



EU and India convene high-level regional experts to discuss how to combat exploitation of online spaces by extremist actors

- 2-day event brings together experts from EU, India, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka; Team Europe (Austria, Italy, Croatia, Estonia, Spain, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, France and Romania) to participate

New Delhi, 19th August 2024 — The European Union (EU), in collaboration with organising partner Global Counter-Terrorism Council (GCTC) and with India's Ministry of External Affairs as a strategic partner, will be hosting a crucial regional conference on August 21-22, to discuss the current and emerging threats in online radicalisation and find ways to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by extremist and terrorist actors.

The two-day EU-India Track 1.5 Conference in New Delhi brings together experts, policymakers, academia and law enforcement officials from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka) and Europe, who are at the forefront of the fight against digital extremism.

The conference aims to enhance counter-terrorism dialogues and partnerships in the region, consistent with the [EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), which foresees a deeper and stronger engagement with partners which share common goals and face common challenges. Expected outcomes include exploring strategies to address the complex challenges posed by the intersection of technology and terrorism, while identifying possible areas of collaboration between the EU, India and the wider region to counter violent extremism in the digital sphere.

The event is part of a series of ongoing counterterrorism engagement between the EU and India, building on recent activities in the country held under the EU project Enhancing Security Cooperation In and With Asia (ESIWA), which have previously included topics such as combating drone terrorism, cybersecurity, misinformation and disinformation, and women peace and security.

On the Indian side, the conference will bring together senior officials and experts in security and strategic studies from institutions such as the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Indian Army and the Indian Police, to name a few.

In the spirit of #TeamEurope, a diverse group of top security practitioners from European Union institutions, EU Member States (**Austria, Italy, Croatia, Estonia, Spain, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, France and Romania**), and key agencies such as European Border & Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and European Counter Terrorism Centre (Europol) will come together to engage in peer-to-peer exchange.

H.E. Hervé Delphin, Ambassador of the European Union to India, said: "Terrorism knows no boundaries and has found with online digital activities a new field of propagation. Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise among friends and partners is vital to keep track and counter





online radicalisation while ensuring the right balance between security measures and citizens' fundamental rights. As two of the world's largest democracies and global security actors, we are happy to host this key conference alongside India, with whom we have a strong ongoing counter-terrorism dialogue and cooperation."

"The EU has been at the forefront of regulating social media companies and internet providers with a strong focus on human rights. We are happy to share our experiences, regulatory frameworks, and enforcement mechanisms. Through collaborating with India and countries in the region, we can enhance our collective capacity to combat transnational terrorist networks, share best practices in intelligence gathering and analysis, and develop effective strategies to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism." H.E. Delphin added.

KD Dewal, Joint Secretary (Counter Terrorism), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, said: "India has a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and stands ready to engage as a collaborative partner in addressing pressing terrorism challenges, especially given its experiences with cross-border terrorism and extremism. It is important to summon the political will to unhesitatingly combat terrorism, not permit terrorism to be justified or terrorists to be glorified. We must not countenance double standards in countering terrorism."

Further he stated, "The recently held meeting of India-EU Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism was an opportunity to continue and enhance cooperation on this important element of the EU-India Strategic Partnership. The EU and India strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised the need for strengthening international cooperation in dealing with counterterrorism challenges. In this context, they agreed that cooperation in multilateral fora such as the UN and Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) remains crucial."

The European Union's proactive measures in combating these threats will be a focal point of discussion. The EU's Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation implemented in April 2021, the Digital Services Act (DSA) of February 2024, and the recently established EU platform on illicit content online (PERCI) by Europol, will be highlighted as key steps in regulating online spaces to curb the spread of terrorist content.

EU-India cooperation in Counter-Terrorism:

In February 2022, the EU and India held their first joint workshop on terrorism content online, building on the Counterterrorism Dialogue initiated in November 2020. This online workshop addressed the pressing issue of terrorist exploitation of the internet, while exploring innovative prevention campaigns and interventions. Since then, the EU-India Counterterrorism Dialogue has continued to prioritise the regulation of Terrorist Content Online, elevating it to one of the top two main priorities during the March 2022 discussion. This critical topic was revisited and further explored during the [2024 EU India Counterterrorism Dialogue](#), demonstrating the shared commitment of both regions to addressing this evolving threat.

About GCTC:

Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC) is a registered non-profit international think tank initiated by public spirited individuals to awaken further issues of national interest and global conscience about terrorism as a threat to humanity, human security etc. Members belonging to different faculties





& background like senior bureaucrats, academicians, officers from the armed forces & paramilitary services, distinguished diplomats, leading researchers, media analysts, parliamentarians, professionals, corporate heads, human rights groups provide support and regularly contribute with the aim to deliberate on the root causes of global terrorism and to present effective solutions to the problems faced by society and the government.

About the EU's ESIWA project:

ESIWA works to enhance the EU's security and defence cooperation with the Indo-Pacific in four thematic areas: counterterrorism and preventing violent extremism, crisis management, cyber security, and maritime security. The project is co-funded by the European Union, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. ESIWA is co-implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Expertise France.

