

# Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation



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# Contents



<b>Introduction: the scope for security cooperation between the EU and India .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Samir Saran, Eva Pejsova, Gareth Price</i>	
<b>West Asia .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Samir Saran and Kanchi Gupta</i>	
<b>Maritime Security .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Eva Pejsova and John-Joseph Wilkins</i>	
<b>Counter-terrorism and Radicalisation .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Gareth Price</i>	
<b>Appendix: EU-India declarations on counter-terrorism .....</b>	<b>41</b>
September 2005: Political Declaration on the India-EU Strategic Partnership .....	41
December 2010: EU-India Joint Declaration on International Terrorism .....	41
30 March 2016: India-EU Joint Declaration on the Fight Against Terrorism.....	43
<b>Biographies.....</b>	<b>44</b>

# Introduction: the scope for security cooperation between the EU and India

SAMIR SARAN, EVA PEJSOVA, GARETH PRICE

There is a clear imperative for greater understanding between the EU and India on a range of security concerns. Until recently, this imperative has not been obvious. India's focus has been inward-looking, predicated on the need for rapid economic growth. However, since 2014, the BJP-led government in Delhi has demonstrated a much greater emphasis on foreign policy; in 2015 the foreign secretary, Dr. S Jaishankar, argued that "India wants to be a leading power rather than just a balancing Power". And while the EU has faced a range of difficulties in recent years – among them, economic challenges since the 2008 financial crisis, terror incidents across Europe, and a surge in refugee inflows – these have increased its focus on constructing both an outward- and forward-looking foreign policy.

The European Union and India have been engaged in a strategic partnership since 2004. The 13<sup>th</sup> Summit, held in March 2016, directly advocated advancing cooperation in the field of security. Counter-terrorism had been an element of EU-India engagement since the strategic partnership was agreed. Other thematic issues raised at the 2016 summit as subjects for dialogue and engagement included cyber-security, counter-piracy and non-proliferation. In terms of regional concerns, the EU and India stressed their shared concerns or interests regarding a number of countries or regions, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, North Korea, Iran and West Asia/the Middle East – in particular Syria.

## Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation

Chatham House, the EU Institute for Security Studies, and the Observer Research Foundation held a closed-door workshop and a public conference on 'Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation' in September 2016 exploring the scope for engagement on three of these issues: West Asia, maritime security, and counter-terrorism and radicalisation. The workshop discussed the potential contours of EU-India collaboration, as well as the hurdles to their enhanced engagement. Each of the issues is of paramount concern both to India and the EU, but each of these differ in terms of existing cooperation and the underlying interests. The degree of cooperation feasible will be contingent both on political will and capacity, but for each issue we established a range of potential options for collaboration, ranging from specific and granular opportunities for shared learning, to more aspirational dialogues seeking to establish shared frameworks for collaboration in dealing with such challenges.

West Asia has historically been a bridge connecting Europe with Asia. As their shared periphery, developments in the region – including conflict – have a severe effect on both the EU and India. Both rely on petro-chemical imports from the region; the EU is suffering from inflows of refugees escaping conflict; millions of Indians work in West Asia. The current economic downturn is affecting the livelihood of many Indians. And India has had to evacuate its own (and other South Asian) nationals from, inter alia, Yemen, Lebanon and Libya in recent years.

India's engagement with West Asia is self-evidently on an upward trend highlighted, for instance, by the recent decision to make the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi the guest of honour at India's 2017 Republic Day celebration. Yet neither the EU nor India conceive of each other as primary interlocutors in relation to West Asia. This may reflect both the geo-political reality and the staid policy approaches on both sides. The interests of the EU and India are more likely to be converging than currently framed and understood. Initiating dialogue now, to understand better the two sides' interests in West Asia, will pay dividends in the years to come when close collaboration will be inevitable.

There is significant scope for better cooperation on the issue of maritime security. The Indian Ocean is the venue for the EU's most successful military mission to date – EU NAVFOR or Operation Atalanta – coordinating anti-piracy operations off Somalia with a host of countries including India. EU engagement in the Indian Ocean also includes EUCAP Nestor, the financing of the Indian Ocean Commission and the EU-CRIMARIO project intended to improve maritime security in the entire region. At the very least, maritime security offers scope for enhanced dialogue; at the more aspirational level, the EU and India – sharing interests in maintaining open sea lanes of cooperation – could work together promoting the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as the basis of maritime governance. Further, while Operation Atalanta has proved successful thus far, piracy will remain a threat until the root causes – on land rather than at sea – have been tackled. Both sides have a palpable interest in stabilising Somalia and other fragile coastal geographies.

The emergence of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean has provided a unique opportunity for navies from within and outside the region to join forces in addressing a concrete security threat. There is a need to seize the momentum and build upon this positive experience to foster operational cooperation also in other maritime security domains or in combatting sea-borne crime such as smuggling and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing. The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is the primary multilateral forum promoting stability and rules-based conduct in the Indian Ocean. The experience, interests and presence of the EU in the Indian Ocean could make it a valuable dialogue partner of IORA.

Counter-terrorism has been a subject for EU-India discussion since the strategic partnership was forged. The joint declaration at the 2016 summit highlighted the determination of the EU and India to work together to tackle terrorism. Cooperation is extant in areas such as financing terrorism, designating groups as terrorist and working together in the UN system.

Yet there is scope to deepen cooperation. The EU is committed to helping India's Smart Cities initiative. This offers great scope to focus on resilience building – whether in relation to disasters or terrorist attacks. Radicalisation is another area in which the EU and India could work together. For the EU, domestic Islamic militancy is a relatively new phenomenon – until the attacks in Europe of 2004 and 2005, it had been seen as a foreign policy concern rather than an internal European problem. Despite having a Muslim population of more than 180 million, Indian Muslims have been relatively immune from radicalisation, certainly in contrast to European Muslim populations. Understanding the causes of this could offer insights to the EU. At the same time, there are growing incidents of radicalisation in India, though from a low base. Are there lessons from European understanding of the process of radicalisation – notably online radicalisation – for India? Existing cooperation on cyber-security could feed into this shared understanding. Countering violent extremism online will remain a common challenge for all liberal societies and working together to share, learn, and discover technologies and methods to respond to this contemporary threat must be part of the agenda.

The EU and India are only now beginning to appreciate the importance of the other, when engaging with global security challenges. The EU brings a range of experiences to the table that are relevant for India. The EU recognises that today's security challenges require a full spectrum approach – pure military solutions rarely work. The EU played a pivotal role in resolving the Iranian nuclear issue. And while India and the EU may approach issues – such as the challenges facing West Asia – from different standpoints, initiating dialogues and conversations to better understand these different perspectives now will prove beneficial, as India's global role becomes more apparent.

### Recommendations

#### West Asia

- The EU and India have clear-cut complementarities in regard to peace-keeping operations, under the auspices of the United Nations. There is scope for engagement both at a Track 1.5 and a Track 2 level, to explore concrete options for collaboration.
- India has proven highly competent in evacuating its own and third-country nationals from West Asia. The EU and India should establish an official level working group to share best practices on evacuation and explore avenues for a cohesive approach.
- The EU and India should initiate an annual Track 2 dialogue to deepen understanding of synergies and divergences in their interests and approaches, and suggest common solutions to mitigate and manage the conflicts in West Asia.
- Other potential areas for greater collaboration would be the development of energy infrastructure projects, greater coordination with respect to the developments in Afghanistan (where both the EU and India have similar objectives), and third-party mediation, for instance between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

#### Maritime security

- The EU and India should establish a regular high-level, official dialogue on maritime security within the Strategic Partnership to build trust and explore avenues for further cooperation. This could include Search and Rescue/Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (SAR/HADR) operations, tackling sea-borne crime such as smuggling or illegal fishing, and potentially joint maritime or evacuation exercises.
- To improve maritime security in the Indian Ocean, the EU and India should cooperate on promoting Maritime Situational Awareness – building human and technological capacity on information sharing, maritime surveillance, search and rescue missions, and data collection – bilaterally, as well as with other countries of the Indian Ocean rim.
- There is a need for a comprehensive, multilateral maritime security and governance regime for the Indian Ocean. Existing regional organisation, with IORA at the forefront, should include discussions on maritime security in view of building such a regime in the future. Given its experience, sustained interest, presence, and involvement in the Indian Ocean, the EU could become a valuable Dialogue Partner of IORA.
- There is scope for enhanced joint scientific research on maritime issues, potentially under the remit of the EU's Blue Growth initiative; a long-term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors.

## **Counter-terrorism and radicalisation**

- The EU and India have agreed to share experiences of their response to terrorist attacks. Under its support for India's 'Smart Cities' initiative, building urban resilience to terrorist attacks and other disasters, should be a primary objective.
- There is scope for enhanced understanding of why India has proven to be relatively immune from radicalisation. In addition, there is scope for the EU to engage with India on its learnings regarding the causes of radicalisation. In particular, online radicalisation is a growing challenge, and India's fast-growing number of smartphone users provides cause for concern; India has the third highest number of Internet users in the world. Similarly, there is scope for greater understanding and collaboration between the EU and Indian approach towards countering violent extremism.
- The EU and India should launch a dialogue to discuss approaches to rogue states, and terrorist groups and individuals. EU and India must develop a shared understanding and basis for identifying such 'states', the process and basis for sanctioning them and thereafter measuring the effectiveness of targeted sanctions.
- There is scope for greater functional cooperation: this could involve developing common situational awareness and identification of terrorist groups and coordinating measures aimed at preventing terror financing and the movement of terrorists. Furthermore there is at the minimum, potential for the exchange of best practices including those pertaining to deployment of new technology and tools.



# West Asia

SAMIR SARAN AND KANCHI GUPTA

## Introduction

Catalysed by the social and domestic uprisings of 2011, the West Asian and North African region is dotted with fragile and failed states such as Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya. Weakened state institutions and the capture of large swathes of territories by extremists like Islamic State (IS) have allowed such groups to expand their power and influence in the region. Geo-strategic competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran has added another dimension, and religious and ethnic exclusion has also fueled the conflict in these states.

Iran's resurgence as a regional actor and its involvement—whether real or perceived—in the conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen has heightened Gulf Arab fears and led them to adopt more assertive regional policies. Ongoing tensions between the two continue to persist and threaten to extend into new arenas.

As the fallout of these conflicts expands beyond the region, West Asia–North Africa (WANA) or the Middle East–North Africa (MENA) as the region is referred to, is now the frontier for global security. For Europe and South Asia, this region is a common periphery. The expanse from South Asia to Europe in particular will feel the impact of any turmoil here. European and Asian security will thus be dependent on how this common periphery and common security challenge is managed by actors in Europe, particularly the EU and India, individually and collectively.

India and the EU member states share key concerns and competencies that can create a lasting foundation for the establishment of a cooperative framework between the two in managing the current turmoil, establishing sustainable stability and working towards the

economic integration of the region and its people with the neighbourhood. The prospects and trajectory of cooperation will, however, be contingent on two overarching factors.

First, the scope of India's reinvented West Asia policy will determine the level and modes of India-EU cooperation in the region. India's engagement with the region is a departure from its previous reticence and showcases a renewed resolve to carve a cogent and effective WANA policy. The contours of New Delhi's regional policy are commensurate with its expanding geo-economic engagements and geopolitical compulsions. This new determination is also evident in New Delhi's vision of Indian foreign policy as aspiring to be a "leading power", rather than just a "balancing power".<sup>1</sup>

India's assertive foreign policy has sought to follow this mandate with energized and, in some cases, re-energised engagement with the neighborhood nations, Japan, France, Germany, Israel, UK and the US. New Delhi has also displayed considerable dexterity in engaging the West Asian states. New Delhi's vision of its role in West Asia, on account of its growing stakes, dynamic regional developments, shifts in Washington's regional policies and growing Chinese and Russian involvement will underline the tenets of cooperation with the EU.

Second, collective management of West Asian challenges will depend on a mutual recognition of each other as important partners in the region. A European pivot to Asia should be ensconced in EU's realisation of the urgency of shifting focus to the east. Building partnerships with the emerging economies of Asia will help Europe keep its periphery stable. As long as Europe continues to view developments in Asia from the prism of the Atlantic order,<sup>2</sup> it will fail to create space for itself as a strategic actor in a region of compelling interest to its member states.

In a speech in 2014, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini reiterated the strategic significance of pivoting to Asia. She stated that it is an "area that's challenging for us in terms of security threats—major security expenditures, territorial disputes, historical animosities, and lack of a regional security architecture. The risk of a major threat to global stability coming from (Asia) puts the issue high on the agenda".<sup>3</sup>

One overarching weakness in the India and EU partnership is the lack of direct communication. Both must develop direct channels for exchanging information that shape

1 Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, "IISS Fullerton Lecture by Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary in Singapore" (speech presented at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Singapore, July 20, 2015).

2 Samir Saran and Britta Peterson, "Beyond #Brexit: What Ails the European Union", ORF Special Report, July 2016, <http://www.orfonline.org/research/beyond-brexit-what-ails-the-european-union/>

3 Federica Mogherini, "Speech at the German Marshall Fund", September 10, 2014, <http://www.gmfus.org/archives/brussels-launch-of-transatlantictrends-2014-with-federica-mogherini/>

the understanding of each other. Much analysis rests on secondary and third-party sources that complicate the understanding of the worldviews and the nature of decision-making in New Delhi and Brussels. Direct and forthright communication is a prerequisite if the two are to work together on this common neighbourhood.

Another cleavage between Indian and European worldviews is the contrived distance between the EU as a bloc and individual European actors. EU's agency cannot be uncovered without acknowledging the capacity of its individual constituents. Since individual member states choose to act through the EU,<sup>4</sup> the Union's role as a security actor cannot be envisioned without accounting for the diplomatic and strategic capacities of individual member states. It is imperative to move beyond this distinction, which could otherwise complicate discussions or actions in any dialogue between New Delhi and Brussels.

Within this broader rubric, any cooperative arrangement must take into account three aspects that concern both EU and India. The first section of the paper outlines the importance of stability in the West Asian region for energy security in India and the EU. Examining India and EU member states' dependence on hydrocarbons and the developments in the region, this section suggests avenues for cooperation between the two to strengthen their oil supply networks. The next section briefly explores Jihadist ideologies that have allowed it to become a global phenomenon. Examining the challenges presented by the rise of foreign fighters in West Asia, the growth of online radicalisation and 'lone-wolf attacks', this section presents recommendations with respect to the security dimension of India-EU relations.

The last section looks at the economic and socio-political challenges posed to EU and India by crises in West Asia. Developments in the region have consequences for India's large migrant population and New Delhi is looking at the mounting cost of ensuring their security and repatriation. Similarly, the influx of refugees into EU has presented huge challenges to the social, economic and political fabrics of individual member states. This section outlines some measures that India and EU can jointly take to support conflict resolution, peacekeeping and post-conflict assistance in the region.

### Energy Security

The West Asian region remains the world's most important source of hydrocarbons, accounting for 33 percent of global oil production and 17.4 percent of natural gas production. The region holds 48 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, of which Saudi

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4 Samir Saran, "The European Union as a Security Actor: View From India", Bundeszentrale Fuer Politische Bildung, May 3, 2015, <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/asien/indien/190264/the-european-union-as-a-security-actor#footnode4-4>

Arabia and Iraq together account for 24 percent. In 2015, the two countries also accounted for 18 percent of the region's total oil production. Of the 43 percent of proven gas reserves in West Asia, Iran and Qatar account for 31 percent of reserves and 11 percent of West Asian production.<sup>5</sup> Stability in these countries, therefore, is critical to global energy security.

As a country largely dependent on energy imports, India recorded a 5.2-percent increase in its energy consumption in 2015. West Asian states supplied 59 percent of oil imports and over 90 percent of gas imports.<sup>6</sup>

As of 2014, 88 percent of EU's overall crude oil requirements were met by imports. In 2015, EU imported 30 percent of its crude oil from Russia, 16 percent from the Middle East, and 8 percent from North Africa. The EU also imports 65 percent of its natural gas requirements, with Russia, Norway, Algeria, Qatar and Libya, being the largest suppliers.<sup>7</sup> Uncertainty in energy supply to some EU member states is much higher due to geographical factors. Landlocked countries like Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary are entirely dependent on oil and gas supplies through pipelines from Russia and Central Asian Republics. Certain countries also rely excessively on a few sources of hydrocarbons. For instance, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Estonia import more than 90 percent of their gas from Russia.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the risks associated with Russian supplies through Ukraine, those from Iraq, Libya and Algeria are also prone to disruptions. The latter three countries accounted for 15 percent of EU oil imports in 2015.

Developments in Ukraine have implications for the EU's natural gas supplies and highlight the need to diversify sources of imports. Diversifying supplier and transit countries will require the EU to factor in the instability in West Asia. Moreover, as the US scales up shale oil production, its energy dependence on, and engagement with West Asia is likely to wane further. This will make it necessary for stakeholders like the EU and India to consider policies that will ensure the security of hydrocarbons supply from the region.

The lifting of sanctions on Iran and its increase in gas production (5.7 percent in 2015<sup>9</sup>) provides a window of opportunity to EU member states that are gas-dependent on Russia. While Iran has an export capacity that could potentially rival Russia's, there is no pipeline network to transport its reserves to the EU. Iran's gas grid is, however, connected to

5 "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", June 2016, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2016/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2016-full-report.pdf>

6 Ibid

7 "Energy Production and Imports", Eurostat, July 2016, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Main\\_origin\\_of\\_primary\\_energy\\_imports,\\_EU-28,\\_2004%E2%80%9314\\_\(%25\\_of\\_extra\\_EU-28\\_imports\)\\_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Main_origin_of_primary_energy_imports,_EU-28,_2004%E2%80%9314_(%25_of_extra_EU-28_imports)_YB16.png)

8 Chi-Kong Chyong and Vessela Tcherneva, "Europe's Vulnerability on Russian Gas", European Council on Foreign Relations, March 17, 2015, [http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_europes\\_vulnerability\\_on\\_russian\\_gas](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_vulnerability_on_russian_gas)

9 "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", June 2016, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2016/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2016-full-report.pdf>

## Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation

Turkey via the Tabriz-Ankara pipeline and could be extended to reach Europe through the construction of Iran's proposed Persian Pipeline.<sup>10</sup> The economic dependencies between Russia and the EU could be implicated by the potential that exists between Iran and the EU with respect to energy flows.

While majority of hydrocarbon production is driven by the Persian Gulf states, significant oil and gas reserves are located in war-ravaged Libya, Syria and Yemen. As their oil and gas infrastructure is overrun by extremist groups, particularly IS, the security situation could impact the prices of hydrocarbons in the future. In 2015, IS had briefly overtaken Iraq's largest oil refinery, Baiji. Had IS succeeded, it would have not only bolstered the extremist group, but would have also had severe implications for the global oil market. While IS has since lost control of the oil fields it held in Iraq, it is believed to still be holding some fields and refineries in Syria and Libya.<sup>11</sup> Acts of IS or another non-state actor could significantly impact the global supply chain. In 2015, oil production fell by 13.4 percent in Libya, 18.2 percent in Syria, and a whopping 67.8 percent in Yemen.<sup>12</sup>

An India-EU Energy Panel was set up in 2004 to address common challenges on energy security. Apart from cooperation in the field of renewables, the panel was also mandated with promoting the security of supplies and maintaining stability of prices. This cooperation was reiterated through various mechanisms and dialogues in 2005, 2012 and 2016. As part of the energy panel, a working group on petroleum and natural gas was also set up in 2007. While it was established that the group would convene twice a year,<sup>13</sup> no meetings after 2007 have been reported. Even though securing supplies at competitive prices, diversifying sources and transport routes were outlined in the agenda,<sup>14</sup> the level of engagement of this group (in terms of time and resources) is below par and would be insufficient for meeting these objectives.

Shifting alliances, geopolitical uncertainties and security considerations have created conditions for a more volatile West Asian energy market. Securing the sea lines of communication and developing connectivity infrastructure in the region require greater political and economic will from India and the EU.

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10 Jonathan Saul and Henning Gloystein, "REFILE-EU plans for Iran gas imports if sanctions go", Reuters, September 24, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/eu-iran-gas-idUSL6N0RG2NG20140924>

11 For reference see: Erika Solomon, Robin Kwong and Steven Bernard, "Inside Isis Inc: The journey of a barrel of oil", Financial Times, February 29, 2016, <http://ig.ft.com/sites/2015/isis-oil/>

12 "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", June 2016, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/statistical-review-2016/bp-statistical-review-of-world-energy-2016-full-report.pdf>

13 "1st Meeting of the EU-India Working Group on Petroleum/Natural Gas", January 25, 2007, [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy\\_transport/international/bilateral/india/energy/doc/eu\\_india\\_3/petroleum\\_gas/2007\\_01\\_25\\_minutes\\_petroleum\\_gas\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/international/bilateral/india/energy/doc/eu_india_3/petroleum_gas/2007_01_25_minutes_petroleum_gas_en.pdf)

14 Ibid

While the EU aims to diversify sources of hydrocarbons, the EU gas market is not connected to West and Central Asia through pipelines. The EU had initiated the Nabucco project in 2002 that could transport gas from Central Asia and Iran to Europe via Turkey. The project was later abandoned and replaced with the Azeri-led Trans-Anatolia Pipeline (TANAP) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), which would together bring gas to Europe through the Turkey-Greece border. However, the Azeri-Shah Deniz gas field will supply only a fraction of the overall EU requirements and leaves considerable space for Europe to expand connectivity with other regional partners.

Iran's return into the energy market provides an opportunity for European and Indian companies to jointly develop oil and gas infrastructure that connects both regions. In June 2016, India inked an agreement to develop the Iranian port of Chabahar and is also negotiating to develop the Farzad B Gas field. India and Iran are negotiating a USD 4.5-billion undersea gas pipeline and have also been in talks to conclude the North South Transport Corridor (with Russia) that will link South and Central Asia to Europe via a network of transport routes. India and the EU can jointly invest in Iran's upstream gas production, gas fields, ports and pipeline infrastructure. Through convergences in the economic imperatives of energy and trade, India and the EU can work together to enhance regional connectivity and strengthen their oil supply networks.

## The 'Internationalisation' of Jihad

The proliferation of radical extremist groups in West Asia and North Africa has, for decades, been supported and facilitated by fluidity in the movement of ideologies and jihadists across the region. Fighters from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Yemen and Algeria have participated in conflicts from Afghanistan to Syria and Iraq. These cross-border movements have been significant in the expansion of powerful extremist groups. Al-Qaeda has three branches across the region and IS has spread beyond its primary territorial control of Iraq and Syria to Libya and Egypt.

While it may not have been inconceivable that the threat posed by these groups remains rooted in the region of their origin, the evolution of Jihad from targeting the "near enemy" to the "far enemy" brought the world in its fold. As the Jihadis were intrinsically opposed to Western presence and influence on their land, they initially mobilised against their 'infidel' local regimes, which they regarded as 'tools' of colonial powers. It was only in the 1990s that the globalisation of Jihad shifted focus towards the US and its Western allies.

Lebanese-American scholar, Fawaz A. Gerges describes three major events as the turning points in the evolution of Jihadist ideology. The withdrawal of Russian troops from Afghanistan; the 1991 Gulf War and the permanent stationing of American forces in Saudi Arabia; and the defeat of religious nationalists on their home turf by the end of the 1990s.

These factors together created the foundation for the rise of transnationalist Jihadism led by Al-Qaeda.<sup>15</sup> In parallel, the ethnic and national boundaries between Jihadist movements began to fade away and Jihadism was increasingly defined by a larger clash between Muslims and non-Muslims.

The 2003 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan intensified this clash and galvanised a large number of non-Arab Muslims to join the movement. Guido Steinberg, foreign-policy expert in Berlin, writes that as the “globalisation of Islamist terrorism gained traction...the European diaspora was among the drivers of this development.”<sup>16</sup> The Pakistani Muslims in Britain were among the first to be mobilised and sought training in the Al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan, followed by the Turkish and Kurdish diaspora in Germany.<sup>17</sup>

While the significance of domestic policies of Britain, France, Germany and Spain towards their large Muslim populations cannot be disregarded, their involvement in the NATO operations in Iraq and Afghanistan supplemented extremist groups’ ability to recruit European Muslims. For instance, the Madrid bombings in 2004 were carried out in opposition to Spain’s presence in Iraq as well as to influence the impending elections in the country.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, the opposition won the elections and promised to withdraw the country’s troops from Iraq.

Extremist groups evolved their strategies to assimilate new recruitment constituencies. Al-Qaeda, for example, is believed to have established cells in at least 80 countries across five continents. The extremist groups have also moved towards increasingly decentralised structures which do not require their presence in every country, instead using social media to spread their messages and to recruit individual sympathisers. The Islamic State embodies the principle of decentralised units that focus less on structure and organisation but more on individual Jihad. While IS’ territorial power grew with the protracted war in Syria and Iraq, the theological appeal of the Caliphate and the dissemination of its propaganda through social media catapulted the group to global prominence.

The gravest challenge to countering IS’ influence lies outside the West Asian region. The rapid rise of ‘lone-wolf attacks’, claimed in the name of IS, presents a conundrum for national counter-terrorist strategists. While some experts like Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr argue that broader cells or networks generally support lone acts of violence,<sup>19</sup> others like Olivier Roy assert that such acts also use the “Islamist label

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15 Fawaz A. Gerges, “The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global”, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009

16 Guido Steinberg, “German Jihad: On the Internationalization of Islamist Terrorism”, New York: Columbia University Press, June 2013

17 Ibid

18 Ibid

19 Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, “The Myth of Lone-Wolf Terrorism: The Attacks in Europe and Digital Extremism”, Foreign Affairs, July 26, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/western-europe/2016-07-26/myth-lone-wolf-terrorism>

opportunistically”.<sup>20</sup> The IS now represents a potent brand that provides the opportunity of fame and martyrdom to every individual whether or not motivated by religious ideology.

Similar discourse also applies to the role of the Internet in radicalisation. A report published by the London-based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) asserts that growth of the Internet and availability of Jihadist ideology online complicates the analysis of the “lone wolf phenomenon”. The report suggests that the Internet provides a “social environment” to “loners” through which they can be instigated to carry out violent acts.<sup>21</sup> Some earlier research, including by the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, suggests that the “internet is not used as a direct means of recruitment, but that it functions merely as a facilitator for the recruitment process. Physical contact, in addition to online communication and propaganda, is essential. Further, the need for anonymity on the Internet most likely prevents it from becoming a primary recruitment tool”.<sup>22</sup> However, most studies conclude that the functionality of ‘online Jihadism’ as a source of inspiration and information will increase as the avenues for connectivity proliferate.

While social media has been used by Jihadist organisations like Al-Qaeda since the 1990s, it was IS that used a communications strategy as one of its primary tools for recruitment. Using Facebook, Twitter and You-tube, IS strategists multiplied the range of content that could be shared, also in real-time. Its *Dabiq* magazine, which is published in a number of languages, is commonly described as “slick”, “professional” and “specific” in outlining its agendas, ideologies and enemies.<sup>23</sup>

A number of measures have been introduced to counter online radicalism including blocking, filtering, censoring and removing online content as well as monitoring. Monitoring itself is a daunting task as tens of thousands of social media users may refer to Jihadist material but may not be prone to radicalisation. Moreover, given that online radicalisation is transnational, monitoring cannot be done by any country in isolation and requires multilateral coordination. This is further complicated by the fact that online

20 Roula Khalaf, “The deadly Draw of the ISIS Brand Without Borders”, Financial Times, June 15, 2016, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/eab2a104-3243-11e6-bda0-04585c31b153.html?siteedition=intl#axzz4IARksAj9>

21 Raffaello Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists”, the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), March 2011, [http://www.trackingterrorism.org/sites/default/files/chatter/1302002992ICSRPaper\\_ATypologyofLoneWolves\\_Pantucci.pdf](http://www.trackingterrorism.org/sites/default/files/chatter/1302002992ICSRPaper_ATypologyofLoneWolves_Pantucci.pdf)

22 Hanna Rogan, “Jihadism Online - A study of how al-Qaida and radical Islamist groups use the Internet for terrorist purposes”, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, March 20, 2006, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/testimony/48.pdf>

23 HJ Ingram, “An Analysis of Islamic States’ Dabiq Magazine”, Australian Journal of Political Science, June 13, 2016

Nick Robins-Early, 4 Things To Know About Dabiq, ISIS’ Slick Propaganda Magazine, The World Post, October 2, 2016, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/isis-dabiq-magazine\\_us\\_56a7e6cfe4b04936c0e8938a](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/isis-dabiq-magazine_us_56a7e6cfe4b04936c0e8938a)

radicalisation has moved far beyond official accounts of Jihadist groups and is often facilitated by individual sympathizers.

India has always been on the radar of extremist groups in West and South Asia. India has traditionally been a victim of cross-border terrorism and the growing presence of IS in India's immediate neighbourhood, particularly Bangladesh, poses an urgent threat. In the April 2016 issue of IS' *Dabiq* magazine, the leader of the 'Bengal' faction stressed on the importance of a Jihad base in Bengal to facilitate attacks inside India.<sup>24</sup> He also talked about enlisting the local Mujahideen in India to create chaos in the country. Some members of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) have reportedly joined IS ranks in Syria while those based in India are involved in recruiting on behalf of the extremist group. However, despite IS' renewed focus on South Asia and on the Indian diaspora in the Gulf, the number of recruits is still relatively low.

According to a 2015 report by the Soufan group on foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria, while there were 40-50 Indians in IS ranks, 1,700 French and almost 800 German citizens were reported to have joined IS.<sup>25</sup> Successful counter-terrorism initiatives have prevented a large number of Indian citizens from traveling to Iraq and Syria and de-radicalisation programmes have been rolled out to ensure better integration within and among communities. Several Indian Muslim leaders, clerics and groups have also denounced IS and launched campaigns to dissuade youth from participating in its "un-Islamic" activities.<sup>26</sup>

The experiences of EU and India on this critical issue must be an important security element in the India-EU strategic partnership. Coordinating intelligence sharing and consulting on de-radicalisation activities and countering violent extremism (CVE) programmes will allow both regions to share experiences, build capacities and tackle extremism more effectively. Many EU member states, including France, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Germany and Switzerland have drafted strategies to prevent violent extremism and the EU could provide a platform for this important conversation with India.

Measures promoting social inclusion among various communities through education, employment, social welfare, counseling and sensitisation are being applied to respond to

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24 "Dabiq: The Murtadd Brotherhood", The Islamic State, Issue 14, <https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/the-islamic-state-22dacc84biq-magazine-1422.pdf>

25 "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", The Soufan Group, December 2015, [http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG\\_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf](http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf)

26 "Muslim organizations launch campaigns against 'un-Islamic' ISIS", The Times of India, September 29, 2015, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Muslim-organizations-launch-campaigns-against-un-Islamic-ISIS/articleshow/49155295.cms>

"Imams to use social media to counter ISIS influence", The Indian Express, July 15, 2016, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/imams-to-use-social-media-to-counter-isis-influence-2915131/>

growing radicalisation. The strength of CVE policies is in government engagement with local leaders, members from the academia and religious institutions. However, paradoxically, CVE policies are being criticised for perpetuating the sentiment of exclusion and religious profiling among Muslim communities. Thus, for these policies to be effective, more nuanced, adaptable and creative responses need to be designed. Greater conversations between international actors can lead to informed and targeted CVE strategies across countries. While India does not have a formal CVE policy, its experience in promoting social cohesion and harmony, against internally and externally instigated communal rhetoric, can serve as an important country experience to be discussed, deconstructed and drawn lessons from. Given the urgency of the threat, India and the EU must also expedite the ongoing discussions on the possibilities of exchanging information between EUROPOL and Indian intelligence agencies.

## The Human Bridge: Security Implications of Migration and Diasporas

India has a seven-million strong diaspora in the GCC states and their remittances play a crucial role in the economies of many States including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat. According to World Bank estimates, India, despite being the largest recipient of remittances in 2015 of USD 69 billion, experienced a decrease in remittances of USD 1 billion from 2014.<sup>27</sup> The 2016 World Bank Migration and Development Brief states that the fall in oil prices contributed significantly to the slowdown in remittances.<sup>28</sup> The decline in oil prices has already led to job cuts and the imposition of income tax on expatriates.<sup>29</sup> Austerity-driven policies of the GCC states and the rise in living expenses have forced a number of expatriates to return home.

The Indian diaspora is also affected by deteriorating security in the West Asia region. In 2014, 46 Indian nurses were kidnapped by IS in Iraq; they were released after New Delhi sought help from Riyadh, Doha and Dubai.<sup>30</sup> In the same year 39 Indians were kidnapped in Iraq and are still missing. While the GCC countries are the most preferred destination for Indian expatriates, a large proportion of them reside in Libya, Yemen and Iraq. Until

27 "Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook", Migration and Development Brief 26, April 2016, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/661301460400427908/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief26.pdf>

28 Ibid

29 Daniel George, "Indian expatriates hit hard as Gulf economies slip on free fall in crude prices", The Times of India, January 22, 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/middle-east-news/Indian-expatriates-hit-hard-as-Gulf-economies-slip-on-free-fall-in-crude-prices/articleshow/50676772.cms>

30 Jayanth Jacob, "46 abducted Indian nurses freed in Iraq, will be back home today", The Hindustan Times, July 5, 2015, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world/46-abducted-indian-nurses-freed-in-iraq-will-be-back-home-today/story-UTg7vKeTFqqtMIcpT5JgK.html>

2012, there were about 15,000 Indians in Libya, 100,000 in Yemen and 15,000 in Iraq.<sup>31</sup> After 2012, a large number of Indian workers had to be evacuated and repatriated.

Much earlier, the 1990-91 Gulf War served as an important reminder of India's susceptibility to the developments in West Asia. During the war, 170,000 Indians had to be evacuated from Iraq and Kuwait. A sharp rise in oil prices and fall in remittances contributed significantly to an ongoing financial crisis in India. The Overseas Development Institute reported that the crisis cost India USD 1.6 billion, with the states of Kerala and Gujarat experiencing the maximum impact.<sup>32</sup> Even now, Kerala is bracing itself for the economic repercussions of the West Asian crisis. After all, 90 percent of Kerala's 2.4 million emigrants reside in the Gulf and their remittances contribute 36 percent of its net domestic product.<sup>33</sup>

The escalating conflict in Syria has also created a refugee crisis, spilling beyond neighbouring countries like Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon into Europe. In 2015, 1.1 million people sought asylum in Europe, representing a 130 percent increase from the numbers in 2014. Consequently, the number of refugees in Europe increased from 1.2 million in 2013 to 1.6 million in 2015. Out of the EU-28, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and Hungary host over 80 percent of the refugees.<sup>34</sup> Apart from the economic challenges of integrating the refugees, the EU is also confronted with security, political and social concerns. The magnitude of the crisis has strained the member states' capacity to respond to the humanitarian challenge.

As many countries reinstate border checks within the Schengen Area, restrictions on free mobility could threaten the very fabric of the Union. An anti-immigrant sentiment has already taken hold in the EU as demonstrated by the Brexit referendum. While in Britain, concerns were more around EU migration, growing hostility towards immigration is a likely political pressure point that the member states' governments would need to respond to.

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31 "India-Libya Relations", The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, December 2014, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Libya\\_December\\_2014\\_.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Libya_December_2014_.pdf)

"India-Yemen Relations", The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, March 2013, [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Yemen\\_19\\_Mar\\_2013\\_political\\_brief\\_for\\_MEA\\_s\\_website.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Yemen_19_Mar_2013_political_brief_for_MEA_s_website.pdf)

"India-Iraq relations", The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, June 2015, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Iraq\\_2015\\_07\\_02.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Iraq_2015_07_02.pdf)

32 "The Impact Of The Gulf Crisis On Developing Countries", Overseas Development Institute, Briefing Paper, March 1991,

33 Madhura Karnik, "An Indian state may be on the brink of recession because of the Gulf oil crisis", Quartz India, August 12, 2016, <http://qz.com/755855/an-indian-state-may-be-on-the-brink-of-recession-because-of-the-gulf-oil-crisis/>

34 "Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook", Migration and Development Brief 26, April 2016, <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/661301460400427908/MigrationandDevelopmentBrief26.pdf>

Greater convergence between India and the EU on security and foreign policy has created space to institutionalise dialogue on West Asian issues. Joint working groups and high-level consultations between Brussels and New Delhi could supplement international efforts for resolving the region's conflicts. These mechanisms could also lay the foundation for an enduring partnership in Asia's evolving security and economic architecture.

More immediate cooperative initiatives could include joint crises response mechanisms and peacekeeping consultations. India's successful evacuation operation in Yemen in 2015, which included the citizens of 33 other countries, indicates the importance of international cooperation. New Delhi's "goodwill" among the West Asian states supported the evacuation operation as conflicting parties agreed to a ceasefire to allow Indian aircraft into the no-fly zone for three-hour intervals over six days.

India and the EU must also work towards developing cooperative mechanisms in Syria. India's stance on the Syrian conflict has been outlined through the UN Security Council, where it appears to be more in favor of President Assad's regime.<sup>35</sup> Conversely, the EU was largely in favor of ousting President Assad and imposed a number of unilateral restrictive economic measures on the regime. Subsequently, the EU recognised the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people.

Under the 2013 policy document titled "Towards a Comprehensive EU Approach to the Syrian Crisis", the Union committed to supporting US/Russia efforts in Syria and engaging with third parties like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran. However, its role has largely been in the realm of humanitarian and development assistance.<sup>36</sup> The fact that the EU is bearing the brunt of the conflict's humanitarian consequences stands in stark contrast to the Union's level of participation in resolving it. Priorities of different member states have defined how they responded to the crisis, with France adopting a military posture and Germany leading negotiations on the EU-Turkey refugee deal. However, increasing congruence in the objective of preventing a Jihadist takeover of Syria and stemming the refugee flow is likely to bring closer coordination between member states in developing a comprehensive EU policy.

India's investments in the turbulent Southwest Asian and West Asian region have largely been through economic diplomacy initiatives, which have included development of infrastructure and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. India and the EU are not

35 Kanchi Gupta, "Will India Become the Next Big Player in Syria", Haaretz, October 19, 2015,

36 "Towards A Comprehensive EU Approach To The Syrian Crisis", Joint Communication To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions, June 24, 2013, [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130624\\_1\\_comm\\_native\\_join\\_2013\\_22\\_communication\\_from\\_commission\\_to\\_inst\\_en\\_v10\\_p1\\_7332751.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130624_1_comm_native_join_2013_22_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v10_p1_7332751.pdf)

political interventionists but rather agents of development and economic engagement. The India-EU emphasis on consulting over the conceptual and operational aspects of peacekeeping, peace-building and post-conflict assistance<sup>37</sup> could be prioritised in Syria.

Afghanistan serves as an important example of where India is playing an active role in post-conflict reconstruction and is now moving towards providing equipment and training to the Afghan security forces. Just like in Afghanistan, India and the EU could work together on capacity building, connectivity and trade to support Syria's security, stability and economic development.

### Conclusion

In their 2005 Joint Action Plan, India and the EU had outlined a number of consultative mechanisms on regional cooperation, democracy and human rights, peacekeeping and post-conflict assistance as well as terrorism and organised crime.<sup>38</sup> However, there was little progress in many of these areas and India-EU cooperation remained limited. The 2016 Agenda for Action can inject fresh momentum in India-EU strategic relations and strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual concern. While the roadmap for India-EU partnership has been expanded to include West Asia, the real challenge will lie in translating these dialogues into outcomes that promote stability in both regions.

From the core trends in West Asia that impact the social, political and economic arrangements in Europe and India, certain key areas of cooperation become apparent. First, there is an urgent need for India and the EU to establish an annual Asia-EU track two or track 1.5 dialogue to understand and discuss possible mechanisms for addressing the common challenges emerging out of the West Asian region. An annual or bi-annual exchange of scholars and practitioners will be instrumental in closing the gap between the understanding of each other's interests in and approaches to conflicts in West Asia.

Second, the region presents huge opportunities for India and the EU to invest in the development of its hydrocarbons sector and support greater connectivity. Emerging out of a sanctions regime, Iran particularly offers avenues for cooperation in the energy domain. This will allow both India and the EU to not only ensure security of supplies but also raise their economic and political profiles as important stakeholders in the stability of the region.

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37 "The India-EU Strategic Partnership - Joint Action Plan", Council Of The European Union, September 7, 2005, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/86130.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/86130.pdf)

38 Ibid

Third, India and EU must also adjust to the alterations in the geopolitical landscape of West Asia. Russia's assertiveness in Syria accords Moscow a place at the high-table, necessitating new dimensions to New Delhi and Brussels' existing West Asian policies. India and EU have complementary capabilities in engaging with Kremlin.

Lastly, India and the EU must also strengthen existing mechanisms that can address their immediate concerns. Elevating the level of engagement in counter-terrorism cooperation, de-radicalisation and CVE policies, consulting on peacekeeping and post-conflict assistance strategies and coordination on energy policies will boost their abilities to deal with existing and emerging challenges. As New Delhi and Brussels initiate a new phase in their engagement, the West Asian region presents opportunities and challenges that they can together navigate better.

## APPENDIX

# EU-India declarations on counter-terrorism

### **September 2005: Political Declaration on the India-EU Strategic Partnership**

We recognize the fact that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and reaffirm our condemnation of all acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as criminal and unjustifiable, irrespective of their motives. As part of our joint efforts to fight terrorism, we will establish contacts between the Indian and EU Counter Terrorism Coordinators, work towards blocking access to terrorist financing and co-operate in the fight against money laundering.

Source: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/86132.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/86132.pdf)

### **December 2010: EU-India Joint Declaration on International Terrorism**

#### **Political dialogue:**

- Continue to discuss Counter Terrorism cooperation at high level meetings within our security dialogue.
- Encourage all countries to deny safe haven to terrorists and to dismantle terror infrastructure on the territories under their control.

#### **Law enforcement and police cooperation:**

- Identify, including through seminars, areas of cooperation with respect to the designated agencies, according to their respective competencies.
- Continue efforts to prevent access by terrorists to financial and other resources.
- Enhance efforts for accessing and sharing strategic information, so as to better disrupt

## Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation

and prevent terrorist activity.

- Intensify efforts to render the widest possible measure of mutual legal assistance and to expedite processing of extradition requests and to explore the possibility of an EU-India Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement and an EU-India Agreement on Extradition.

### **Research, Technology and Cybersecurity:**

- Agree to closer India-EU cooperation and mutual assistance in this area.

### **Transport, aviation and border security:**

- Work together in ICAO, to improve international security standards for passengers, cargo and mail, including in transit.
- Coordinate efforts against terrorists and terrorist groups so as to deny them safe haven and freedom of travel in accordance with international law.
- Encourage more efficient controls on issuance of identity and travel documents to prevent movement of terrorist and terrorist groups across national borders.

### **Consequence Management:**

- Share experiences and best practices on managing the consequences of a terrorist attack.

### **Cooperation in the Multilateral system, including United Nations:**

- Increase cooperation in multilateral fora like the UN, and intensify efforts to bring about a rapid adoption of CCIT.
- Build on the opportunities of coordination provided by the membership of Financial Action Task Force of EU Member States and India by intensifying efforts to prevent access by terrorists to financial and other resources and by sharing best practices on financial controls.
- Reaffirm commitment to implement the 2006 UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy as a unique instrument to enhance national, regional and global efforts to counter terrorism.
- Encourage global ratification and effective implementation of all relevant conventions on counter terrorism.
- Promote initiatives, under the auspices of UN, inter alia, on Alliance of Civilization initiative, to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations.
- The EU and India agree that an effective and comprehensive approach to diminish the long term threat of violent extremism is an important component of our efforts to combat terrorism.

Source: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/118405.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/118405.pdf)

**30 March 2016: India-EU Joint Declaration on the Fight Against Terrorism**

Recalling the 'India-EU Joint Declaration on International Terrorism' of 2010, the Leaders noted the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to address terrorism. They resolved to step up cooperation to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalisation, disrupt recruitment, terrorist movements and the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, stop sources of terrorist financing, dismantle terrorist infrastructure and prevent supply of arms to terrorists. To this end, they committed to further enhance exchanges in the fields of finance, justice and police and looked forward to the EU-India Counter-terrorism Dialogue.

Reaffirming that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, India and the EU agreed to coordinate efforts to prevent violent extremism also by addressing conditions conducive to its spread. The Leaders expressed concern at the increased incidence of radicalisation of youth and the use of the internet to this end. They emphasised the need to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of information and communication technology, including IT service providers to minimise the use of cyber space for by terrorist groups and to counter extremist narratives online. They agreed that cooperation between immigration and airline authorities for monitoring travel of foreign terrorist fighters requires urgent collective action by all nations.

*Source: [http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26576/IndiaEU\\_Joint\\_Statement\\_on\\_the\\_13th\\_IndiaEU\\_Summit\\_Brussels](http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26576/IndiaEU_Joint_Statement_on_the_13th_IndiaEU_Summit_Brussels)*

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