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DRAFT REPORT

on a European Parliament recommendation to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning EU-India relations
(2023/2128(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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**to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning EU-India relations
(2023/2128(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EU-India Strategic Partnership established in 2004,
- having regard to the joint statement of the 15th EU-India summit of 15 July 2020, to the document entitled ‘EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025’ adopted at the summit and to the other joint statements signed recently by the EU and India,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of India on partnership and development of 1994¹,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the Commission of 20 November 2018 entitled ‘Elements for an EU strategy on India’ (JOIN(2018)0028) and the related Council conclusions on the EU Strategy on India of 10 December 2018,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 September 2021 entitled ‘The EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific’ (JOIN(2021)0024),
- having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the update of the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan ‘An enhanced EU Maritime Security Strategy for evolving maritime threats’ of 10 March 2023 (JOIN(2023)0008),
- having regard to the ‘Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy - Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe’ of June 2016,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe²,
- having regard to the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence approved by the Council on 21 March 2022,
- having regard to the EU’s restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine,

¹ OJ L 223, 27.8.1994, p. 24.

² OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1.

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 February 2023 on EU priorities in UN human rights fora in 2023,
- having regard to the EU thematic guidelines on human rights, including those on human rights defenders, on human rights dialogues and on the protection and promotion of freedom of religion or belief,
- having regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,
- having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution on aggression against Ukraine adopted on 2 March 2022,
- having regard to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the Paris Agreement,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on connectivity and EU-Asia relations³,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2022 on EU-India future trade and investment cooperation⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2022 on the EU and the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2017 on EU political relations with India⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 July 2023 on India, the situation in Manipur⁷,
- having regard to its recommendation of 29 April 2021 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning EU-India relations⁸,
- having regard to the press statement of the Delegation to India and Bhutan on the 10th round of the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue held on 15 July 2022,
- having regard to the conclusions of the G20 Summit held in New Delhi on 9 and 10 September 2023,
- having regard to the forthcoming EU-India summit to be held in New Delhi,
- having regard to Rule 118 of its Rules of Procedure,

³ OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 117.

⁴ OJ C 47, 7.2.2023, p. 23.

⁵ OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 32.

⁶ OJ C 337, 20.9.2018, p. 48.

⁷ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0289.

⁸ OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 109.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9 0000/2023),
- A. whereas the EU and India intend to convene at leaders' meeting in New Delhi;
- B. whereas in 2022, the EU and India marked the 60th anniversary of their bilateral partnership; whereas this partnership has gained momentum in recent years but has not yet reached its full potential;
- C. whereas bilateral relations between EU Member States and India on issues such as security and connectivity contribute to the EU-India partnership;
- 1. Recommends that the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:

The EU-India Strategic Partnership: the institutional framework

- (a) continue to broaden and deepen EU-India relations as strategic partners; pursue a 'Team Europe' approach to the partnership;
- (b) continue to promote and fully implement the EU Strategy on India of 2018 and the EU-India Roadmap to 2025 in close coordination with Member States' own actions to engage with India;
- (c) ensure that any deepening of the partnership is based on the values of freedom, democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, equality, respect for human rights and a commitment to promoting an inclusive rules-based global order;
- (d) ensure the active and regular consultation and involvement of EU and Indian civil society representatives in the development, implementation and monitoring of EU-India relations;

EU-India cooperation on foreign and security policy

- (e) further enhance the growing cooperation in foreign and security policy through the existing dialogue mechanisms;
- (f) hold the bilateral security dialogues on an annual basis, and with greater involvement of EU Member States;
- (g) expand EU-India cooperation on maritime security as an area of considerable potential;
- (h) coordinate positions and initiatives in multilateral fora, in particular the UN, the World Trade Organization and G20, effectively aligning positions in defence of multilateralism and a rules-based international order;
- (i) urge India to join the international condemnation of Russia's illegal war against Ukraine; engage with India on its continued purchases of crude oil from Russia at low prices and its subsequent sale of refined products on international markets, including in the EU; press EU-based businesses to cease

purchasing such products;

- (j) underline that ensuring that a free and open, rules-based order comprising freedom of navigation, open and secure sea lines of communication, enhanced security of shipping and more robust response systems for natural disasters and non-traditional security threats should remain a priority for both partners;
- (k) continue to monitor closely the worrying situation in Indian-administered Kashmir, in particular the respect for the fundamental freedoms of the Kashmiri people; remain committed to supporting stability and de-escalation between India and Pakistan;
- (l) monitor closely the fragile situation around the unresolved border dispute between India and China, two nuclear powers ;

Human rights and democracy: from an appendix to the heart of EU-India relations

- (m) effectively enshrine human rights and democratic values at the heart of the EU's engagement with India with the aim of a constructive and results-based dialogue, including on the range of shortcomings in these areas;
- (n) continue to express concern about India's Citizenship Amendment Act; encourage India to guarantee the right to freely practice the religion of one's choice enshrined in Article 25 of its constitution; counter and condemn hate speech;
- (o) insist that India, as a founding member of the United Nations and a current member of the UN Human Rights Council, should act on all the recommendations in its Universal Periodic Review process;
- (p) address the human rights situation of and challenges faced by civil society, in particular the concerns raised by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN special rapporteurs at all levels of EU dialogue with the Indian authorities;
- (q) engage with India in order to secure a safe environment for the work of human rights defenders, environmental and indigenous people's defenders, trade union activists, journalists and other civil society actors; cease to invoke laws against sedition and terrorism as a means to restrict their legitimate activities; step up EU and Member State support to civil society organisations and human rights defenders, including by facilitating funding;
- (r) welcome the adoption of the Women's Reservation Bill; engage with India on its efforts to investigate and prevent gender-based violence and discrimination and promote gender equality and women's empowerment;
- (s) address prevailing caste-based discrimination in India;
- (t) welcome India's adoption of a national action plan on business and human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

and deepen cooperation with India in this area;

- (u) upgrade the EU-India human rights dialogue to a bi-annual, headquarters-level dialogue and strive to make it meaningful through high-level participation and by setting concrete commitments and benchmarks for progress, addressing individual cases in line with the EU guidelines on human rights dialogues;

Connecting on climate, energy and digital issues

- (v) welcome the EU-India Connectivity Partnership and the commitment to supporting sustainable digital, transport and energy networks to the flow goods, services, data and capital and exchange of people, contributing towards the wider EU's Global Gateway strategy; note that the Connectivity Partnership has become one of the most important aspects of the EU-India partnership;
 - (w) enhance cooperation on climate and energy issues with India as a key partner in the global fight against climate change and biodiversity degradation and in the green transition towards renewable energy and climate neutrality;
 - (x) step up engagement with India on health emergencies, pharmaceuticals and digital health innovations that will provide universal health coverage in India;
 - (y) recognise the substantial potential of digital issues in the EU-India partnership such as digital infrastructure and connectivity, digital policy, data protection and flows and cybersecurity;
 - (z) invite India to join the EU in leading the global conversation on the safe and ethical use of artificial intelligence and to advance human-rights based artificial intelligence;
 - (aa) make progress on a shared commitment not to selectively restrict or ban social media platforms and or impose blanket bans on internet and telecommunications access, while setting joint standards for a digital economy rooted in human rights;
 - (ab) facilitate further EU-India mobility, including for migrants, students, highly skilled workers and artists, as well as people-to-people exchanges in all sectors relevant to the EU-India partnership;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the legislative bodies and Government of India.