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*Selected papers*

**Title:** Critical drivers of EU-India Security Cooperation: Pathways for Optimizing  
Convergence

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**Funded by  
the European Union**

This paper was written in the framework of the Call for Individual Research Papers on EU-India Relations under the EU India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative 2022-2023, aimed at connecting research institutions in Europe and India. This publication is funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the corresponding author or authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

## EU-India Individual Research Paper\_ Swasti \_Rao

### *“Critical drivers of EU-India Security Cooperation:*

#### *Pathways for Optimizing Convergence”*

The current state of India-EU bilateral relations presents unprecedented [opportunities](#). Successfully navigating this intricate landscape of commonalities requires the identification and implementation of crucial factors, described in the paper as **critical drivers**, driven by political will and flexibility. This is essential for fostering a practical mutual engagement that maximizes the potential for cooperation.

This paper will examine the possibility of convergence in the security domain between the EU and India. The security domain, encompassing various facets of inter-state engagement, has become expansive, with virtually all aspects being susceptible to securitization.

Certainly, the [favourable](#) backdrop for the growth of mutual security relations includes an upswing in trade, [connectivity projects](#), shared values, convergence on a [multipolar](#) world order, and strategic autonomy. While each of these variables warrants specialized analysis, for the purpose of this paper, they are contextualized within the broader framework where the security domain has been given precedence.

**Research objective:** The paper has a dual purpose- firstly, to identify the critical drivers driving increased collaboration in the security domain, and secondly, to develop effective frameworks that serve as pathways for optimal results in operationalizing these crucial drivers.

However, operationalizing is contingent upon EU-India diplomatic efforts in identifying and rectifying a significant gap of perception. The paper provides insights into the root cause of this gap and proposes suggestions to mitigate it.

**First Critical driver:** The most prominent security convergence between India and the EU is the expanding cooperation in maritime security within the Indo-Pacific. This critical driver is

exemplified by EU's [Coordinated Maritime Presence](#) in the region. The CMP, as a comprehensive framework, encompasses vital elements such as maritime domain awareness, joint exercises, port calls, and further builds upon existing cooperative frameworks with partners in the broader Indian Ocean region.

However, here comes the caveat. New Delhi currently does not [view](#) Brussels as a reliable partner, let alone a "security provider." There is a need for New Delhi to re-imagine and envision Brussels as a potential security provider. Previous scholarly [recommendations](#) have proven insufficient. Consequently, the pivotal question that persists is how to actualize this re-imagination?

The paper proposes that rectifying this perceptual gap in New Delhi can be achieved by activating the *second critical driver* i.e. EU-India Defence industry cooperation.

**Second critical Driver:** Being the [fourth-largest military spender](#) in the world, India's strategic vision is overcast with defence relationships. The core argument of the paper posits that unless Brussels becomes an integral part of the securitized narrative within New Delhi's strategic partnerships—such as those with France, Israel, the US, and Russia—the cooperation on security between the EU and India is likely to progress slowly, even in the presence of substantial strategic convergence in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, there is immense importance of EU-India Defence industry cooperation in bridging the perception gap between EU and India.

In essence, the paper asserts that to foster the expansion of the overall security relationship, it is imperative to optimize maritime security cooperation in the strategically vital Indo-Pacific region. However, the pathway to achieving this goal must traverse through the establishment of robust defense industry cooperation between the two sides. The crucial point to bear in mind is that the significance lies not only in the sale, purchase, or joint production of defense equipment but also in the role these transactions play in shaping India's 'securitized imagery' of its strategic partners.

Consequently, while EU-India bilateral trade may remain substantial and even grow, Brussels will not be perceived as a security provider unless it actively assumes that role

**How are the two critical drivers related?** The paper contends that, from India's standpoint, to enable the development and synergy of the second critical driver with the first, defense industry cooperation with Europe must be put into action within the framework of India's Ministry of Defence's evolving defense diplomacy towards Europe. The next sections will discuss the various strands within the aforesaid statement.

**Crucial geopolitical timing:** The geopolitical moment is such that New Delhi and Brussels have found an unprecedented convergence in the Indo Pacific.

The European Union finds itself on the cusp of a profound existential transformation. The repercussions of the war in Ukraine have not only [dismantled](#) the European security order but have also underscored the imperative to fortify and [enhance](#) its security and defense dimensions. Europe's pursuit of assuming the role of a security provider is a direct manifestation of this quest for transformation and resilience in the face of evolving geopolitical challenges.

Indeed, it is correct to assert that the primary mechanisms through which Europe aspires to establish itself as a security provider are intricately woven into continuous negotiations across various platforms in Brussels. Analysts have aptly [highlighted](#) that a mere increase in defense investment does not automatically result in the European Union playing a constructive role as a security provider.

Coming to India as well, the geopolitical timing has never been more crucial than it is now. New Delhi is currently engaged in [recalibrating](#) its strategic calculus, a task that involves the considerable challenge of [diversifying](#) its defense dependence away from Russia.

Simultaneously, it must navigate the delicate balance of recognizing the utility of Russia in maintaining a multipolar Asia, a balance that has been significantly disturbed by the unprecedented developments in the Ukraine war.

While India will always adhere to multi-alignment as the fundamental foreign policy response to a very ambivalent world, ***India's multi-alignment is not an equal distribution.*** Hence, within India's evolving matrix of comprehensive national power, various components and elements exist. However, the primary and unequivocal priorities for the Indian state are centered around ensuring its security.

India's experience with China in 2020 at Galwan, at a time when Beijing was New Delhi's one of the top most trading partners has cleared the clouds of strategic ambivalence. When it comes to China, it cannot be [business as usual](#). Undoubtedly, New Delhi may be cautious about directly labeling China; however, the consecutive [statements](#) from India's top leadership underscore a discernible enhancement in India's strategic clarity.

**Perceptual gap in envisioning EU as a security actor:** From India's perspective, EU's quest as a security provider is an unusual development. The Indian strategic community is attuned to dealing with 'Europe the economic bloc'. It is still finding the right semantics to engage with 'EU the security actor' despite maritime convergence in the Indo Pacific.

From India's perspective there are at least *two* most visible outward tools through which the EU aims to ace its place in the evolving security order. Both have analytical limitations.

- 1. European Peace Facility:** New Delhi was taken by surprise by this off-budget instrument, as it marked the first instance of providing military aid to third parties. The European Peace Facility (EPF) has evolved into a more substantial EU instrument for [consolidating](#) financial resources for defense. The EPF, amounting to €12 billion until 2027, surpasses the approximately €9 billion allocated under the European Defence Fund, including the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) and the Common Procurement act (EDIRPA).  
Nevertheless, unless the EU articulates plans for deploying it in the Indo-Pacific region, the significance of this instrument may not resonate strongly with India, aside from acknowledging the gravity of the development itself.
- 2. Coordinated Maritime Presence:** The partnership between India and the EU has experienced a notable upswing, particularly in the maritime domain, underscoring a collective dedication to fostering security, stability, and sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific. This heightened collaboration is [manifested](#) through diverse initiatives, dialogues, and joint exercises, underscoring a mutual vision for an Indo-Pacific that is free, open, and rules based.  
The most recent substantial development to EU- India maritime security cooperation is the alignment with EU's Coordinated Maritime Presence, where India has been

[recognized](#) as a significant partner. India and the EU have established maritime security dialogues since January 2021, complemented by [security and defence consultations](#) that commenced in June 2022. This collaborative effort has found expression in operational activities, particularly in [joint naval exercises](#) that commenced in 2021 and have gained momentum in the subsequent years. The [appointment](#) of a military attaché to New Delhi is a definitive upgrade to mutual military ties. Additionally, the two sides also have at least four EU- India [workshops](#) that have provided a platform to explore and delineate the contours of cooperation.

A robust Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) from Europe would offer the necessary complementarity to enhance cooperation within existing and developing frameworks in the Indo Pacific. Nevertheless, as highlighted earlier, a noteworthy challenge lies in the likelihood that the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Indian side may be constrained or limited due to perceptual gap.

**How to rectify this perceptual gap?** Identifying the role of the missing vertical, the second critical driver, between EU- India relations is crucial to developing the optimal pathway for the bilateral security relationship to thrive. This requires connecting the dots between defence military aspects with geopolitical realities.

This paper delineates **four pivotal aspects** that will help establish connections between EU-India military-industrial considerations and geopolitical realities in Indo Pacific's maritime domain, offering a distinct perspective aligned with the [priorities](#) of India's Ministry of Defence as vantage point. Moreover, it also highlights substantial gaps in India's evaluation of Europe's European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), thereby revealing considerable export potential for India. These four pivotal aspects or key points are summarized here:

**(i). Vantage Point of India's Defence Diplomacy:**

From India's perspective, an upswing in defense diplomacy towards Europe is already underway, driven by clear parameters [outlined](#) by the Ministry of Defence. These parameters, derived from recent defense acquisition and offset reforms, shape India's model of '[self reliance](#).' It may be extrapolated that India's evolving defense diplomacy in Europe is evaluated based on several key factors. These factors include the strategic significance of a country, the promotion of defense

exports, maintenance of inventory, joint training initiatives, capacity building efforts, access to niche technology, and the establishment of logistic basing.

India's emphasis on defense relations with European nations can be broadly categorized into two groups: individual EU member states and the EU as a collective entity. This paper will specifically concentrate on the latter aspect.

Briefly, however, the first part concerns EU member states, which can be broadly categorized into three groups:

- a. Countries possessing a highly developed military-industrial complex, such as France, Germany, the UK, Sweden, Italy, Norway, and Spain, are more likely to be considered as major partners for activities like co-development, co-production, and the transfer of military equipment and technology.
- b. Countries abundant in rare earth mineral reserves, including Sweden, Greenland, Norway, Turkey, Spain, Finland, the UK, etc., are also a focus.
- c. Countries with the potential to become defense export markets for India, like Greece, Armenia, Spain, Poland, Portugal, etc., form another category of strong consideration

**The second part pertains to the EU as a whole:** Given the European Union's aspirations to emerge as a new security provider, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, there is now a compelling case for India to establish a defense wing in Brussels. It is noteworthy that Brussels has already appointed its first military attaché to India, a [development](#) that was previously inconceivable.

Looking ahead, as per recent [statements](#) made by India's Army Chief, New Delhi may witness the establishment of new defense wings in Central and East European states. India's recognized defense relationships with Poland and Spain could also pave the way for heightened defense diplomacy, particularly in the Caucasus and the Baltics.

**(ii). Setting of frameworks:**

When establishing frameworks for collaboration with the EU, it is essential for India to address key areas. While there is [existing research](#) on streamlining regulatory frameworks and facilitating research and development (R&D) cooperation, what remains conspicuously under-

analyzed is the evolution of the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) in the post-Ukraine context.

The creation of a robust EDTIB ranks high among the [priorities](#) of EU Member States, benefiting from a surge in available funds after years of insufficient investment in the sector. The current rejuvenation in Europe is often attributed to the "Ukraine effect," signifying a widespread acknowledgment, prioritization, and active promotion of the necessity to establish a unified European EDTIB. This push is notably pushed by influential member states. However, developments in the EDTIB are not yet analyzed from an Indian perspective.

To enhance the understanding of EDTIB in India, the EU can implement several mechanisms. For instance:

- Facilitate comprehensive information sharing about the EDTIB's objectives, capabilities, and ongoing projects to ensure transparency and provide valuable insights to Indian stakeholders
- Organize workshops and seminars that bring together experts from the EU and India to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and discuss potential areas for collaboration within the EDTIB.
- Encourage joint research and development projects between EU and Indian defense industries. This could involve collaborative initiatives, funding mechanisms, and joint ventures to promote technological innovation.
- Establish training programs and exchanges for Indian professionals in the defense sector to gain insights into the functioning of the EDTIB, fostering a deeper understanding and collaboration.
- Engage in policy dialogues between EU and Indian policymakers to discuss regulatory frameworks, export controls, and other policy measures that can promote collaboration within the EDTIB.

By implementing these measures, the EU can stimulate a healthy competition, encourage innovation, and promote a more profound exploration of the value of the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base in collaboration with India. Analysis [suggested](#) by other scholars highlights how a Technology (ToT) office and appointing a ToT officer would be a



constructive step forward to better understand how the European Investment Fund (EIF), as an EU agency, defines ToT as the process of transforming research and development results into marketable products and services. Recognizing technology transfer a strategic area, especially within the EIF, emphasizes its importance.

This initiative could logically contribute to the growth of potential defense exports and imports between EU and India, fostering collaborative innovation and enhancing the overall defense partnership between the two regions, especially for India's defence export prospects.

### **(iii). Maximising potential defence exports from India:**

Despite substantial research on enhancing joint production with European partners, there is a notable lack of attention to analyzing the stated goal “exports” within India's defense diplomacy in Europe. It's noteworthy that India has already exported defense items to countries such as Armenia, Poland, Spain, France, and Italy. The Indian government has set an ambitious target, aiming to achieve annual defense exports worth Rs 35,000 crore by the end of FY 2025. This signifies a strategic emphasis on expanding defense exports as a key aspect of India's defense diplomacy in the European region.

In this context, the paper contends that unlocking the vast potential to increase exports from India hinges on a better understanding of the following factors:

- The [Versailles declaration](#) of March 2022: Emerging in the immediate aftermath of the war in Ukraine, this declaration was singularly directed at fortifying the EU's defense capabilities in an unprecedented manner. It is crucial to note that the analysis of defense investment gaps within the EU commenced in mid-May 2022. Subsequently, the EU formally approved the Strategic Compass, an ambitious initiative aimed at bolstering the EU's security and defense policy by 2030. This project specifically focuses on identifying defense investment gaps and intends to escalate investment in defense capabilities
- The [establishment](#) of European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA) gained formal discussion within the EU in June 2023, with a specific focus on progressing EDIRPA to reinforce the EDTIB.

In October 2023, a new regulation under EDIRP was [announced](#). This regulation stipulates that a partial reimbursement from the EU budget will be accessible to member

states engaging in joint purchases through a consortium comprising at least 3 member states. The aim is to specifically enhance common procurement in the EU defense industry.

However, it is important to note that currently EDTIB faces [challenges](#) in meeting demands at the required volumes and speed. Consequently, third countries are anticipated to play a crucial role in filling this gap and here lies the window of opportunity for countries like India. While US companies are likely to secure more contracts from Europe, research indicates that the American industry also faces pressures due to high demand.

Other players, including South Korea and Turkey, are poised to step in to address the demands within the European defense industry. South Korea, for instance, has secured [significant contracts](#) from Poland for K2 battle tanks and artillery ammunition. Additionally, South Korea is actively establishing partnerships with other European countries, such as Romania, signaling its readiness to contribute to the European defense market. This indicates a diversification of sources and partnerships to address the challenges faced by the European defense industry

Türkiye also looks prepared to take on a greater role. Its Bayraktar drones have [proved](#) their worth in several conflicts, including the war in Ukraine.

For the EU then, increasing significance of imports and off-the-shelf procurement underscores a growing importance in meeting defense needs swiftly. As these acquisitions often involve purchasing from non-European third countries, there is a newfound momentum for enhancing European defense industrial cooperation. This momentum is driven by the need to address immediate requirements while recognizing the time-intensive nature of establishing joint European development programs. The focus on cooperation aims to navigate challenges effectively and ensure a more responsive and adaptable defense industry within Europe.

Based on the discussion above, some practical suggestions can be summarized thus :

To effectively coordinate and represent the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) in India, the following initiatives could be considered

- **EDTIB Coordinating and Representative Forum:** Establishing a dedicated forum in India that serves as a coordinating and representative body for the EDTIB. This forum

would act as an intermediary with Indian policymakers, identify common areas of interest, and facilitate constructive dialogues between European and Indian stakeholder

- **Transfer of Technology Advisory body:** Create a specialized advisory body focused on advising and facilitating technology transfer from the EU to non-EU countries, including India. This body could be based on best practices and adopt a win-win approach to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes. The role of a Transfer of Technology (ToT) officer, also mentioned in preceding sections, can be instrumental in coordinating these efforts.
- **Regular Dialogues with the Chairman of the EU military Committee:** The two sides can facilitate regular dialogues, possibly in the presence of the Chairman of the EU Military Committee (EUMC), who holds the rank of a 4-star officer. The EUMC is the highest military body within the EU, consisting of the chiefs of defense of EU member states. Regular interactions with the EUMC can enhance dialogue, foster collaboration, and provide strategic guidance on defense and military matters

These initiatives aim to strengthen communication, collaboration, and coordination between the EDTIB and Indian stakeholders, fostering a more robust and mutually beneficial defense relationship.

(iv) **Better understanding of Strategic tech and export controls in the EU:** Strategic technology plays a pivotal role in India's defense diplomacy with Europe. To enhance cooperation, it is crucial for the European side to address disparities among EU member states in export controls on military, defense, and dual-use technologies. Overcoming reluctance in technology transfer is also a key consideration and a work in progress.

However, coming back to tech and export controls, a detailed [analysis](#) of Regulation 2021/821 is warranted, as it represents a comprehensive system upgrade to strengthen the previous export control system and respond to evolving security risks. The amendment by Delegated Regulation 2022/699, that removed Russia as a destination from the scope of EU general export authorizations in 2022, adds another layer of complexity to the regulatory landscape. Understanding the implications of these changes is essential for both India and Europe to navigate the evolving dynamics of defense technology cooperation.

## **Conclusion: Towards a multipronged approach**

EU- India security cooperation needs a multi-pronged approach to enhance the two critical drivers of the security relationship. This can also pave the way for a more comprehensive and effective defense diplomacy between India and Europe. Practical cooperation becomes a catalyst for creating favourable political space, aligning with the vision outlined by India's Ministry of Defence for its defense diplomacy towards Europe. Simultaneously, it aligns with the European Union and its member states' objectives of enhancing internal coordination and expanding global outreach.

This paper, as an analytical exercise of identifying critical drivers and connecting dots, recognizes that stand-alone initiatives may not yield optimal results unless they are driven by critical factors that converge cohesively. The interconnectedness of these initiatives underscores the need for a strategic and integrated approach, where each element reinforces and amplifies the impact of the others. This approach fosters a more synergistic and mutually beneficial defense relationship between India and Europe based on a revised perception of Europe as a security provider.

### **1. Abstract:250 words**

The paper explores critical drivers for enhancing security cooperation between the European Union (EU) and India, focusing on the security domain's multifaceted aspects. It identifies two key drivers: maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, particularly through the EU's

Coordinated Maritime Presence, and EU-India defense industry collaboration. The first driver highlights the substantial progress in maritime security endeavors but notes India's current skepticism about Brussels as a reliable security partner. To bridge this perceptual gap, the second driver proposes robust defense industry cooperation to integrate the EU into India's strategic narrative.

The geopolitical context underscores the opportune moment for enhanced collaboration, given the EU's quest for a security role post-Ukraine and India's recalibration of its strategic alliances. The paper contends that the efficacy of the proposed defense industry collaboration relies on activating maritime security cooperation and addressing New Delhi's apprehensions about the EU as a security provider.

Crucially, the paper outlines four pivotal aspects connecting EU-India military-industrial considerations with geopolitical realities, presenting a unique perspective aligned with India's Ministry of Defence priorities. It identifies gaps in India's understanding of Europe's Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) and the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), pointing to substantial export potential for India

In conclusion, the paper advocates for a multi-pronged approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of proposed initiatives. It contends that a strategic, integrated approach is crucial for fostering a synergistic defense relationship between India and Europe, aligning with the vision of both entities for internal coordination and global outreach.

## **2. Bullet-pointed summary of key issues in 250 words**

- **Critical Drivers for EU-India Security Cooperation:**
  - ✓ **Maritime Security in Indo-Pacific:** EU's Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) signifies a robust framework for maritime security cooperation, but India's skepticism about EU as a security partner remains.

- ✓ **Defense Industry Collaboration:** Proposes activating EU-India defense industry cooperation to integrate EU into India's strategic narrative, recognizing the significance of defense transactions in shaping India's perception of its partners
  
- **Geopolitical Context:**
  - ✓ **Opportune Moment:** EU seeks a security role post-Ukraine, while India recalibrates alliances, necessitating deeper collaboration.
  - ✓ **Mutual Commitment in Indo-Pacific:** Strengthened India-EU cooperation reflects a commitment to regional stability and security, especially in the Indo-Pacific.
  
- **Connecting Military-Industrial Considerations with Geopolitical Realities:**
  - ✓ **Vantage Point of India's Defense Diplomacy:** Emphasizes an upswing in defense diplomacy, with parameters focused on self-reliance and prioritizing strategic partners.
  - ✓ **Gaps in Understanding EDTIB and EDIRPA:** Identifies substantial gaps in India's assessment of Europe's EDTIB and EDIRPA, highlighting export potential for India.
  
- **Proposed Frameworks for Collaboration:**
  - ✓ **EDTIB Coordinating and Representative Forum:** Recommends establishing a dedicated forum in India to coordinate and represent the EDTIB.
  - ✓ **Transfer of Technology Advisory Body:** Suggests creating a specialized advisory body to facilitate technology transfer from the EU to non-EU countries, with a Transfer of Technology officer playing a key role.
  - ✓ **Understanding Regulation 2021/821:** Urges a detailed analysis of the regulation to address export control disparities and promote technology transfer.

- **Conclusion:**

- ✓ Integrated Approach: Advocates for a multi-pronged approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness of proposed initiatives for a synergistic defense relationship between India and Europe.

**3. Indication of three sentences:**

1. The central argument of the paper posits that unless Brussels becomes an integral part of the securitized narrative within New Delhi's strategic partnerships—such as those with France, Israel, the US, and Russia—the cooperation on security between the EU and India is likely to progress slowly, even in the presence of substantial strategic convergence in the Indo-Pacific.
2. The paper contends that unlocking the vast potential to increase exports from India hinges on a better understanding of factors such as the Versailles Declaration of March 2022, which marked the first instance of providing military aid to third parties, and the establishment of EDIRPA (European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act) to reinforce the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB)
3. This paper, as an analytical exercise of connecting dots, recognizes that stand-alone initiatives may not yield optimal results unless they are driven by critical factors that converge cohesively. The interconnectedness of these initiatives underscores the need for a strategic and integrated approach, where each element reinforces and amplifies the impact of the others