

EU-India Joint Press communiqué

Marseille, 29 September 2008

The ninth European Union - India Summit was held in Marseille on 29 September 2008. The EU was represented by President Nicolas Sarkozy, in his capacity as President of the European Council; by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission; by Dr Javier Solana, High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy; by Mr Bernard Kouchner, French Foreign Minister; by Mme Anne Marie Idrac, French Secretary of State for external trade and by Mr Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade. The Republic of India was represented by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh; Shri Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce and Industry; and Shri M. K. Narayanan, National Security Adviser.

The Leaders discussed regional situations, global issues and the strengthening of EU-India relations.

I. Regional and international issues

The EU and India, as the two largest democracies in the world and global actors in a multipolar world, reiterated their commitment to their strategic partnership. The Partnership is firmly based on shared values of democracy and human rights, fundamental freedoms (including religious), pluralism, rule of law and multilateralism.

The EU and India are committed to promoting international peace and security. They reaffirmed their strong and continued commitment to the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts to build a democratic and pluralistic society. They agreed that strengthening Afghan security and military forces would help in the enforcement of the rule of law. They further agreed to assist the Afghan authorities in ensuring free and fair elections in the period ahead. They recalled their commitments taken at the Paris International Conference in Support of Afghanistan. They expressed deep concern at the continued deterioration of security conditions in areas bordering Afghanistan, and reiterated that the situation required sustained action. They noted the new commitments of the Government of Pakistan to address regional and international concerns.

They expressed their serious concern over the Iranian nuclear issue and called on Iran to take steps to re-establish confidence in the nature of its nuclear programme, as required by the IAEA Board of Governors. They expressed their support for the current diplomatic efforts and steps in order to find a satisfactory solution to the nuclear issue.

They discussed the situation in Burma/Myanmar, agreed on the need to strengthen efforts towards national reconciliation and reaffirmed the need for an inclusive dialogue, including with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Myanmar ethnic groups, to progress towards democracy.

The Leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose. The EU and India agreed to work actively towards a swift finalisation of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN. At the bilateral level, the two sides expressed commitment to continuing their cooperation on counter-terrorism and early formalisation of cooperation between Europol and Indian agencies.

II. Global issues

Food security

The Leaders exchanged views on how best to deal with rising commodity prices, which pose a serious challenge to stable growth and further increases in global inequalities. They recalled that, in the short-term, actions should be taken to address and mitigate the effects of the food price shocks on the most vulnerable groups of population. They agreed that the international community needs a fully coordinated response and a comprehensive strategy to tackle this issue in an integrated manner, from short to medium and long term. They also declared that a high level of priority should be given to rural development policies, in particular with a view to enhancing agricultural productivity. Finally they called for a global partnership on food and agriculture.

Climate change and energy

The Leaders stressed that climate change is one of the great challenges of our time and decided that clean and sustainable development should be a joint priority area of EU-India cooperation. They called for tangible action in this field, involving all stakeholders. They also reiterated their determination to step up the pace of negotiations in order to reach, by the end of 2009, an ambitious and comprehensive agreed outcome, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as set out in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Recognising each other's efforts to tackle climate change, as demonstrated by India's National Action Plan on Climate Change and the EU's emissions reduction targets of at least 20% by 2020 (and 30% in the event of a satisfactory global agreement), the Leaders agreed to work towards a long term cooperative action including a long term global goal. The EU and India also reaffirmed their commitment to promote energy security and energy efficiency as a key to stable and sustainable development.

Global economy

EU and India discussed the pressing need to address the impact of current problems in the international financial sector and to adjust global economic imbalances through concerted action from leaders of the world economy. The Leaders took note of the current state of play of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations and reaffirmed their willingness to conclude a comprehensive and balanced trade agreement which would bring substantial gains to the world economy and in particular to developing countries.

III. EU-India bilateral relations

Developments in Europe and India

The Leaders discussed developments in the EU and in India. Regarding Europe, the EU focused on the Lisbon Treaty and the recent developments in EU's migration policy, in particular the proposed Pact on Migration and Asylum, the initiatives taken to facilitate the employment in the EU of skilled migrants. India shared its assessment of India's economy and the opportunities it offers; the challenges faced in areas such as infrastructure, energy, agriculture and human resource development in its endeavour for inclusive growth.

Developments in EU-India cooperation

The EU and India agreed to further develop their political exchanges and cooperation.

The EU and India recognised the importance of the early conclusion of the broad based trade and investment agreement, to fulfil the expectations of businesses on both sides and to further strengthen the bilateral economic relationship. Towards this end, the EU and India endeavour to achieve a balanced and ambitious outcome. While welcoming the signature of a horizontal civil aviation agreement, they encouraged the conclusion of a maritime transport agreement that is mutually beneficial.

They also noted that joint cooperation in the framework of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) Agreement remains a priority that will be further enhanced through the conclusion of a bilateral agreement between Euratom and India in the field of fusion energy research, for which negotiations are being finalised.

The EU and India announced their intention to promote dialogue and cooperation in education and culture. In the field of education, areas identified for this purpose include vocational training, technical education, recognition of qualifications, the modernisation of higher education with emphasis on quality, transparency and partnership, and the promotion of languages.

In the field of culture, particular focus will be placed on the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and multilingualism, including through mutual TV broadcasts.

Joint declarations will be signed between the Commission and India to implement the above objectives.

The EU and India welcomed efforts to increase people to people exchanges.

The EU and India approved the following:

- a revised Joint Action Plan extending the strategic partnership of 2005 to new areas;
- a joint work programme on energy, clean development and climate change;
- horizontal civil aviation agreement;
- the launch of a European Business and Technology Center in India, which shall support business-to-business and research co-operation between the EU and India.