

# Capacity building and training of peacekeepers – Exploring Synergies between India and the European Union

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India and the European Union are both long-standing supporters of peace operations and have committed themselves to António Guterres's Action for Peace Initiative (A4P), designed to enhance UN peace operations' performance. A central shared commitment of this agenda is to improve training and capacity building, including the formation of triangular partnerships between troop-contributing countries and member states.<sup>1</sup> Analysed individually, India and the EU, have successfully implemented this commitment. India has formed several bilateral- and trilateral training partnerships, including with South-East Asian countries, West-Asia, African nations and the United States. The EU most visibly implemented the goal in its triangular partnerships involving the African Union and the UN. Most EU member states have thereby preferred the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, rather than UN formats. The EU formats are deployed, however, always in close partnership with the UN.<sup>2</sup> The EU's training missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia are signature initiatives of the EU in the field of training and capacity building.<sup>3</sup>

While successful with other partners and enthusiastic about establishing training cooperation among themselves, India and the EU have made only nascent steps towards more concrete implementation. Furthermore, given the myriad security challenges India and the EU are currently facing – both internally and externally - training cooperation seems to have been put at the backburner in favour of other security fields.<sup>4</sup> This policy brief outlines why investing in peacekeeping training, seemingly a niche field of security, can positively impact the EU-India security partnership and makes concrete proposals for how this could materialise.

## ***What is in a bilateral or trilateral training cooperation?***

Currently, most peace operations are deployed on the African continent, where the UN and regional formats, such as AU-led or EU-led missions, are engaged in the same geographical area. Given the need for coordination on the ground, bilateral or trilateral pre-deployment

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training initiatives would increase interoperability between defence forces and the civilian parts of the missions and create a better understanding of shared commitments among the different actors. Moreover, if experienced troop contributors, or member states with specific areas of expertise, would assist member states with less peacekeeping experience or lack of training facilities, peace operations' performance could be enhanced. Apart from increasing peace operations' effectiveness, training cooperation also serves as a prelude for deepening security partnerships. For the EU-India security partnership, an interaction among training communities has the advantage that these practitioners spend longer stretches of their career in the same posting than career diplomats. Exchanges among training instructors can thus, over the long-term, establish shared understandings.

### ***India's Bilateral and Trilateral Training Cooperation***

India has answered to the UN's call for more cooperation in capacity building and training with several initiatives. India's peacekeeping training institute, the Centre for United Nations peacekeeping Delhi (CUNPK), sponsors vacancies for foreign participants in all its international pre-deployment training courses.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, India has concluded a field training exercise on UN peacekeeping with participants from 18 African countries in 2019.<sup>6</sup> At the India-Africa Defence Minister Conclave in February 2020, the interest to deepen the partnership in the field of capacity building has further been underlined.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, India has sent mobile training teams to Vietnam and Myanmar to train their respective security forces for peace operations.<sup>8</sup> In Central Asia, India trained Kazakhstan's first-ever peacekeeping contingent, currently co-deployed in an Indian battalion in Lebanon.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding India's training cooperation with Western countries, a fruitful cooperation has developed with the United States. The two countries have organised an annual training course for African peacekeepers in New Delhi since 2017 (UNCAP).<sup>10</sup> Recent talks suggest that this format will be replicated in the training of South-East Asian countries.<sup>11</sup> In the training cooperation, which had been initiated by the United States, the Indian side provides its well-established training facilities, while funding comes from the US and instructors for the training courses are provided from both sides.<sup>12</sup>

A stronghold of the Indian training activities has been to answer to the UN's landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which for the first time acknowledged the crucial role of women in securing and maintaining peace. Concretely, together with UN Women India and the UN Department of Peace Operations, India's peacekeeping training centre has since 2015 conducted a specialised course for female military officers.<sup>13</sup> Apart from the female

military officers' course, India's peacekeeping training centre has regularly been conducting modules on gender and peace in its pre-deployment training.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Policy Recommendations***

A discussion of the Indian training context clearly depicts that India has the interest and the capacity to enter bilateral and trilateral training partnerships. Given the already existing initiatives, which are the most promising avenues for EU-India cooperation?

- Ireland and India started their non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council in January 2021. Given that peace operations are a hallmark of both Ireland and India's commitment to the UN, it is likely that the two countries will try to put this issue on the agenda during their term at the UNSC. This is even more so, given that they share their commitment to reform UN peacekeeping, their support of the WPS agenda, and their efforts to strengthen capacity through peacekeeping training.<sup>2</sup> If the two countries leverage their strength to translate these shared commitments into a collective effort, they increase their chances to achieve the desired changes during their term at the UNSC. Increased interaction and collaboration between Ireland and India on the topic of peace operations, could have positive spill-over effects for an EU-India cooperation. As Ireland is involved in both CSDP and UN-led formats, it could also act as a bridge-builder to facilitate Indian participation in CSDP missions and operations.
  
- The EU shares with India its support for implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.<sup>15</sup> Given both actors' expertise, they could cooperate in assisting third countries, which are less familiar with incorporating a gender lens in peacekeeping training. The concrete format of such a partnership could mirror the US-India cooperation on training African peacekeepers. The EU would provide finances, India, the training facilities, and instructors would be contributed from both sides. As the Indian training centre is guided and financed by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of External Affairs, this

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<sup>2</sup> A Future of Peace: 60 Years of an Unbroken Tradition of Irish UN Peacekeeping, <https://www.ireland.ie/peacekeeping/>, Ireland similar like India has a well-established training institute, the United Nations Training School Ireland (UNTSI), which engages in pre-deployment training of Irish peacekeepers, but also allows for international participations

cooperation would need to be initiated by the EU delegation in Delhi. Alternatively, the United Service Institute of India (USI), a security and defence-focused think-tank in Delhi, has worked together with UN Women India to conduct a course on mainstreaming gender in UN peacekeeping. A partnership could thus also materialise between the USI and European think-tanks.

- The EU has made the nexus of climate change and security a priority area. In a recently published roadmap on climate change and defence, the EU has highlighted the importance to integrate training on climate change.<sup>16</sup> The roadmap is thereby envisioning cooperation with other international organisations and third countries on the issue. In the Indian context, climate change-related issues have yet to make more substantial inroads into the Indian pre-deployment training of peacekeepers and the defence sector at large.<sup>17</sup> The EU here can thus offer an important niche capability. India itself impacted by climate change and notably involved in climate change-related disaster relief operations in third countries, such as the 2004 Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, seems an ideal partner for such cooperation.<sup>18</sup> As the importance to incorporate climate change-related issues in the training and planning process of peace operations is slowly gaining traction in the UN, the training cooperation could also put India and the EU in forerunner roles on the subject.<sup>19</sup>

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