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COVER NOTE

From: European External Action Service (EEAS)

To: Delegations

Subject: Security and Defence Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of India

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SECURITY AND DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Preface

1. The European Union (EU) and the Republic of India (now onwards, India) face an increasingly challenging security environment. Europe and the Indo-Pacific are deeply interconnected and interdependent in geo-political, economic, and security terms. The growing complexity of global security threats, rising geopolitical tensions, and rapid technological change underscore the need for closer EU-India dialogue and cooperation in security and defence. The EU and India face a volatile security environment. Security is not limited to traditional military and defence-related issues, increasingly encompassing a broader range of closely linked areas, ranging from the cyber and hybrid spheres to maritime and outer space, as well as terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In this context, both sides emphasise their support to the principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter, including the sovereign equality of States, the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, political independence, the prohibition on the threat or use of force and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
2. EU–India relations are anchored in a long-standing partnership shaped by shared democratic values, economic interdependence, and a mutual interest in promoting a stable, rules-based international order and the rule of law based on international law and the respect for the UN Charter. The foundation of the engagement was laid by the 1994 EU–India Cooperation Agreement, which was further elevated with the 2004 Strategic Partnership, giving rise to regular summits and dedicated dialogues. In recent years, the partnership has been consolidated and reinforced through the EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025. The Security and Defence Partnership constitutes an integral part of a new and further strengthened Comprehensive Strategic Agenda between the European Union and India (Towards 2030: a New Joint EU-India Comprehensive Strategic Agenda).
3. EU-India security and defence cooperation has gained momentum over the years, including through the Strategic Dialogue on Foreign and Security Policy launched in June 2025. The EU and India have established dialogues on security and defence, as well as sectoral ones on areas such maritime security, cybersecurity, counterterrorism and non-proliferation. India will

continue to engage in the EU project 'Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia and the Indo-Pacific' (ESIWA+).

4. Security and Defence is one of the key strategic pillars of the Joint Communication on a New Strategic EU-India Agenda, endorsed by the Council of the European Union, which welcomed closer collaboration on security and defence matters based on the principles of mutual trust and respect.
5. The EU's Strategic Compass, the White Paper on Defence Readiness/ReArm plan and the Joint Communication on a new EU-India Agenda underline that Europe's security depends not only on strengthening its own capabilities but also on deepening partnerships. India remains committed to safeguarding national interests in a complex regional environment and a stable Indo-Pacific and the importance of international partnerships with key global and regional actors. Initiatives on both sides are aiming at strengthening cooperation on security and defence, including resilience of supply chain.

General Framework

6. The EU and India have decided to establish and implement a tailor-made, mutually beneficial Security and Defence Partnership, underpinned by a series of dialogue mechanisms to provide steering and oversight:
 - a. Making use of the annual EU-India Strategic Dialogue at ministerial level (High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission with the External Affairs Minister of India). Security and defence related issues will be a key component of the agenda of the EU-India Strategic dialogue.
 - b. Enhancing the existing Security and Defence Consultations to an annual EU-India Security and Defence Dialogue to discuss the broad strategic environment, thematic security and defence issues. This Dialogue will feed into ministerial level meetings.
 - c. Building on and continuing existing thematic dialogues on specific domains of shared interest, including on space and maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber security, and non-proliferation and disarmament.
 - d. The EU and India have also recently established a dedicated dialogue on the Indo-Pacific.

Specific Areas of Cooperation

7. In addition to discussing respective developments in security and defence policies and relevant regional security and geopolitical issues, the EU and India will hold targeted dialogues and boost cooperation in areas such as:

Maritime Security

8. The EU and India will deepen cooperation on maritime security with the aim of promoting and upholding a rules-based maritime system, in line with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
9. The EU and India will enhance operational cooperation for maritime security, including joint exercises and port calls, and the exchange of information for maritime domain awareness. They will deepen their exchange of experiences and explore possible cooperation to counter emerging threats to maritime security, including threats to critical submarine infrastructure.
10. The EU and India will also seek to cooperate in supporting the development of regional cooperation for maritime security architectures in areas of mutual interest helping coastal states develop their own capacities and capabilities to promote maritime security and sustainable development and exploitation of the maritime domain.
11. The EU and India will pursue enhanced cooperation between Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR operations Atalanta and Aspides through joint activities, including coordination on counter piracy and strengthening the freedom of navigation to enhance regional maritime security.

Cyber issues

12. The EU and India will deepen the existing Cyber Dialogue, including by enhancing regular exchanges on the cyber security threat landscape, respective policy frameworks and practical cooperation to coordinate diplomatic responses to malicious cyber activities, as well as coordination of cyber capacity building efforts.
13. The EU and India will continue to coordinate and cooperate at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, in particular on the promotion of the UN framework on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace-through the UN Global Mechanism, including on the implementation

of cyber confidence building measures and exchange of best practices and capacity building efforts, supported by the Global ICT Security Cooperation and Capacity-Building Portal.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs)

14. The EU and India will exchange views in their Security and Defence Dialogues on the impact of AI and EDTs on security and defence.
15. The EU and India will coordinate and cooperate in addressing issues related to the global governance and responsible use of AI in the context of relevant international initiatives and fora.

Countering hybrid threats

16. The EU and India will enhance exchanges on hybrid threats and share best practices in developing strategies and policies to counter these threats, including diplomatic responses.

Resilience and protection of critical infrastructure

17. The EU and India will exchange on approaches and development of policies with respect to strengthening the resilience of critical infrastructure, in full respect of respective legal frameworks.

Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism

18. The EU and India will strengthen the existing Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, allowing for a comprehensive exchange on domestic, regional, and global threat assessments, as well as for regular updates on the evolution of terrorist threat, including the link between organised crime, terrorism and financing of terrorism. The exchange will also include key developments of their respective counterterrorism and countering violent extremism policies and discussion on opportunities of cooperation and exchange of best practices.
19. The EU and India will continue their collaboration at the multilateral level within various appropriate forums, including the United Nations counterterrorism framework, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), along with other regional and international platforms for counterterrorism cooperation.

External aspects of fighting organised crime

20. The EU and India will expand cooperation in the external dimension of fighting transnational organised crime and international trafficking, with a particular focus on arms and ammunition transfer, and work together in breaking the business model of global poly-criminal networks engaged in drugs trafficking, weapons smuggling, migrant smuggling, and trafficking in persons.

Situational awareness and exchange of information

21. The EU and India will develop cooperation through exchanges on situational awareness in areas of common interest according to respective internal procedures.

22. The EU and India will proceed towards the conclusion of an EU-India Agreement on the Security of Information, and the subsequent Implementing Arrangement required for the Security of Information Agreement to become applicable.

Cooperation in multilateral fora

23. The EU and India will work towards increasing coordination in multilateral fora, notably the UN, including with EU Member States and other partners, in areas of mutual interest, as jointly agreed, to promote peace, stability and a rules-based international order.

24. The EU and India will hold regular consultations on multilateral affairs, including on matters related to the United Nations, as appropriate.

25. The EU and India will increase their exchanges in the sphere of UN Peacekeeping Operations and policy, and will engage further on the ongoing reform efforts related to the future of UN Peacekeeping Operations in areas of mutual interest.

26. The EU and India will exchange analysis, consult on positions and, where relevant, co-sponsor initiatives, resolutions or declarations of mutual interest. Where agreed upon, the EU and India may coordinate contributions, observer participation or joint workshops in multilateral initiatives and support capacity building of multilateral institutions, in line with their respective mandates and decision-making autonomy.

Non-proliferation and disarmament

27. The EU and India express their strong commitment to the principles of multilateralism in

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disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. Both parties will work closely to reinforce existing international frameworks, to strengthen efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. By promoting dialogue, sharing best practices, and engaging in joint initiatives, the EU and India aim to enhance global security and contribute to effective arms control mechanisms. A regular Non-Proliferation and Disarmament dialogue will be held to address common challenges, uphold international non-proliferation architecture and foster collaborative initiatives.

Space security and defence

28. The EU and India will deepen exchanges on space security as part of the overarching EU-India Space Dialogue.

29. India and the EU will cooperate in bilateral and multilateral fora, including at the United Nations, to enhance space security.

Capacity building for partners in security and defence

30. The EU and India will explore further opportunities for cooperation and synergies in support of capacity building for partners in the field of security and defence.

31. The EU and India will explore possible cooperation on maritime capacity building with other partners.

EU and India defence initiatives

32. The EU and India will consult on their respective defence initiatives, including through exchanges on defence industry-related matters. They will explore, where there are mutual interest and alignment of security priorities, possibilities for India's participation in relevant EU defence initiatives, as appropriate, in line with respective legal frameworks.

International peace and security

33. The EU and India have a history of working under the UN Charter and both have and contribute to operations ensuring international peace and security. The EU and India will exchange on these matters, including on peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)

and will explore opportunities for an increased coordination and options for joint initiatives.

Other areas of cooperation

34. India and EU will explore cooperation in field of training and education including through collaboration between India's National Maritime Foundation and the European Security Defence College (ESDC).
35. The EU and India will hold exchanges and deepen coordination on consular matters affecting the safety and security of their citizens in third countries, on consular crisis preparedness and response, in view of possible consultations. They will also seek to cooperate on consular assistance to their citizens, by facilitating assistance to those who cannot be represented locally by their country of nationality.

Women Peace and Security

36. The EU and India are committed to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which consists of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, and will ensure that Women, Peace and Security principles are factored appropriately. The EU and India will exchange good practices on implementing Women, Peace and Security commitments.

Way Forward

37. The areas identified in the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed regularly in the framework of the EU-India Security and Defence Dialogue. The Dialogue will take stock of progress made, give further impetus, and feed into the annual Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue as well as ministerial level engagements and the Summit, with a view to exploring ways to further strengthen and develop the cooperation.
38. The content of the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed as appropriate. This Agreement is legally non-binding and is not intended to create or give rise to rights or binding legal or other obligations under domestic or international law.

Agence Europe