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Encouraging EU-India Multilateral Cooperation on AI Governance & Research

The importance of maintaining a global environment based on liberal and humanistic values implores the prioritization of cooperation within the sphere of artificial intelligence (AI) research, governance, and ethics. As the fast-paced growth of AI in the daily lives of citizens, in our economies and in the defense sector poses both opportunities and challenges for individual freedom, prosperity and security, effective governance and democratic standards of AI will be crucial for maximizing the technology's benefits and minimizing its risks. This imperative is further prompted by the growing influence authoritarian states hold in the realm of cyber affairs and AI implementation which, if left unchecked, will outpace that of liberally oriented democracies by the end of the decade.

In order to ensure an ethics and rules-based future where consent and transparency do not yield to the pressures of mercantilism and domination, partnerships such as those between the European Union and the Republic of India must lead the way in the transparent development and effective governance of AI technologies.

Below are five policy recommendations which aim to promote and facilitate cooperation and collaboration between the EU and India in the emerging AI sector. These recommendations fixate on three overarching themes: equitable governance, cooperative research, and sincere ethics. The multilateral bonds between India and EU member states, and the trust which cements them, serve as a firm foundation for these progressive and forward-thinking recommendations that position all parties involved to best utilize this emerging technology.

Why is cooperation on AI important?

Artificial intelligence is quickly becoming a facet of daily life and has become ingrained in a number of industries and sectors including: healthcare, transportation, academia, banking, national security, and environmental sciences, among many others. The ability for machines to learn in real-time and improve their efficiency has launched the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution. As with the previous industrial revolutions, the current one will have a massive impact on the development of industry and society and promises to shape the future in a way unimaginable only a generation ago. What makes

the emergence of AI unique among other industrial revolutions, however, is the speed of its breakthroughs, disruptions and the exponential spread of the technology in general.[1]

While AI has already proved its altruistic and industrial purposes, such as assisting medical researchers develop COVID-19 vaccines and optimizing just-in-time manufacturing and shipping, the technology also presents opportunities for authoritarian states to repress its citizenry through censorship and surveillance, and create discourse in the international community by automating disinformation creation and increasing the sophistication of cyber warfare.[2] Poignantly, it is these authoritarian states who are increasingly taking the lead in AI development and implementation which, if not countered by a liberally based alternative, will set the future norms of AI usage, governance, and ethics globally.[3]

Both the EU and India recognize the potential AI holds to help solve some of the world's biggest challenges as is made evident in their respective strategies for AI implementation.[4] The spheres of prospective cooperation and the ensuing policy recommendations listed below touch on key issues identified by both parties in their strategies and aim to address them in a way which provides both with equitable solutions such as India's call for "responsible AI" and smart cities, and the EU's call to set ethical standards for AI, increase investment in AI SMEs and support AI research excellence centers. It is clear that both India and the EU have many convergent interests in the realm of AI, especially with respect to countering the employment of AI for geopolitical and geoeconomics purposes by malign actors.

Policy recommendations

Equitable governance

As mentioned above, the need to establish a framework of governance norms between the EU and India on AI matters is essential to building a rules and ethics-based environment for AI not only between each other, but globally as well. Establishing a Working Group for AI Common Governance would bode well as a kick-off initiative. The working group would follow a Track 1.5 diplomacy logic, including academics, think-tank experts, government officials and state bureaucrats from both sides. The primary goal of this working group would be to identify convergences and divergences in EU and Indian AI policy and work to synchronize key governance and ethics issues of importance to all parties involved. This working group will also propose opportunities for further collaboration between the involved parties with the intent of providing equal opportunities for hosting and parity in agenda setting.

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[1] (Schwab, 2016)
[2] (Lawrence & Cordey, 2020)
[3] (Lawrence & Cordey, 2020)
[4] (European Comission, 2018) (NITI Aayog, 2018)

Initial priorities for this working group could include:

- Identifying core policy positions between parties involved
- Identifying key discrepancies in matters involving governance, privacy, and ethics
- Proposing policy to lay further groundwork for EU-AI cooperation and collaboration.

Cooperative Research

The absence of a nexus for EU-Indian collaboration on AI matters hinders cooperative efforts. The establishment of an AI Center of Excellence (AICOE) jointly funded[5] and staffed by involved parties would promote not only opportunities for cooperation, but would serve as a forum to explore common interests, issues, and developments. In addition to serving as a forum, the AICOE would serve as a body for joint AI research and publications with the intent of fostering a network of experts familiar with EU-Indian AI matters.

Additionally, this forum would be a focal point for commercial groups to obtain relevant and up-to-date information on EU-Indian AI policy, norms, and business opportunities. With its network of experts and intellectual resources, the AICOE also presents itself as the ideal coordination organization for a start-up incubator which focuses on joint EU-Indian AI solutions.

In its 2018 communication on AI, the EU Commission called for strengthening cooperation in AI with like-minded partners such as Japan and Canada and jointly establishing AI-focused research centers among member states to encourage collaboration and networking. This recommendation aims to work in conjunction with that call by not only supporting joint efforts among member states, but by bringing in India as an EU partner whose expertise in the field will doubtlessly add to the success of such an institution.[6]

Another approach to building cooperation in AI is through exchanges of academics. Intellectual exchanges have long been a cornerstone of fostering understanding and growth between academic institutions. This recommendation proposes an initiative to promote and expand intellectual exchanges between EU and Indian universities and think-tanks with programs, departments, or academic focuses on AI research, governance, and business. To encourage participation in exchanges, a jointly funded grant and scholarship program focused on AI would ensure equitable access for accepted applicants. Such a program would include, but not be limited to: visa assistance, room and board subsidization, and travel assistance. Similarly to the AICOE, a robust intellectual exchange between the EU and India would promote networking and

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[5] On the EU side the funding could be provided under the Horizon 2020 scheme.
[6] (European Comission, 2018)

inter-mobility among experts and affiliated parties and create an environment of goodwill between partnered institutions.

Lastly, the EU and India can further cooperation in AI research by jointly developing "smart cities". A smart city is "a place where traditional networks and services are made more efficient with the use of digital and telecommunication technologies for the benefit of its inhabitants and business." [7] Taking inspiration from the EU's Smart Cities Marketplace (SCM), the establishment of a program to pair smart cities and enterprises in the EU and India would promote technological and expertise exchange as well as promote cross-cultural exchange and solution diffusion. The SCM has been a resounding success with over 100 cities within the EU taking part in innovate and forward-thinking digital projects that improve the lives of their residents.[8]

This program could work as an addition to existing sister city agreements such as the more than 50 year old partnership between Mumbai and Stuttgart, or as independent programs built from the ground up to cater to the individual needs and experiences of different localities. Example exchanges include Indian AI traffic management and EU carbon control AI.[9]

Sincere ethics
A joint declaration on the ethics of AI would be a symbolic, yet very impactful step the EU and India could take to demonstrate their joint resolve to ensure that AI in the 21st century needs to be transparent, democratic, accountable, and have equitable impacts on democratic societies. Rallying other democratic states to join such a declaration would further increase its impact and send a strong message to malign actors who aim to use and export AI technologies for the purposes of oppressing and controlling societies.

This declaration would also serve to place the EU and India at the forefront of multilateral global AI ethics, set the standards for transparency and accountability of AI and the underlying algorithms and ensure the partner's collective voice is heard and respected on such matters. The weight of this declaration could be amplified by the level of publicity and prestige it is afforded by the parties by including it as an agenda item at an EU-India summit, or similarly high-level meeting.

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[7] (European Comission, 2020)
[8] (European Comission , 2020)
[9] (IndiaAI, 2020) (Gemeren, 2020)

Summary of recommendations

- Establish a Working Group for AI Common Governance

  This working group will identify convergences and divergences in EU and Indian AI policy and work to synchronize key governance and ethics issues of importance to all parties involved. This group will also work to recommend future collaboration between the EU and India on AI matters.

- Establish an EU-India 'AI Center of Excellence'

  This center (AICOE) will act as a nexus of joint EU-Indian AI research and collaborative efforts and serve as a focal point for commercial groups to obtain relevant and up-to-date information on EU-Indian AI policy, norms, and business opportunities.

- Improve EU-India AI Intellectual Exchange

  In order to promote rigorous and productive intellectual exchange, a program of jointly funded scholarships and grants will be established. Such a program would include, but not be limited to: visa assistance, room and board subsidization, and travel assistance.

- Establish a 'Smart City' Twinning program

  This program would pair EU and Indian Smart Cities to exchange AI expertise, resources, and solutions to common problem such as traffic management, environmental regulation and protection, and healthcare optimization.

- Issue a joint declaration on democratic ethics in AI

  This declaration would serve as a foundation for further EU-Indian collaboration on AI ethics and implementation. The declaration will highlight common goals and ideals such as transparency, privacy, consent, and liberally oriented values.