

EU – India Joint Statement
1st Meeting of the Trade and Technology Council

16 May 2023

Brussels, Belgium

The EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) met in Brussels on 16 May 2023. The meeting was co-chaired by European Commission Executive Vice-Presidents Margrethe Vestager and Valdis Dombrovskis, with Indian Ministers Dr. S Jaishankar, Piyush Goyal and Rajeev Chandrasekhar and joined by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and European Commissioner Thierry Breton.

Rapid changes in the world’s geopolitical environment highlight the need for an even deeper strategic partnership between the European Union and India. As vibrant democracies, open market economies and pluralistic societies, the European Union and India share fundamental values and have a common interest in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multi-polar world. Both partners also face a challenging and volatile global political, economic and security landscape. In that context, both sides emphasized the importance of the rules-based international order and full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, transparency, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Therefore, President Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to set up the TTC as a key coordination platform to address key trade, trusted technology and security challenges, to promote a human-centric approach to the digital transformation, and to deepen their bilateral relationship in these fields. The choice of this format reflects the strategic nature both sides attach to their bilateral relationship, the desire to guide their cooperation towards tangible results and the geopolitical significance of their trade and technology links in the context of a more contested and rapidly evolving international environment. They reaffirm that international rules-based approaches to trade, technology, and innovation that are founded on solid democratic principles and values can improve the lives of their citizens and generate greater prosperity for people around the world.

The European Union and India are committed to deepening their partnership and leveraging their respective strengths to accelerate the development and deployment of advanced digital technologies that will benefit both societies and promote global progress in line with our common values. The EU-India TTC Working Group 1 on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance and Digital Connectivity defined priority areas and outlined the next steps. The EU and India will undertake Quantum and High-Performance Computing research and development projects that could address climate change, natural hazards, bio-informatics, bio-molecular

research, and drug development. In addition, the European Union and India will coordinate within the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) and explore bilateral cooperation on trustworthy and responsible Artificial Intelligence, including in research and innovation.

The two sides will coordinate their policies with regards to the strategic semiconductor sector, with the aim of concluding a Memorandum of Understanding by September 2023. Furthermore, the European Union and India will work towards bridging the digital skills gap, explore Mutual Recognition of certifications and make progress on the promotion of skilled professionals and exchange of talent. They will also enhance cooperation on IT and Telecoms Standardisation with a particular focus on promoting interoperable standards.

Both sides recognise the importance of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for the development of open and inclusive digital economies and digital societies, and realise that the DPI approach leverages technology, markets and governance to create population scale digital ecosystems that promote inclusive development and competitive markets and accelerates the progress for achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, the European Union and India have agreed to collaborate on enhancing the interoperability of their respective Digital Public Infrastructures and on this basis jointly promote secure, privacy-preserving solutions to the benefit of Developing Countries. In addition to the abovementioned priorities, there is an opportunity for both sides to work together on areas such as Platforms, Data Governance, and Telecoms Regulation.

The European Union and India have set ambitious goals of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and 2070, respectively. They have also taken commitments to halt and reverse Biodiversity loss by 2030 and to promote Circular Economy. Achieving these targets and objectives will require significant investments in new clean technologies, as well as increased research and innovation efforts. To this end, Working Group 2 on Green and Clean Energy Technologies will focus on relevant aspects of three areas: (1) Renewable and Low Carbon Hydrogen; (2) Batteries for Electrical Vehicles and (3) Standards. Under these focus areas, India and the EU will start with implementing the joint waste water treatment and management projects to facilitate their market uptake; work on waste water to energy and on waste to Hydrogen; undertake gap analysis on how to tackle marine plastic litter/pollution; share knowledge on circularity aspects of batteries and recover raw materials; and develop standards that can ensure interoperability, including for Renewable and Low Carbon Hydrogen. By investing in these areas, the European Union and India will seek to drive innovation and promote sustainable development in a way that helps meet their respective climate targets, strengthening the role of start-ups, and building skills and capacity.

Working Group 3 on Trade, Investment and Resilient Value Chains aims to deepen the bilateral cooperation in specific areas of mutual interest. They complement the on-going negotiations for legally binding agreements on Trade, Investment Protection and Geographical Indications, that proceed on a separate track. To this end, the two sides intend, in the year to come, to focus on the following four areas: (1) Resilient Value Chains- with the aim to first agree on broad principles for co-operation and as second step focus on specific supply chains of mutual interest; (2) Market Access issues - with the aim to jointly resolve identified trade barriers; (3) exchange of information of each side's mechanisms for screening of Foreign Direct Investment with the objective to enhance mutual understanding of both regimes; and (4) multilateral trade issues, with particular emphasis on the World Trade Organization, including the forthcoming Ministerial conference-13 and G20. The sides will also intensify their engagement to address the issues that emerge in implementation of carbon border measures.

The European Union and India underline the importance of advancing across all Working Groups established under the TTC. The co-chairs will meet again in early 2024 in India to take stock of the progress achieved and decide on further actions.