent, especially France and the United Kingdom – the impending Brexit



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notwithstanding – because of their deep colonial legacy. By 2016, the total foreign direct investment stock from the EU into Africa was €290 billion; and in 2017 the EU was the largest trading partner with a share of 36 per cent of total African trade. The EU has also taken a lead in helping millions of people to get access to basic education in Africa. Japan's presence in Africa has mostly based on official development assistance. It is now seriously considering expanding in order to build new quality-based infrastructure to revive its traditional presence.

The EU-India-Japan- trilateral cooperation rests upon a grander inter-continental structural complementarity that converges liberal-democratic values on issues like promotion of human rights, pluralistic societies, espousing peaceful and dialogue-based conflict resolution mechanisms as well as state institutional capacity building. Further, all three are free market economies propelling the basis of comprehensive economic partnership. Therefore, such a trilateral cooperation has the potential to usher in a new era of developmental cooperation in Africa which needs assistance in all these areas. Based on these arguments, we offer the following policy recommendations to EU and Indian policy makers.

### Policy Recommendations

**Non-Traditional Security (NTS):** (i) While India-EU-Japan are involved in peace building in Africa through UN Peacekeeping Missions, they can contribute further outside the purview of UN missions. The existing India-France strategic partnership can be the base for *India-EU-Japan NTS cooperation in Africa*. There is a strong case to be made that this partnership can be further leveraged to the hinterlands of Africa. This is viable because of the large presence of French troops across Africa historically and India's experience in dealing with NTS issues like religious extremism and ethnic violence; (ii) African NTS experience can benefit from India, EU and Japan's rich history in successfully dealing with disaster management in response to repeated climate – and nuclear disasters. With regards to *climate disaster management*, the trilateral can conduct joint personnel training, engage in material resource contribution and help architect the integrated response mechanism for the necessary stakeholders such as security forces, technical experts and first responders. The same applies to *nuclear disaster management*. This is recommendable as several African countries are planning on installing nuclear plants for sourcing green energy.

**Human development:** (i) With India-EU-Japan increasing their focus on expanding their *tourism industries* and the African tourism industry the second fastest growing in the world, the trilateral along with Africa can build on their tourism industries for better people to people connectivity. Simplification of visa approvals by making use of schemes like e-Visa and visa on arrival along with highlighting tourist friendly destinations can lead to mutual growth in tourist exchanges. As the

EU is one of the world's major tourist destinations, its policies in dealing with both intra-bloc and foreign tourism can serve as a reference for African countries in formulating tourism guidelines; (ii) *Student exchanges* can also be furthered by proposing easier educational visa guidelines; India and EU can be cost-effective study destinations due to their geographical proximity to Africa. The increase in number of scholarships by the trilateral grouping for potential students from Africa must be a priority; (iii) *Healthcare* is a major gateway for ensuring a strong presence of the trilateral in Africa. Providing access to quick, affordable and quality healthcare while promoting development of medical skills of African practitioners can be a key source of human resource development; (iv) The trilateral can share the *industry specific technical know-how* with African countries in developing skills of people by training them to become employable. This is very crucial for labour-intensive manufacturing industries where skilled manpower is the backbone; (v) The trilateral should take the initiative in promoting ideas with Africa that were crucial for cost-effective and incentive-based financial inclusion in India with complementary assistance from the EU and Japan with regards to issues such as data protection and cybersecurity surrounding such a financial system.

**Economic/Continental development cooperation:** (i) Agendas under forums like India's IAFS, Japan's TICAD and EU's AU-EU can potentially collaborate in a purposive manner under this trilateral grouping; (ii) *Streamlining the funding* by the EU, Japan and India in a coherent way for infrastructure projects relating to connectivity, power plants, energy parks, digitalization, etc., will help in scaling up the plans to fill infra bottlenecks for Africa in cost-effective manner; (iii) While the EU and Japan can aid in highly technological and value-added industries for Africa, India's role becomes crucial in sharing its know-how in propelling sectors such as information technology and pharmaceuticals, especially to produce low-cost generic medicines that is crucial for affordable health in Africa.

## Emerging technologies: what areas for EU-India cooperation?

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The purpose of this paper is to outline and compare current Indian and European strategies and approaches towards the development and regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This is intended to highlight points of convergence that could be entry points for dialogue between civil society and/or regulatory authorities in the two jurisdictions. As matters stand today, norms underlying the development of AI are still being developed, especially at the international or multilateral level. Such norms will invariably embed the underlying values of different states and jurisdictions. While neither India nor Europe are currently the leaders in AI innovation – China and the US dominate patents in this field – they are two of the largest potential markets for such technologies. Questions of whether control of AI and related fields lies with states, producers or consumers are currently in flux.



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Broadly speaking, the two leading countries, China and the US have divergent approaches. The Chinese approach is state-focussed, while the US prioritises large technology companies. The EU has prioritised consumers, while India's position is not as easily identifiable. Meanwhile, China is pushing its own norms with regard to AI governance in international bodies such as UNESCO. Given the lack of the US presence in this particular organisation, it could be an arena in which the EU and India can cooperate to prevent Chinese dominance of the AI agenda. For example, India dislikes safe harbouring but that means little incentive to report data breaches, meaning India is more insecure and vulnerable. So international standards matter.

India has various major initiatives – smart Cities, 5G, Smart Manufacturing and so forth – which benefit from AI. That the EU and India have a shared commitment to liberal democratic values suggests potential for some level of convergence separate to corporate-backed or statist norms that might be developed elsewhere.

The EU's approach towards AI is relatively well documented with a number of official communications setting out its position. India's positions are less clear-cut. However, in 2018 the Indian government's think-tank, 'NITI Aayog', released a paper outlining India's official strategy for the advancement of AI, with a significant boost in the funding for AI.

In terms of methodology, the paper takes as its baseline reference the European Political Strategy Centre's (EPSC) Strategic Note for a proposed EU strategy towards AI as indicative of the EU position towards the issue. This Strategic Note splits the EU strategy in four areas: 'support'; 'educate'; 'enforce' and 'steer', and the same structure will be used to explore the Indian position. These positions are populated on the basis not just of official strategy papers and secondary sources, but also of interviews conducted with subject experts in both jurisdictions. The paper concludes with an examination of the geopolitical balance that makes co-operation, or at the least convergence, in the field of AI regulation a particularly powerful instrument at this moment in time.

## Policy Recommendations

A number of potential actions present themselves as a result of the exploration of the respective Indian and European positions.

- An EU-India joint working group on AI could be established to work out which of the various other ideas/focal points offer greatest traction for EU-India engagement;
- To start with, relevant topics to be explored could be centred around the

sectors mentioned in the Niti Aayog Discussion Paper on AI: Health, Education & Skilling, Agriculture, Retail, Manufacturing, Smart Cities, Smart Energy etc.;

- A national Centre of Excellence on AI could be established in India; likewise, the EU would benefit from setting out a EU Centre of Excellence on AI. This would lay the basis for further EU-India cooperation and exchanges in the field of AI;
- India could develop 'ethics guidelines' around AI as has been done in Europe. Data privacy, especially consent management, is an especially important aspect. The EU could share its experiences in this regard;
- India could also consider setting up an association of AI players active in India; likewise, the EU would profit from the establishment of a pan-European association of AI players active in Europe. The creation of these two associations would provide the two partners with more opportunities for cooperation and exchanges on AI;
- Indian research initiatives such as Indian Urban Data Exchange (IUDX) and Indian Urban Observatory (IUA) combining Smart Cities data could be promoted and supported as they will provide very valuable data for AI work in India. This could then be of use to European counterparts'; Programmes such as 'Digital India' have a direct link with Europe's 'Digital Single Market' initiative. A joint research program could therefore be established between India and Europe for a research project around AI under the umbrella of the EU's Horizon 2020 and India's Horizon Industry.



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