



**EU-INDIA**  
**YOUNG**  
**LEADERS**  
**EXCHANGE**  
**2023**



## Esha Banerji

# Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE Indo-Pacific region has evolved as an essential axis of global economic and geopolitical forces, pushing India and the EU to engage actively in the region to safeguard their interests. In this regard, maritime cooperation serves as a crucial area for deepening their partnership and addressing shared security challenges.

Maritime security cooperation between India and the European Union (EU) is of paramount importance for their bilateral relations and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Given the EU's pivot to Asia and India's growing significance, this partnership is critical for maintaining a stable and secure maritime environment.

The EU's interest in the Indo-Pacific region stems from its economic significance and the imperative to diversify its engagements. From a security perspective, the Indo-Pacific maritime domain is of growing importance to the EU due to the substantial trade flows passing through the Indian Ocean sea lanes. By actively participating in maritime security efforts, the EU can secure its trade routes and safeguard its economic interests. Similarly, with over 90 percent of India's trade transported by sea, maritime security also plays a vital role in India's commercial and energy security. China's increasing presence in India's neighboring countries has raised concerns in New Delhi, further emphasizing the urgency of maritime security cooperation.

Due to their vested economic interests and India's geographical positioning in the Indo-Pacific, both the EU and India hold strategic importance in securing critical sea lanes of communication. The maritime domain represents an important conduit for trade, energy transport, and connectivity, emphasizing the need of ensuring the freedom and safety of these routes. By collaborating on maritime security, India and the EU can effectively combat conventional and non-conventional threats such as

piracy, human and drug trafficking, and maritime terrorism.

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) serves as a cornerstone for effective maritime security cooperation. By sharing information and enhancing connectivity, the EU and India can identify and respond to maritime security threats in real time. France's deployment of a liaison officer at India's Information Fusion Centre exemplifies the potential for cooperation in MDA. The EU's participation in organizations such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) also can open up opportunities for collaboration with India in areas such as marine ecology and environmental protection. The EU's participation in IORA, combined with India's regional leadership, has the potential to generate synergies and contribute to the building of an Indo-Pacific maritime security architecture.

By prioritizing maritime security cooperation, India and the EU can elevate their bilateral relationship to new heights. The EU's increased engagement in maritime security and India's role as a responsible regional guarantor of stability will position both partners as significant players in the evolving security architecture of the Indo-Pacific. Their shared values and common objectives will create a solid foundation for collaboration in tackling security challenges.

Diplomatic coordination and closer cooperation between India and the EU can help ensure continued global prosperity. In this regard, intelligence sharing, the development of a common Maritime Domain Awareness framework, adherence to international maritime law, and joint efforts in addressing piracy, crime, and terrorism are crucial. Both partners must also actively support the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and engage in comprehensive maritime governance. By leveraging their respective strengths and aligning their interests, the two sides can, thus, create a safer, more prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

**The EU's interest in the Indo-Pacific region stems from its economic significance and the imperative to diversify its engagements.**

*Esha Banerji holds a Masters in Political Science and International Relations, with a specialization in Defense and National Security and her thesis explores India's signing of Military Logistics Agreements and its impact on Asia's security environment. Currently she is associated with a premier think-tank in India, where her work focuses on the East Asia region with special emphasis on the current and emerging security challenges in the region. Esha's other research interests include defense strategy, geo-economics, foreign affairs, and the implications of Chinese security developments on the region, especially India. Esha has participated in the 2023 DCAF's Young Faces Initiative and the 2023 UK PONI Introduction to Nuclear Policy Workshop conducted by Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). Her work has been published both online and in international peer reviewed journals. She has presented various international conferences, including the Belgrade Security Conference, where she focused on security-development nexus. She is fluent in Bengali, Hindi and English and a beginner in Mandarin.*



## Manisha Bieber

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**M**Y vision for EU-India relations centers around addressing the lack of awareness that exists within the European Union (EU) regarding India and vice versa. This gap in knowledge prevents closer ties between the two regions. By prioritizing initiatives to enhance communication, expand trade and economic cooperation, promote further research and innovation partnerships, deepen security collaboration, and nurture people-to-people exchanges, we can bridge the gap that currently exists between the EU and India and forge a stronger, more comprehensive, and mutually beneficial EU-India relationship, unlocking the untapped potential for greater collaboration and shared prosperity.

Accordingly, I believe the following aspects should be prioritized in the following manner:

**(1)** Trade and economic cooperation, the most progressive of relations between India and the EU, must continue to be given high priority within the EU-India relationship. To unlock untapped potential, current efforts to remove trade barriers, simplify regulations, and explore avenues for greater market access should continue. However additional efforts to further inform and encourage SME's and self-entrepreneurs on the market potential, advantages and disadvantages of both the EU and India should be prioritised.

**(2)** Collaboration in research, innovation, and education. For this, I propose that the establishment of Centers of India Studies across Europe, akin to the Centers of European Studies in India, should be given considerable attention. While there are existing centers focusing on India's relations with individual European member states, a shift towards broader coverage is imperative. Increased dissemination of knowledge about Indian politics, culture, administration, and market potential to Europeans is

necessary. This concentrated effort will contribute to a deeper understanding of India, promoting research and innovation, and facilitate knowledge sharing, technological advancements, and address global challenges. This will develop successors with sufficient knowledge to continue the work in this field. Additionally, efforts towards mutual recognition of academic degrees from both the EU and India should further be prioritized for enhanced cooperation.

**(3)** Security cooperation and counter-terrorism efforts. Joint efforts to combat common threats, enhance cybersecurity capabilities, and concentration on data protection will strengthen the security environment for both the EU and India. Regular consultations and exchange of best practices in security-related matters will enhance both the EU and Indias collective ability to effectively address emerging security challenges.

**(4)** Concentration on more people-to-people exchanges and cultural diplomacy. Promoting cultural events, educational scholarships, and tourism initiatives is needed to foster greater understanding, appreciation, and friendship between the people of the EU and India. Fostering this intercultural dialogue and celebrating diversity will create a solid foundation of mutual respect and harmony.

In conclusion, I believe the prioritization in the improvement of the EU-India bilateral relationship revolves around enhancing communication, expanding trade and economic cooperation, promoting education, research and innovation partnerships, deepening security collaboration, and nurturing people-to-people exchanges. By focusing on these areas, the EU and India can establish a stronger, more comprehensive, and mutually beneficial relationship, unlocking the untapped potential for enhanced collaboration and shared prosperity.

**[ To unlock untapped potential, current efforts to remove trade barriers, simplify regulations, and explore avenues for greater market access should continue. ]**

*Being of Indian-German heritage, I was raised in Asia and Europe, receiving my primary education in India and higher education in Germany. Initially studying Law ignited my interest in the political and legal dimensions of EU-India relations and European Studies at Maastricht University. Currently, I serve as a board member of AGS-RLP, a German state working-group for self-employed and SMEs at a major Germany party, and as Vice President of students at the European Universities Initiative YUFE. Through my multicultural background, and my experience with national, political, and European bureaucracy, I hope to offer a different perspective to this group.*

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## Aditya Chauhan

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE European Union and India are both significant players on the global stage, and their collaboration holds tremendous promise for addressing shared challenges and harnessing mutual opportunities. To forge a strong and prosperous partnership, certain priorities must be emphasized within this bilateral relationship.

Firstly, trade and economic cooperation should be prioritized. The European Union is primarily an economic union of mostly industrialised countries with advanced economies while India offers the world's biggest market. Hence, a deeper coordination in trade is mutually beneficial. Historically, China has been a major market for India and the EU. However, in light of the recent events, as Brussels aims to "de-risk" its dependence on China, India has also taken steps in that way. Both the EU and India can prove to be a mutual alternative for China. The EU and India are major trading partners with bilateral trade over 100 billion euros per year, and there is ample scope for further enhancing economic ties. Strengthening trade relations through the negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) should be a key priority. Such an agreement would facilitate the flow of goods, services, and investments between the EU and India, fostering economic growth, job creation, and increased market access for businesses on both sides.

Another critical area of focus should be innovation and research collaboration. The EU and India boast vibrant scientific and technological ecosystems, and by fostering collaboration in these fields, they can drive innovation, spur technological advancements, and address global challenges together. Encouraging joint research projects, promoting academic exchanges, and facilitating the mobility of researchers and scholars would facilitate knowledge sharing and create synergies between the

EU and India. Such collaboration could yield breakthroughs in areas like renewable energy, healthcare, digital technologies, and sustainable development. Recently concluded first meeting of India- EU Trade and Technology Council is a welcome step.

Furthermore, the EU and India should prioritize cooperation in tackling global issues, particularly climate change and sustainable development. Both regions have made commitments to the Paris Agreement and share a common responsibility to combat climate change. By deepening collaboration on climate action, renewable energy transition, sustainable urbanization, and environmental conservation, the EU and India can set a positive example and contribute significantly to the global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Joint initiatives and knowledge exchange in these areas would pave the way for a greener and more sustainable future.

Lastly, it is crucial to recognize the importance of political dialogue and strategic cooperation. Regular high-level exchanges, policy dialogues, and joint initiatives on regional and global issues would deepen the understanding and trust between the EU and India. This would enable them to coordinate their positions on international forums and work together to address common challenges, such as terrorism, cybersecurity, migration, and geopolitical developments.

In conclusion, my vision of EU-India relations entails a comprehensive and strategic partnership that encompasses trade and economic cooperation, innovation and research collaboration, joint efforts to tackle global challenges, cultural exchanges, and robust political dialogue. By prioritizing these areas, the EU and India can forge a stronger and more resilient partnership that benefits their respective societies, fosters sustainable development, and contributes to global peace and prosperity.

**The EU and India should prioritize cooperation in tackling global issues, particularly climate change and sustainable development.**

*Aditya Chauhan is a 21 year old hailing from Uttar Pradesh in India. Currently, I am pursuing my Masters in Geopolitics and International Relations from Manipal University. Prior to this, I completed a Postgraduate Diploma in European Studies from Manipal Centre for European Studies, specializing in Politics and International Relations. I have also pursued a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from PDM University. My academic focus revolves around the European Union and its dynamics. The process of EU integration has fascinated me. Moreover, I am particularly interested in EU-India relations. Through my studies, I have tried to gain a deeper understanding of the European Union and various dynamics of its relationship with India. I believe that the bilateral relationship has a large untapped potential which needs to be explored in the near future. As a driven individual, I constantly seek opportunities to expand my knowledge in these fields and contribute to the advancement of EU-India relations.*

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## Joel Christoph

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE evolving economic partnership between the European Union (EU) and India holds profound potential to shape the global economic landscape in the coming decades. This strategic relationship, anchored in shared democratic values and mutual benefit, calls for meticulous prioritization and concerted cooperation in key areas to catalyze bilateral relations and global progress.

One fundamental area to concentrate on is the enhancement of trade and investment relationships. The EU, being one of the world's largest single markets with sophisticated industries, and India, with its rapidly growing economy and vast labor force, offer unique attributes that can create a symbiotic economic partnership. Efforts should be concentrated on reducing non-tariff barriers to trade, fostering regulatory coherence, and promoting reciprocal market access. Such a strategy will not only enhance economic integration but also ensure a level playing field, thereby promoting fair trade and benefiting businesses and consumers in both regions.

As we advance deeper into the era of digitalization, an increased emphasis on digital trade and the economy could be instrumental in unlocking new economic growth trajectories. Together, the EU and India can shape the future digital economy, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic inclusivity. The development of robust digital infrastructure, comprehensive policies for data privacy and security, and frameworks for cross-border data flows would be fundamental in this context.

Addressing global economic imbalances represents a significant aspect of the EU-India economic partnership. Here, cooperation could entail devising strategies for effective tax

systems, reforming international financial institutions, and contributing to new global economic norms. This would help tackle pressing issues such as debt sustainability, tax evasion, and the need for greater fiscal transparency.

The intersection of sustainable development and economics also warrants mutual cooperation. As regions grapple with the impact of climate change and the need for sustainable growth, the EU and India can pioneer models that reconcile economic development with environmental preservation. Green investments, sustainable public procurement policies, and collaboration on carbon pricing mechanisms can help transition towards an environmentally friendly economic model.

In the sphere of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, there exists a vast potential for collaboration. As both regions invest heavily in these sectors, sharing best practices, navigating regulatory landscapes, and fostering ethical guidelines for AI usage can lead to economic advancement and societal good. Joint research initiatives in these areas would also be instrumental in propelling technological innovation and creating future-ready economies.

To sum up, the EU-India relationship warrants a strategic focus on trade and investment, the digital economy, global economic governance, sustainable development, and AI regulation. This targeted approach, reinforced by open dialogue and cooperation, could create a partnership that is not only economically advantageous but also socially beneficial and environmentally responsible. Together, these two dynamic regions can pioneer a new era of global economic collaboration, shaping a prosperous future for their citizens and contributing to global progress.

**In the sphere of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, there exists a vast potential for collaboration.**

*Joel Christoph is a PhD Researcher at the European University Institute (EUI), specializing in Economics. He brings extensive academic and professional experience to the EU-India Young Leaders Exchange. Joel has worked with organizations like the World Bank and Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute. He is a Bretton Woods 2.0 Fellow of the Atlantic Council, Dahrendorf Fellow, and co-founder of Endeema, a renewable energy start-up. Joel's academic journey spans Asia, Europe and North America, demonstrating his interest for international affairs. As a Youth Delegate at the UN Climate Change Conference and a Hiroshima G7 Youth Summit delegate, he remains committed to understanding the positions and interests of various countries. Ultimately, Joel brings his multilingual proficiency, economic specialization, and enthusiasm to contribute to EU-India relations and exchange.*



## Shaurya Dev

### Vision of EU-India Relations

INDIA and the EU are two of the largest democracies which together represent more than a quarter of the world's population making their bilateral cooperation integral to the entire world. In a world grappling with challenges like war, fragile economic recovery, energy insecurity, health crisis and climate change, EU-India relations could give new hope to the world that democracies can deliver and help establish a rule-based peaceful world order. I strongly believe young leaders from both the regions can play an integral part in deepening these ties and providing the impetus to bilateral growth and prosperity.

I am thrilled at the prospect of participating in the 2023 EU-India Young Leaders Exchange. The EU and India have the potential to build a strong and mutually beneficial partnership in a wide range of areas. By prioritizing cooperation in trade, security, climate action, people-to-people exchanges, and healthcare, both sides can deepen their ties and contribute to a more stable and prosperous global order. The EU is India's third largest trading partner and one of the largest investors in the country. Enhancing economic cooperation between India and the EU has immense potential to boost bilateral trade, investment, and economic growth. This collaboration creates opportunities for job creation, technological exchange, and market access, benefiting businesses, industries, and consumers on both sides.

As the global geopolitical landscape evolves, it is essential to prioritize certain aspects within this bilateral relationship to maximize its potential and address key challenges. Among these, addressing climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of our time. The EU and India have a

shared responsibility to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. Prioritizing cooperation in areas such as renewable energy, clean technologies, and sustainable agriculture can lead to significant progress. Collaborative research and development initiatives, joint investment in clean energy projects, and knowledge sharing on sustainable practices would contribute to a greener and more resilient future. The expertise and technology of EU with the infrastructure and building capacity of India can certainly produce sustainable and long-term solutions to several climate issues.

Besides Climate Change, the enhanced bilateral cooperation of India and the EU could contribute significantly in reforming the multilateral structure and global order. Despite global disturbances such as war, terrorism, extremism, etc. both sides have always been committed to multilateralism and the rules-based international order however the current order reflects a world of the 20th century. The international structure needs to be restructured to be more inclusive, accommodative and reflective of contemporary realities. By working together, India and EU could work towards reforming international order and institutions to improve their relevance, particularly in the wake of a war. This can further help effectively address global challenges, promote peace, security, and sustainable development. Cooperation in international organizations such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and G20 allows both entities to align their positions, advocate for shared interests, and contribute to global governance.

**[ The enhanced bilateral cooperation of India and the EU could contribute significantly in reforming the multilateral structure and global order. ]**

*Shaurya is currently pursuing a MSc International Relations at the London School of Economics (LSE). Originally from India, he did his schooling in Tanzania, followed by an undergraduate degree from Delhi University. Besides studying at LSE, he is also interning at The Nehru Centre, Cultural wing of the High Commission of India, and India Global Forum (India Inc Group). After his Masters, he wishes to pursue a career in the field of diplomacy and global politics. He is excited about the prospect of engaging with like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds, exchanging ideas, and gaining a deeper understanding of different cultures, which he believes would give him an opportunity to develop innovative solutions to global challenges, promote inclusivity, and foster positive change.*



## Thibault Fournol

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE EU-India relationship may not be reduced anymore to economic and commercial ties, as it is still often presented. The Strategic Partnership Roadmap to 2025 reflects the ambitions of the two actors to diversify areas of cooperation towards security issues, maritime security, sustainable modernisation, or global governance. Although some projects have been implemented, the potential of EU-India cooperation remains under-exploited and still struggles going over political dialogues and declarations of intent. India and the EU's visions of the Indo-Pacific have in common a same commitment to promote inclusivity, multilateralism and cooperation, beyond the traditional security focus. This convergence may now need to be turned into concrete engagement in the region. How can India and the EU demonstrate to all actors in the region, especially in the Indian Ocean Region, that they do care about common issues in the region and that they deliver concrete projects? How can India and the EU convince these actors that their joint engagement is not only for themselves, but in the interests of the region?

Two main areas of cooperation could be considered to reinforce EU-India cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. A first pillar would be environmental security and climate change resilience.

Numerous projects have been implemented already between India and the EU in this field, whether on resource efficiency, air quality or water resources management. More can be done on green investment and green infrastructure building. Enhanced cooperation on climate issues could thus provide a lever on which to base the credibility of a joint regional commitment to address environmental risks, widely shared in the region. Another area of cooperation would then be technology, as technology emerged as a strong interest of India around four key priorities (space technologies, quantum technologies, semi-conductors, defence). Particularly on the question of regulation, where the EU has a strong expertise to bring. Eventually comes the question of implementation. Notwithstanding the area of cooperation, three principles may worth guiding practical orientations of the EU-India partnership: encouraging a people-centered approach; adopting an action-based method through delivering concrete initiatives addressing very specific and sometimes technical issues; and adapting the formats launched by the EU in order to better take into account the practices and preferences of cooperation of regional actors, including India, and especially at the multilateral level.

**[ India and the EU's visions of the Indo-Pacific have in common a same commitment to promote inclusivity, multilateralism and cooperation, beyond the traditional security focus. ]**

*Thibault Fournol is a Research Fellow at the Fondation pour la recherche stratégique (FRS) where he coordinates the Observatory of Multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific, a research program supported by the French Ministry of Armed Forces which aims to contribute to a better understanding of the Indo-Pacific and to promote French strategic thinking on and in the region. His research focuses on India's security and defence policies as well as on strategic and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the Indian Ocean Region. As a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the Centre for International Studies of Sciences Po (CERI), his doctoral research focuses on India's multilateral practices in the field of regional security. He previously worked as a Parliamentary Attaché at the French National Assembly and at the Centre of Doctrine and Command Teaching of the French Army.*



## Miguel Gorriz

### Vision of EU-India Relations

EU-India bilateral relations could be approached from a “think global, act local” perspective. That is why, to be continued 5 points are prioritized from a general perspective, however each of them followed by specific “call to action” to exemplify ways of collaboration. Facilitating people-to-people exchanges in an industrial or business level in the upcoming prioritized areas can strengthen cultural ties and foster mutual understanding, promote long-term relationships and build use cases/best practices that can be raised to higher levels (i.e., diplomatic or political) to show evidence of success stories and convince of the benefits of collaboration.

**1. Promoting Sustainable Development:** First point to bring into the conversation could be the “what”. In this sense, more urgent topics in the global agenda are to address climate change and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) as challenges that require from international collaboration. The EU and India can work together on initiatives related to:

- Renewable, efficient, and universal access to energy,
- Waste management, air, and water quality needs,
- Sustainable urban development and resilient industrial value chains,
- Universal education, upskilling and reskilling of population

**Specific actions:**

- Find specific “areas of interest” for both EU and India (e.g., Critical raw materials and Clean Tech developments; Skilling for the factories of the future).
- Identify existing programs in which this “areas of interest” can be developed. (e.g., REPowerEU, Net Zero Industry Act).
- Add/create new channels of collaboration.

**2. Strengthening Trade and Economic Cooperation:** Both the EU and India have strong economic potentials, but also find themselves in very different economic situations. While we find India in a steep and very strategic economic growth, Europe has a special focusing on re-understanding the concept of growth, and how circular economy and even “degrowth” can couple for a sustainable future.

**Specific actions:**

- Negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement that removes barriers and promotes investment.
- Creating a favourable environment in which both economic systems couple for both regions in a short- and long-term perspective.

**3. Enhancing Research and Development Collaboration:** Innovation is a crucial aspect of sustainable technologies. Encouraging joint R&D projects between EU and Indian institutions can boost technological advancements and knowledge exchange. Establishing dedicated funding programs and promoting collaborations in sectors like clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital technologies can be prioritized.

**Specific actions:**

- Focus on specific topics for R&D (i.e., energy production, resilient supply chain)
- Find technology providers and uses case from EU-India that can collaborate.
- Identify programs to develop research/development (e.g., EU level-Horizon Europe, India level; national level-CDTI: Spain/India)

**4. Collaborating on Skill Development and Capacity Building through Digitalization:** Industrial advancements require a skilled workforce.

Also, individual access to information and education are fundamental. Collaborative efforts in skill development and capacity building can enhance the capabilities of individuals and industries.

**Specific actions:**

- Promoting exchange programs, vocational training, and internships can help bridge the skills gap and promote knowledge transfer.
- Build common platforms for bilateral knowledge so that India and EU can benefit from their corresponding strong areas of expertise.
- Prepare younger and senior generations for the need of the upcoming technological and societal developments.

**5. Supporting Startups and Entrepreneurship:** Both the EU and India have vibrant startup ecosystems. Different approaches on new ideas and business creation but same feelings and positive energy to execute projects. Encouraging collaboration and providing support for startups between EU and India can bring:

- Identification of common challenges.
- Inspiration from others ‘insights.
- Find solutions in other markets.

**Specific actions:**

- Joint incubation programs (e.g., EU-India Start-up spaces)
- Mentorship networks; joint business intelligence teams
- Build interrelation between start-up ecosystem and Trade agreements.

**More urgent topics in the global agenda are to address climate change and achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs)**

*Material recycling, IoT infrastructures and environmental sustainability are some of the topics Miguel has been working on in recent years. He is an Industrial Engineer from the Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain) with a research specialization in IoT systems for wastewater pumping applications at the TU Berlin. Additionally, having worked with a leading Spanish packaging and logistics research center he has a good knowledge of the waste management industry. Today, he combines his work at EIT Manufacturing with a Masters in Air Quality, Waste and Water Management at the University of Stuttgart, where he is part of the WASTE program and is in contact with an international network that looks at a cross-sectoral approach between environmental sustainability and innovation. His daily work is driven by the application of sustainable practices and digitalization in the European manufacturing system, with a passion for international cooperation and European affairs.*



## Aakash Guglani

### Vision of EU-India Relations

I envision EU-India relations as the cornerstone for the governance of critical and emerging technologies. This partnership would be crucial to develop principles for responsible use of these technologies. The European policymakers set a benchmark when they came up with the broad-based legislative package to regulate the digital economy. Concomitantly, the Indian policymakers were first to deploy digital public infrastructure to ensure that the access to digital economy is not prohibitive. Therefore, the one area which should be prioritised in this relationship is the development of digital public infrastructure with technical expertise of India and legislative vision of the European Union.

In the first Ministerial meeting of the India – EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), the focus on digital public infrastructure and supply chain resilience has been prioritised. The India-EU Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2025 envisages EU-India Joint Working Group mechanism to develop sustainable digital infrastructure and regulatory frameworks to deploy interoperable networks and promote international standards.

In India, policymakers have developed open protocols and standards in identity, payments, banking and health domains using the digital public goods approach. The EU digital legislative strategy consisting of the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act paves the way for an equitable level playing field for the small and medium businesses. On the technical side, India is building an Open Network of Digital Commerce (ONDC)—an interoperable network under community ownership—to empower the neighbourhood stores by providing foundational services of discovery, ordering, payments, tracking, last-mile delivery, returns etc. as open-source specifica-

tions to democratise the level playing field in the digital commerce. Due to this, startups can provide these services cost-efficiently to neighbourhood stores against the 20-25% markup by e-commerce marketplaces. In this manner, the India-EU partnership embodies the techno-legal approach to resolve the governance challenges emerging out of deployment of critical technologies.

As was the case with GDPR, the EU’s draft Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act is best placed to regulate the growing deployment of AI in our quotidian lives and bring forth a coherent strategy to develop responsible principles and test cases for AI use. The EU’s approach has pioneered the regulatory sandboxes and legislative approaches that puts users’ safety at the core of the digital economy. In India’s case, in addition to data protection legislations, her success in the digital economy is based on deployment of technical specifications using the principle of optimal ignorance where privacy by design is embedded in the architecture of an emerging technology.

Consequently, India and the EU bring forth different capabilities and a common set of values. This partnership is anchored in diverse lived experiences of their communities consisting of multiple ethnicities, cultures, religions, political systems, languages, geographies and historical linkages. These regions in a way reflect the sheer diversity of this world. If we need to look for potential solutions for responsible technological advancement, development of green technologies, resilient supply chains, and equitable economic growth strategies then this partnership showcases immense potential and fundamental strengths for sustainable cooperation.

**[ Consequently, India and the EU  
bring forth different capabilities  
and a common set of values. ]**

*Aakash Guglani is a manager at Digital India Foundation, a policy think tank working in the areas of technology policy, digital inclusion and internet related technologies. He has made policy presentations to senior leadership teams at World Bank, Gates Foundation, Pepsico, Publicis Groupe, NITI Aayog etc. He has moderated a panel of European experts on navigating trust and risk at the RAID tech conference and spoken about digital divide at policy conferences of ISB, ORF and the T20 group of G20. He was one of the emerging leaders at the QUAD conference in Melbourne and contributed to The La Trobe Asia Brief. He has presented working papers at Oxford University’s Department of International Development and taught digital economy courses at University of Delhi’s Hindu College. He has contributed to ThePrint, Valdai Club, PressTV and co-authored the Indian contribution in forthcoming The Palgrave Handbook of Malicious Use of AI and Psychological Security.*

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## Gurmehar Kaur

### Vision of EU-India Relations

INDIA and the EU have a long tradition of bilateral cooperation in the domain of cybersecurity, and they could build upon existing cyber interactions by exchanging best practices and lessons learned on the implementation of cyber norms. Both parties could work towards enforcing and promoting responsible behavior through diplomatic means, engage in discussions on the drafting and implementation of relevant international standards for new technologies such as 5G, and undertake joint efforts to advance global cyber resilience.

Moreover, with the EU's adoption of its Indo-Pacific strategy in September 2021, the region presents new opportunities

for EU-India-supported capacity development and confidence-building exercises. Strengthening capabilities to counter ransomware, in particular, could be an important area of intervention. Therefore, the establishment of dedicated EU and Indian points of contact at the policy and technical levels could provide guidance for determining cyber roles and responsibilities, coordination functions, and readiness requirements.

Overall, I believe that India and EU dialogues are crucial for addressing the continuously evolving challenges of cyberspace and enhancing global cybersecurity.

**Strengthening capabilities to counter ransomware, in particular, could be an important area of intervention.**

*Gurmehar Kaur is the author of **Small Acts of Freedom**, a deeply personal family history published by Penguin Random House India in 2018. She is a social activist and an ambassador for Digital Peace now, a non-profit organization advocating for Cyber Peace. Kaur cofounded Citizens for Public Leadership (CPL), an independent nonpartisan movement focused on advocating for progressive public policy in India. CPL is an apolitical non-profit with the sole objective of strengthening the capacity of Indian youth to take up leadership challenges in the public sphere. In 2017, Kaur was listed by TIME magazine as a 'Next Generation Leader', a global listing of ten young men and women making a difference in the world. She graduated from Lady Shri Ram College in 2019 and holds a Masters from University of Oxford. Her second book **The Young and the Restless: Youth and Politics in India** was published during the Lok Sabha elections in May 2019.*



## Jayesh Khatu

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE EU-India relations today are characterised by a combination of cooperation and challenges. On one hand, the bilateral relations are witnessing an upward trajectory in areas of trade, maritime security, connectivity, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and people-to-people contact, there are unresolved and contentious issues of trade and market access, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and differing views and outlook towards the Russia-Ukraine war. As we have entered the 61st year of partnership between the EU and India in 2023, it is necessary to work together to achieve the full potential of bilateral relations by addressing certain issues.

Firstly, Brussels and New Delhi share a commitment towards fortifying their trade relations by reinitiating talks on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). But, certain disputable matters remain in the FTA negotiations. The establishment of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council is a welcome step for addressing any debatable issues.

Secondly, as both partners have adopted a positive outlook towards the Indo-Pacific region, a shared roadmap of growth for the region needs to be charted. Navigating strategic competition through cooperation should be prioritised.

Moreover, connectivity remains a strong area of partnership between the two democracies. The signing of the EU-India Connectivity partnership in 2021 marks a historic milestone in the bilateral relations. But deliverables towards achieving joint connectivity projects around the world are lacking.

Lastly, the EU-India partnership should not be an end in itself but should be means to all the aforementioned ends like fructifying trade relations, flourishing partnership on connectivity, climate change and security, and further strengthening people-to-people contact. Finding tangible ways for accomplishing the same through dialogues would guarantee a strong EU-India strategic partnership for these challenging times.

**[ The establishment of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council is a welcome step for addressing any debatable issues. ]**

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## Devika Makkat

### Vision of EU-India Relations

THE EU-India relationship, ever on the back burner, has finally found its place in the limelight. The EU's interest in the Indo-Pacific and its complicated relationship with China have brought India and the EU closer. Today, the central imperative that underlines India-EU relations is the common threat perception regarding China. This issue widens into a broader goal of India and the EU— the preference for a multipolar world order. India also harbours a wariness regarding a China-led Asian order, which the EU is unlikely to prefer as well. A certain level of mutual apathy has historically defined the bilateral relationship. However, today, as the world grows more interconnected beyond the realm of geography, India and the EU have discovered a helpful partner in each other. Reducing dependency on an increasingly belligerent China and improving economic resilience are common goals. Improving security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and India as a crucial alternative to diversify Europe's supply chains away from China should be the primary priority in the bilateral relationship. The EU and US pivot towards the Indo-Pacific and Russia and China's rising closeness beckons

the merging of the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic security architectures. The pandemic years signalled the dangers of supply chain dependencies on China, and since then, the war in Ukraine has demonstrated how actors like Russia can weaponise trade partners' dependencies. Engagements in strategic tech sectors, including semiconductors and green transition technologies, could provide a firm foundation for future arrangements. In the interest of both actors' strategic autonomy, the EU-India relationship needs to come out of the shadow of the India-US relationship and be de-hyphenated from the India - Russia dynamic. EU-India scholars in both regions have historically been a rare breed. China dominates scholarship on Asia in Europe, and for the longest time, studying Europe in India practically translated to studying Russia. People-to-people connectivity, boosted by independent scholarship and area studies experts that will foster a better understanding of the socio-political realities of each other and champion the bilateral relationship, needs to be built from the ground up.

As the world grows more interconnected beyond the realm of geography, India and the EU have discovered a helpful partner in each other.

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## Aditi Mukund

# Vision of EU-India Relations

INDIA and the European Union (EU) share a deep history of bilateral relations, marked by cooperation in various areas such as trade, economic security, and people to people exchanges. As we look ahead, it is essential to shape a vision for India-EU relations that emphasises two critical global priorities: gender security, and combating climate change, which form the base of my vision for India-EU Relations in 2023 and beyond. By prioritising these issues, we can foster a stronger, more inclusive, and future-proof between India and the EU.

As a researcher, I am keen on understanding how the security discourse between India and the European Union can be broadened to be more inclusive and to encompass human security, climate change, and a myriad of other non-traditional security issues. Having written extensively about gender in the Indo-Pacific, I believe that enhanced India-EU cooperation is of vital importance in ensuring peace and prosperity.

Gender security is a pressing global issue that requires concerted efforts from nations and international organisations. Gender should not be relegated to a silo, and is a cross-cutting issue that affects climate, sustainable development, technology, and a wide range of issues. India and the EU, (the latter being champions of gender equality), can collaborate to address this challenge. For example, as discussions reopen on an India-EU Free Trade Agreement, it will be crucial to mainstream gender across different areas of trade, and to enhance women's eco-

nomie empowerment. As world economies slowly recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to factor women in for inclusive growth and development.

Climate change however, is the biggest existential threat to our world, and will hinder any progress we make on growth and development. It is a crisis that requires collaborative action, and India and the EU can lead by example and work together to mitigate its impacts and promote sustainable development, whether through green transitions, climate resilience and adaptation, or renewed multilateral efforts.

Another key aspect of my vision is a collaborative mindset: I believe that strong institutional and strategic partnerships are essential to support India-EU relations. I hope to leverage my networks to foster a continuous dialogue and exchange of ideas on topics that are of relevance to India and the EU.

EU-India engagement must also bring in perspectives from the youth. Youth engagement is a cornerstone of effective policy-making: it ensures that the next generation's perspectives are represented, which will then contribute to building long-lasting cultural, economic, and political ties.

India and the EU thus have the opportunity to lead by example and contribute significantly to addressing these pressing global challenges, while enhancing bilateral ties and shaping a better future for generations to come.

**Gender security is a pressing global issue that requires concerted efforts from nations and international organisations.**

*Aditi Mukund is a Program Associate at Kubernein Initiative, a geopolitical advisory and think tank based out of India, where she leads their projects on gender and foreign policy. She runs the Women in International Relations Network Initiative on Twitter, which seeks to amplify the voices of women in international security, foreign policy, and peace-building and conflict resolution, with a focus on India and the Global South. She is a presently World Economic Forum 'Global Shaper' based in the Mumbai hub.*

*She has written for several publications, most recently for Observer Research Foundation, the Australia India Institute, Columbia's Journal of International Affairs, and 9DashLine to name a few. Her areas of interest are interdisciplinary and lie at the intersection of gender, foreign affairs, inclusive policy-making, peace and security, and climate change.*

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## Jonas Nitschke

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE White Paper of the Y20 Consultation Group on Youth and Democracy states that the age group between 15 years to 29 years consists of 34% of the population in India. Even as this number declines over time, around 24% of the Indian population will still be considered youth in 2030. With regard to this development and the focus on youth with the European Year of Youth, my vision for the EU-India relationship is that both partners become more honest with each other. The key priorities in my vision are three major pillars: a proper youth engagement platform that is not used for tokenism of the young generation and focuses on democracy and human rights, a green climate alliance for accelerated climate action and third the digital partnership that seems to be the number one priority for future engagement from the Indian side in terms of regulation and data protection.

In terms of the first pillar, I think we need to be clear that democracy does not contain more factors than just voting as India recently declared themselves as Mother of Democracy hosting the G20 engagement platforms. The limitation of free speech and the turn towards autocratic measures in certain governmental branches as well as in some member states of the EU needs to be properly addressed. If we want to be proper partners, our foreign policy in Europe needs to address concerns and opportunities more often. This also includes the inclusion

of ethnic and religious minorities in the political process. In my opinion, young people can be key actors in these processes if they are structurally included in decision-making procedures.

The second pillar in terms of climate engagement affects the EU and India. Floods and heatwaves in India and Southern Europe show that the fight against climate change is a global task. Together, we need to figure out, how we can best ally to accelerate climate action. India is a vital global player in this regard. If we look e.g. into the Indian steel sector, the production is about 6% of global production. While national steel policies set a production target of 300 million tons by 2030, the demand remains low. The decarbonisation efforts show that Europe can be an important partner in this field.

The third pillar would be the digital sector where India has not only an increase interest but also extremely high amount of human resources that want to learn more in terms of data regulation from Europe and where Europe could learn a lot in terms of efficiency from India. A lot of the digital big players as well as social media networks have been developed by Indians or in India.

I think this group of talented young people from the EU and India can lead by example to showcase how our future cooperation can and must look like. This is a huge chance and I want to contribute to move this process into the right direction.

**[ If we want to be proper partners, our foreign policy in Europe needs to address concerns and opportunities more often. ]**

*Jonas Nitschke is currently working as a Programme Manager for Democracy and Sustainable Development at the Multinational Development Policy Dialogue of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and as a co-organizer of the youth initiative to bring young leaders from Europe and Asia together at the Young Indo-Pacific Forum 2022. His research interests focus on authoritarian forms of government as well as developments in European foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. Internships and volunteering during his studies led him to Vietnam, Tanzania, Qatar, India and Singapore. In addition to his studies, Jonas is involved as a board member and in the regional program connecting Asia at the grassroots think tank Polis180, as a EU delegate for the Y20 Summit on Youth in Democracy and Governance in India, as a youth ambassador for the campaign organization ONE, as Deputy Director of the Programmes Team at Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YPPF) and participates in the European Academy of Diplomacy as a scholarship holder by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation.*

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## Magnus Obermann

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE EU and India are pole number 3 and 4 in today's multipolar world, and there is an urgent need to foster deeper EU-India ties in politics, business, science, and geopolitics. The potential of this partnership has been dormant for many decades but the imperative to work closer together has been underscored by recent events in world affairs. When Russia launched its war on Ukraine fifteen months ago, India "suddenly" emerged as an indispensable partner for the EU, pronouncing its own business, trade, political and societal interests & priorities in a quickly reshaping world order.

Therefore, managing the fallout of the Russian invasion should be the first priority. The war in Ukraine has pinpointed a cross-cutting set of issues which urgently require the attention not only of the "old world" in Europe and the "new world" in the Americas, but also India as one of the corner stones of the future multipolar world order. From international security and national defence in the Indo-Pacific, research & development of low-carbon energies, to international migration and labour market reform, there is a wide array of policy issues that the EU and India have a joint interest in addressing together.

Identifying further areas for cooperation will require some reflections. The EU and India are perhaps the planet's two most diverse and dynamic subcontinents, connected by the Eurasian landmass and a wealth of common history and cultural heritage. More than half of the world today speaks an Indo-European language, testament to millennia of mutual permeation and

exchange. This shared heritage is often not fully understood and utilized, although it could provide context and perspectives where perceptions between the EU and India diverge. This is why deeper EU-India relations should start with the recognition of each other's role in the bilateral relationship.

Based on this, a third priority for deeper EU-India relations should be a joint thought-exercise about the future world order. There can be no question that both the EU and India would benefit from upgrading their partnership in this regard. Both are not only stakeholders but shareholders of the international rules-based order, which in the last century allowed Europe to recover from war and destruction, and India to emerge from colonialism as the world's demographic and economic motor of this century. For both the EU and India, being caught between the fronts of a new Cold War would be catastrophic.

To conclude, the framework in which the case for closer EU-India relations can be made is no less grandiloquent than the challenges in and for this partnership are grand. They are not exclusively exogenous either. India and the EU often find themselves at opposite ends of global governance systems, symbolised by their membership of the G7 and BRICS, and the global North-South divide in international relations. To overcome this divide and prevent another Cold War-induced inertia at a time of profound global change, the world needs the EU and India to move closer together.

**[ The potential of this partnership has been dormant for many decades but the imperative to work closer together has been underscored by recent events in world affairs. ]**

*I am a geopolitics and strategy advisor at Global Counsel in London. In my job I advise several multinational corporates and investors across several industries on geo-economic and geopolitical trends, including the war in Ukraine, US-China relations, EU foreign policy, as well international trade and energy issues. Previously I worked at the European External Action Service in Brussels, a technology consulting firm in Munich and an archaeological institute in East Jerusalem. I have studied International Relations in Dresden and Moscow and hold a double degree in International Affairs from Peking University and the London School of Economics. However, my true passion is comparative linguistics, which is why I have been studying languages for as long as I can remember. I am fluent in Mandarin and Russian next to my native German and am currently learning Urdu and Hindi. India is a growing field of personal and professional interest to me.*

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## Meritxell Perelló

### Vision of EU-India Relations

INDIA has emerged as a key regional and global actor, leveraging its strategic position, foreign policy, human capital, and its rising private sector, particularly in technology and manufacturing. Recognizing the importance of diversifying global supply chains and production away from China, the European Union's 'De-risk' policy aligns with India's potential as a vital partner in achieving this objective and expanding EU engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

India's non- (or multi) alignment policy in its foreign affairs provides the country the flexibility to engage a wide range and opposed actors, including the United States, Russia, Iran, and the European Union, particularly with neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. This unique characteristic of India presents an opportunity for Europe to diversify its presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Recently, India, along with other countries in the region like Vietnam, has attracted international manufacturing centers seeking to move away from China. This trend facilitates the implementation of EU policies in the Indo-Pacific and provides an opportunity for increased investment in India, particularly in technology, education, and infrastructure. To ensure the success of both EU policies and the ongoing negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), they should be accompanied by additional agreements and European investments in the country.

Actions that foster a deeper understanding between governments and societies are crucial are key to build a strong and enduring EU-India relationship. People-to-people contacts, cultural exchanges, and collaboration in research, innovation,

and education will promote knowledge exchange, scientific cooperation, and capacity building between the EU and India. These initiatives will contribute to comprehend the needs of both counterparts and achieving a long-lasting and strategic relationship.

Cooperation programs and future agreements between India and the EU should extend beyond economic and trade aspects. Prioritizing programs focused on improving the welfare state, including digital connectivity, access to basic services across the country, education, infrastructure development, and addressing climate change will not only strengthen India internally but also align with European interests. I firmly believe that a stronger India will bring mutual benefits to Europe.

Although the EU won't support India's positions on Pakistan and its border conflicts, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of cooperation between them in the defense and security domain. Such collaboration can play a pivotal role in achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, securing global supply chains, and maintaining territorial integrity. Therefore, it's crucial to explore joint actions in the defense sector, such as addressing terrorism, a subject of prior discussions between both parties.

In summary, prioritizing EU-India relations will enable both parties to capitalize on the opportunities presented by India's emergence as a regional and global actor. By fostering deeper understanding, expanding cooperation beyond economics, and aligning common interests, the EU and India can establish a strong and mutually beneficial partnership in various spheres, contributing to a more prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific region.

**India, along with other countries in the region like Vietnam, has attracted international manufacturing centers seeking to move away from China.**

*Meritxell Perelló Pinto is an international relations analyst focused on the Indo-Pacific region and the EU-Asian countries relations. She's the Asia Pacific lead Analyst of Geopol21 and has experience on geopolitical research and publications, such as a Policy Brief for the T20 Leveraging India's G20 Presidency to Address the IMF's Quota Allocation Issue published for the official G20 engagement group (T20) or the publication at the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) "The South China Sea. The Indo-Pacific Dispute". Additionally, she has experience as a Consultant and has worked at the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps –ITA (NRDC-ITA) as a political advisor using the PMESII method. She has a law and political science background as well as a Master of Arts on Diplomacy, Leadership and Intelligence focused on geopolitical analysis. Through her academic and professional pursuits, Meritxell has developed a comprehensive understanding of global affairs.*

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## Rushali Saha

### Vision of EU-India Relations

IN view of the rapid transformational process underway in the international system, my vision for India-EU relations is one where the two natural partners work together to usher in a new era of multilateral cooperation. In the changing international landscape marked by the intensification of great power competition between US and China, I see India and EU committed to a multipolar world which reflects diversity and encourages cooperation. Despite India being amongst the first few Asian countries to extend diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in 1962, for long New Delhi's relations with Europe were largely based on bilateral relations with individual member countries. However, that is now rapidly changing as the bilateral relations have taken a more strategic focus as both sides have come to acknowledge each other as relevant geopolitical actors. From the EU side, I see a shift in the perception of India from a trade and development partner to a strategic partner. In New Delhi, EU is steadily rising in ranks on the list of India's significant global partner, which is not only an

important geo-economic bloc but also an important and decisive actor on the global stage.

With Indo-Pacific emerging as a theatre of strategic contestation, I believe that EU and India should work together in the region and focus on developing synergies in implementing their respective guiding documents for the region. To implement their common vision for a rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific, I strongly believe that India and EU should prioritize maritime cooperation in their bilateral interactions. Within the broader ambit of maritime cooperation, promoting the development of a sustainable blue economy should be prioritized to secure a truly free and open Indo-Pacific. I see EU as a viable partner for India in its Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, which in one of its pillars, focusses on marine economy and blue economy. To effectively leverage science, technology and innovation in blue economy it is necessary both sides to come together and facilitate exchanges between inter-sectoral experts and stakeholders.

**[ EU and India should work together in the region and focus on developing synergies in implementing their respective guiding documents for the region. ]**

*Rushali Saha is a Senior Research Associate at the Council for Strategic and Defence Research, New Delhi. She was a former research associate at the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) and a qualitative research analyst at the Diplomat Risk Intelligence. She was also selected as the South Asian Voices Visiting Fellow, 2021-22, hosted by the Stimson Centre. She holds a master's degree in Politics and International Relations from Jadavpur University and graduated summa cum laude from the same university with an undergraduate degree in political science. Rushali's research area of interest is the evolving geopolitics of South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region with a specific focus on Indian foreign policy towards the region.*

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## Fanny Sauvignon

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**I**N the current geopolitical environment, I believe that it is important for the EU and India to focus on finding common ground. Despite harbouring different world views and opinions on geopolitical events such as Russia's war on Ukraine, or global challenges such as the best path towards decarbonisation, India and the EU have a lot in common and are not a threat to each other. There is untapped cooperation potential in many areas.

In terms of priority areas for bilateral or multilateral cooperation, I would include both the digital and green transition, as well as their intersection. The EU and India have a lot to learn from one another on that front. Connectivity – in the broad sense – is important, including a just energy transition, sustainable transport networks and urbanisation, climate (including disaster resilience) and health cooperation. Connectivity cooperation can only be supported by strong knowledge exchange and people-to-people connectivity. Collaborative research and innovation, as well as the mobility of researchers, would build a solid platform for long-term scientific and technological cooperation.

In fact, for EU-India connectivity cooperation to be a success, people-to-people flows should not be limited to education, research and innovation. The EU and India have to agree on common frameworks and reach a mutual understanding of each other's business and regulatory practices. This can only be achieved through continuous dialogue at the person-to-person level. EU Member States should further encourage matchmaking among EU and Indian companies and economic players. Private

sector investment can be unlocked through understanding the needs of local businesses, integrating ecosystems and showcasing opportunities.

A domain for EU-India cooperation that I think is insufficiently highlighted is the Blue Economy, meaning the sustainable use, preservation and regeneration of marine resources. India and the EU are already engaged in a Maritime Security Dialogue including maritime domain awareness, capacity-building and joint naval activities. I believe there is an opportunity to use existing dialogue procedures to extend this cooperation to economic sectors including fisheries and aquaculture, maritime transport, tourism, renewable energy and marine biodiversity. Natural resources of the Indian Ocean face many threats and challenges, including illegal or unregulated fishing, illicit trafficking in wildlife and perhaps seabed mining in the future. The EU and India could lead a powerful regional coalition to tackle such issues collaboratively, perhaps in cooperation with the World Bank.

In the wider multilateral context, I am curious to see the outcome of G20 sessions, in which India will strive to bring together a set of very divided countries. In general, I think the G20 is a major platform for the EU and India to work together on peace and governance, Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. The fact that emerging countries are setting the tone at the G20 from 2022 to 2024 (Indonesia, India, Brazil) will certainly provide interesting policy outcomes and means of cooperation.

**[ For EU-India connectivity cooperation to be a success, people-to-people flows should not be limited to education, research and innovation. ]**

*Fanny Sauvignon is a Research Assistant in the Foreign Policy Unit at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. Her current research covers global EU connectivity engagement across sectors, with countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific and across the so-called 'Global South'. She is a core member of research teams on EU-India and EU-Japan cooperation. Key personal interests include the climate-development nexus and how it relates to international relations, human rights, corporate governance, technology and maritime affairs. Prior to joining CEPS, Fanny spent around five years in East Asia, including South Korea and Singapore. She has experience working in the private renewable energy sector and international development NGOs specialising in vocational education. She holds a Master's in Management from ESSEC Business School and an MA in International Cooperation from the Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies (SNU-GSIS).*

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## Avinash Singh

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**T**HE EU and India with their unique capabilities have the potential to shape the future of the world. In the current geopolitical environment where power shifts are happening, and countries are trying to balance dependencies, I see opportunities for the EU and India to exchange and collaborate more: especially to solve the wicked problems of the present which are still being viewed as the problem of the future such as climate change.

To start with, I believe, there is a need for better alignment between the EU and India on the matters of international conflicts. While the EU is alarmed by conflicts at its doorstep, India has found opportunities to leverage the current market scenario for economic growth. A shared voice and negotiated position between the EU and India on matters of international conflict can set the right examples for foreign policy and international diplomacy. This will remove the distraction and bring the stability the world needs to focus on existential issues such as climate change.

The EU, with its political will and economic capacities and India, with its youthful energy, and innovation capabilities (also simply because almost one-fifth of the world population lives there) can exchange more on issues of international importance such as climate change. I believe intensified research and innovation cooperation between the EU and India can fasten the developments necessary to tackle the challenges being brought about by climate change. Whether it is about climate adaptation or mitigation, the EU and India still have time, opportunities and

resources to change the course of where the world is headed, which does not seem very utopian.

While the above two topics cover blanket cooperation opportunities which can crisscross sectors such as academia, technology, business and investments, etc. I would take this opportunity to highlight one more which I believe is of higher importance. In my opinion, I see India and the EU as two very far-away worlds. If we want these two countries to collaborate and cooperate more- it has to start from a grassroots level. The people of the EU and India need to connect and build a shared understanding of the world. This topic reminds me of how a 36-year-old mobility and exchange program, Erasmus is still alive and the positive impacts it has brought to the cooperation efforts within Europe. I am a strong believer in the power of the youth. India and the EU must prioritise exchange between the youth if we envision greater cooperation today or in the future.

Lastly, I see cooperation opportunities for a better quality of life. The EU and India can collaborate to shape the international narrative through their policy influence and collective voice. Issues such as immigration, poverty, access to health, and gender-related discrimination are still on the rise in most parts of the world. They are the 'world problems', not the 'third world problems' and need to be addressed on an immediate basis.

It is my wish that together, the EU and India can set the course for changes needed to make this world a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable place for humans to live and thrive collectively.

**India and the EU as two very far-away worlds.  
If we want these two countries to collaborate and  
cooperate more- it has to start from a grassroots level.**

*Avinash is a Design Thinking Practitioner at HPI School of Design Thinking in Potsdam, Germany. He studied Computer Science and Engineering for his bachelor's, Public Management for his master's and basic and advanced design thinking course at the HPI-D school. Over the last 8 years, Avinash led various sustainability initiatives through a nonprofit organisation in India and a hospitality brand in the Maldives. Together with the HPI D school team, Avinash contributes to an EU-wide digital education program. Back in India, Avinash has co-founded a non-profit to reimagine how green livelihoods, with women and youth at the core of it, can help adapt to climate change and build resilient mountain communities which are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.*



## Hannah Vanquaille

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**S**TRENGTHENING EU-India relations is becoming increasingly important: currently the EU is India's 3rd largest trading partner and India is the EU's 10th largest trading partner, well behind countries such as China. However, with the current rising tensions with China across the global geopolitical landscape and the need for more resilient and diversified supply chains, clearly demonstrated through the aftermath of the covid19 lockdowns, the EU-India trade and wider economic cooperation will only continue to gain relevance. Moreover, India is a growing power, with GDP growth this year estimated at 7%, well above the EU GDP growth average. Being fully aware of this growth potential, the US exhibits a strategic reorientation towards the Indo-Pacific with the IPEF established last year and the EU should not fall behind. Apart from a fruitful economic collaboration, the EU and India can also greatly benefit from technology sharing and a joint striving towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

What should be prioritized within this bilateral relationship is to build the EU's capacity to engage with their Indian partners and vice versa. A domain of cooperation which encompasses all other domains and is currently not being addressed enough in my opinion, is the people-to-people domain of cultural understanding, consisting of cultural training, continued dialogue and general soft skills. These activities serve as catalysts to the effectiveness of all other cooperation domains such as economic cooperation in the broad sense, trade, the focus on value chains,

the move towards the SDGs and other environmental and social challenges. If both the EU and India truly wish to establish a trust-based, long-term partnership, they must invest in deepening their understanding of how the other party thinks, operates and plans in a comprehensive manner.

From the IPEF special negotiation round held in Delhi in February this year, it is clear that the Indian government wants to focus on an early harvest of mutually beneficial deliverables. The EU is known for wanting a more long-term relationship and focuses on an alignment of values to forge partnerships with 'like-minded' partners. My advice would be to focus on arguably less sensitive areas first, such as investment protection agreements, trade and the establishment of resilient value chains which are crucial now that a host of countries worldwide are decreasing their reliance on China as major manufacturing partner. More sensitive areas such as environmental initiatives and the fostering of societal equality should naturally remain on the agenda, but should be regarded as more long-term initiatives in order to avoid being perceived as so-called 'neo-colonial' efforts of the West trying to force their value system upon a country such as India, which has a quite different traditional value system, being majorly boosted and promoted by the current Indian government. Pursuing dialogue in a timely manner and focusing on less sensitive areas first within the EU-India bilateral relations would be a way to gain trust and establish a base for strong relations and societal improvements in the future.

**What should be prioritized within this bilateral relationship is to build the EU's capacity to engage with their Indian partners and vice versa.**

*Hannah Vanquaille originally from Belgium, obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business Engineering at the University of Ghent, in her home country, followed by a Double Master's Degree in Management and Innovation at HEC Paris and Esade Business School in Barcelona, respectively. She gained early professional experience across various European countries in the fields of management consulting, supply chain and tech venture building and founded a community to boost self-confidence in women, a topic close to her heart, after witnessing how important this factor is for women's success in the workplace. Her discovery of the wealth of Indian textiles led Hannah to found Saheli Stories, a new brand showcasing womenswear handcrafted by Indian artisans. She aims to increase the artisans' visibility and propel the 'Made in India' label. Furthermore, upon realizing that the perception of India and the EU often still lacks nuance, she now wants to actively contribute to a greater degree of understanding between both parties.*



## Marlene Willimek

### Vision of EU-India Relations

**O**VER the past 60 years, EU-India Relations have gone through many ups and downs, but have consistently proven their resilience to internal tensions and outside pressure. What started with a merely pragmatic cooperation in economic affairs has since then grown into a deep and fruitful friendship on all levels, from governments to civil society. As the two largest democracies, India and the EU contain more than a quarter of the world's population which puts an immense responsibility on their leadership. However, the bilateral relations remain at a level below their incredible potential. In many areas, relations between the two seem to follow patterns of the past. This not only concerns mutual perceptions, but also impacts respective approaches to key collaboration areas such as climate change and digital development.

Giving young Indians and Europeans the unique chance to deliberate together on these burning global issues does not only provide huge potential for future shared leadership, but is also necessary to make our relationship a modern and innovative one that sets an example for other international partnerships.

As both countries are revisiting their position in the global system, it becomes more and more clear that their trajectories are irreversibly intertwined. Europe and India need each other to achieve their economic, political and environmental goals. But also the world needs EU-India relations. Particularly to overcome the challenges of global conflict, a fragile economic recovery and climate change.

The two regions pursue constant dialogue and cooperation in almost every sector that affects the world and our people. Among which Health is a key concern and priority for both democracies. In a world post the COVID-19 pandemic, I believe India and the EU together can contribute significantly to building Global Health preparedness.

While India is a major producer of generic drugs and vaccines, the EU has the expertise and resources to support their development and distribution. The two sides can work together to increase production capacity and ensure equal access to vaccines around the world.

My vision for the relationship is a permanent body of India - EU Cooperation for Global Health - which would provide a platform for regular exchange of best practices related to healthcare. The EU and India can also partner on telemedicine initiatives and integration of AI in healthcare systems to help build more global resilience.

Beyond health, I suggest making culture the next biggest points on our common agenda. We need to boost our people-to-people ties with deepened exchanges between all levels of civil society. Which means connecting our people with their common love for food, sports, movies, and with student exchange programs and cultural festivals. In the past, one of the most important reasons for my growing fascination for India's role in the international system was certainly the opportunity to learn so much about its culture and values from my Indian friends and fellow students.

In order to achieve our common goals and to strive together, we therefore need to deepen our mutual understanding, respect each other's opportunities and ways of seeing the world. If we concentrate on the similarities rather than the differences, on what unites us rather than what divides us, we can build a sustainable partnership. Our advantage as young aspiring leaders is that we have the visions and the capacity to draw the roadmap to make EU-India relations modern and innovative.

I am very honored to be a part of this promising initiative and am looking forward to collaborating with all of you on today's most crucial challenges. Let's not wait and start working!

**Europe and India need each other to achieve their economic, political and environmental goals.**

*Marlene currently lives in London, completing the final year of her Dual Master's Degree in International Relations at Sciences Po Paris and the London School of Economics and Political Science. During her Bachelor's Degree in European Studies, Marlene spent semesters abroad in Canada and France and worked for the German Council of Foreign Relations. Her research today focuses on Diplomacy, Leadership and Political Psychology in the European context which she would also like to make the core of her PhD project. As Director of EU Affairs for a youth-led international think tank and with work experience at the International Crisis Group and in political education, she is passionate about fostering dialogue across borders and about empowering young minds to become meaningful change-makers. Marlene is now looking forward to starting her traineeship at the European External Action Service and to working with all our participants on the crucial challenge of strengthening EU-India relations in today's complex world.*