

INDIA-EUROPEAN UNION (EU) RELATIONS

GS 2, MAINS: India and its neighbourhood- relations, Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests, Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora, Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.

IN NEWS: The European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy have adopted a Joint Communication that sets out the EU's vision for a strategy to strengthen cooperation and the partnership with India. This Joint Communication replaces the last Commission Communication on India of 2004, recognising that India has emerged as the fastest-growing large economy and has acquired an important geopolitical role. The Communication aims to strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership by focusing on sustainable modernisation and on common responses to global and regional issues. It also seeks to reinforce the effectiveness of the EU's external action and is coherent with the implementation of the Global Strategy.

- India-EU bilateral relations date to the early 1960s with India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in 1962.

- A Cooperation Agreement signed in 1994 took the bilateral relationship beyond trade and economic cooperation. The Cooperation Agreement together with the Joint Political Statement signed in 1993, opened the way for annual ministerial meetings and a broad political dialogue.

EU-India relations: Chronology

- 1962: India establishes diplomatic relations with EEC*
- 1971: EU provides **trade support** through the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)
- 1973: The EU and India sign a **Commercial Cooperation Agreement for marketing support** to several sectors of Indian industry with export potential
- 1981: India and the EU sign a Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement
- 1983: The EU sets up a Delegation in India
- 1988: The **first meeting** of the EU-India* Joint Commission
- 1989: **Scientific cooperation** between Indian and the EU is set up in fundamental as well as applied research
- 1992: European and Indian industry establish a **Joint Business Forum** to promote trade and investment.
- 1993: The first **sector cooperation programme** is launched in primary education with EU support of €150 mn. to the Indian Government's District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)
- 1994: EU-India **Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development** upgrades relationship
- 1996: A second **sector cooperation programme** is launched in the area of health with a grant of €200 mn.

- The first India-EU Summit took place in Lisbon on 28 June 2000 and marked a watershed in the evolution of the relationship.
- The relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' during the 5th India-EU Summit held at The Hague in 2004. A Joint Action Plan was adopted in 2005 (which was reviewed in 2008) and it provided for strengthening dialogue and consultation mechanisms in the

political and economic spheres enhancing trade and investment, and bringing peoples and cultures together.

AVENUES OF COOPERATION:

Ranking of Key Issues in EU-India Relations



- In 2013, both sides agreed to the institution of a dialogue on non-proliferation and disarmament under the umbrella of the Security Dialogue.
- India-EU Cyber Dialogue: India and EU have reaffirmed their commitment to an open, free, secure, stable, peaceful and accessible cyberspace, enabling economic growth and innovation.
- India and EU have an institutionalized Dialogue on Counter-terrorism. Leaders also reaffirmed to step up cooperation in tackling terrorism and adopted the Joint Statement on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism.
- India and the EU are negotiating a bilateral Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) since 2007. India and the EU expect to promote bilateral trade by removing barriers to trade in goods and services and investment across all sectors of the economy. Both parties believe that a comprehensive and ambitious agreement that is consistent with WTO rules and principles would open new markets and would expand opportunities for Indian and EU businesses.
- India-EU Energy Panel: The two sides have agreed to commence a wide ranging dialogue on Energy, underlining the importance they attached to India-EU cooperation in this sector. The

Panel has been set up to discuss the various possible strategies for development of secure and sustainable energy supplies of fossil, renewable and nuclear energy.

- India and EU adopted a Joint Declaration on Clean Energy and Climate Partnership at the 13th India-EU Summit that paves the roadmap for bilateral cooperation in the field of renewable energy and climate technologies.
- India and the EU in 2017 announced the establishment of an Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) for EU Investments in India as to enable a close coordination between the EU and India with an aim to promote and facilitate EU investment in India.
- Both the sides have reiterated their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement and committed to lead and work together to combat climate change, implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and encourage global low greenhouse gas emissions, climate resilient and sustainable development.
- Both have also resolved to promote the global clean and low greenhouse gas emission energy transition, towards sustainable, affordable, reliable and modern energy services and have adopted the Joint Statement on Clean Energy and Climate Change.
- Implementing Arrangement between the Science & Engineering Research Board (SERB) and the European Research Council (ERC), EIB loan agreement for Bangalore Metro Phase-II Project, Joint Declaration between the Interim Secretariat of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), and the European Investment Bank (EIB) aimed at mobilizing investments for broad-based deployment of affordable solar energy applications across the prospective member countries of the ISA were also agreed.

TAKING IT FORWARD

- The new India strategy document unveiled by the EU comes at an appropriate time when both have to seriously recalibrate their partnership.
- Merely reiterating that India and the EU are “natural partners” is not enough, and the areas outlined in the document, from security sector cooperation to countering terrorism and regional security, need to be focussed on.
- India needs resources and expertise from the EU for its various priority areas, such as cybersecurity, urbanisation, environmental regeneration, and skill development.
- As the EU shifts its focus to India, New Delhi should heartily reciprocate this outreach. In the past, India had complained that Brussels does not take India seriously and that despite the two not having any ideological affinity, the EU-China relations carried greater traction. Now all that might change.

(Q) Discuss the importance of European Union (EU) to India in the backdrop of the EU's vision for a strategy to strengthen the cooperation and partnership with India.



ACHIEVERS IAS ACADEMY

PREVIOUS YEARS UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS:

- Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in south-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. (2017)
- Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. (2016)
- With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (2014)