



### EU-INDIA SUMMIT 2017: LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN

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*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do  
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On October 6, 2017, India hosted the 14th EU-India Summit in New Delhi to mark the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EU-India diplomatic relations. The summit was attended by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Council President Donald Tusk. The EU and India came together to discuss trade, migration, security and foreign policy, and adopted joint declarations on countering terrorism, climate and energy, and partnership for smart and sustainable urbanization.<sup>1</sup>

While addressing the press conference of the EU-India Summit, President Donald Tusk stated, "I am happy that today we have agreed to further develop the political dimension of our relationship; that we have agreed to develop our dynamic trade and investment relations; and that we have agreed to step up cooperation on global and regional issues."<sup>2</sup>

In its desire of becoming a regional hegemon and counter the growing dominance of China in the region, India is desperately trying to improve its relations with other regional powers and organizations. By issuing a joint statement on co-operation in combating terrorism with the EU, India again indirectly tried to put international pressure on Pakistan in which they insisted that responsible states should ensure that their territory is not used for terrorist activities. Leaders from

<sup>1</sup> European Union, "14th EU-India Summit: Why the EU-India strategic partnership matters," *European Union External Action*, October 6, 2017, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33482/14th-eu-india-summit-why-eu-india-strategic-partnership-matters\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33482/14th-eu-india-summit-why-eu-india-strategic-partnership-matters_en).

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, "President Juncker at the EU-India Summit," *European Commission – News*, October 6, 2017, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/president-juncker-eu-india-summit-2017-oct-06\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/president-juncker-eu-india-summit-2017-oct-06_en).

both sides agreed to strengthen security cooperation and take concerted actions against globally banned organizations and terrorists, including Dawood Ibrahim, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Hafeez Saeed, Lashkar-e-Tayibba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Haqqani Network, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, ISIS (Da'esh), Al Qaeda and their affiliates.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, EU leaders also appreciated India's role in Afghanistan for "extending development assistance including for building social and economic infrastructure, governance institutions and human resource development and capacity building".<sup>4</sup> This is not in the interest of Pakistan as it has clearly stated on numerous occasions that it does not want India to have any role in Afghanistan.

Adding on, the leaders expressed their commitment to further strengthen economic partnership and make joint efforts towards re-launching negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement and enhancing free and fair trade for achieving sustainable development and economic growth.<sup>5</sup> The recent launch of the Investment Facilitation Mechanism for EU investments in India was welcomed by the summit leaders as it will encourage and facilitate EU investments by providing procedural guidance and support to EU companies intending to invest in India.<sup>6</sup>

The summit set out the agenda of enhanced cooperation between EU and India in urban development for the future. The leaders shared their desire of promoting sustainable urbanization in India by developing a program similar to Urban Agenda for the EU and further enhancing India's 100 Smart Cities Mission program.<sup>7</sup> The aim is to encourage regular dialogue between EU member states and Indian states on issues such as energy, infrastructure, water and sanitation. This is a good initiative at a time when it is expected that by the next 10 years, 60% of the world's population will be living in cities and by the year 2050, the number of people living in Indian cities will rise to 843 million.<sup>8</sup> Hence, there is a need to provide resilient and sustainable development in an inclusive manner to ensure that the most vulnerable groups such as women and poor are able to live a healthy life and fulfill their potential in equality and dignity. This initiative will therefore help in stimulating employment and innovation to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

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<sup>3</sup> European Union, "India-EU joint statement on Cooperation in combating terrorism," *European Union External Action*, October 06, 2017, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33478/india-eu-joint-statement-cooperation-combating-terrorism\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33478/india-eu-joint-statement-cooperation-combating-terrorism_en).

<sup>4</sup> Kanwal Sibal, "The Telegraph India," *A natural partnership - More real than rhetorical*, October 2017, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/a-natural-partnership-180925>.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, "President Juncker at the," *European Commission – News*, October 6, 2017,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> European Union, "EU-India Joint Declaration on Climate and Energy," October 6, 2017, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/international/pdf/joint\\_declaration\\_india.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/international/pdf/joint_declaration_india.pdf).

The leaders from both sides demonstrated their shared determination and responsibility in making efforts to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and agreed to cooperate in the implementation of solar pumping, renewable, green cooling and other climate action commitments under the Paris Agreement.<sup>9</sup> In order to encourage collaborative research and development, arrangements for exchange of researchers and scientists were also worked out during the summit.<sup>10</sup>

After the summit Jean-Claude Juncker said, "We agreed that we should take our trading relationship to the next level. It is high time for a Free Trade Agreement between India and the EU... Today's Summit is an important step in the right direction and after hearing Prime Minister Modi, I am confident we can move forward."<sup>11</sup>

EU is India's largest trading partner, accounting for more than 100 billion euros in trade and investments of \$83 billion over the time period of 2000-2017.<sup>12</sup> About 6000 European companies are operating in India and 50,000 Indian students are studying in EU universities.<sup>13</sup> This summit provided a great opportunity to India for further enhancing its relations with EU member states in fields which have high potential of successful cooperation such as sustainable urban development, climate change and security. It also indicates a shift in EU-India relations from trade to strategic issues.

These new developments are also quite significant for Pakistan and can help in setting the course of future EU-Pakistan relations. Pakistan needs to strengthen its ties with the EU and expand cooperation not just in terms of trade, but also on security issues. Pakistan has not been able to effectively reach out to the EU members states in the past due to its over reliance on the US as a political ally. Pakistan needs to put forward its concerns regarding India's enhanced role in Afghanistan and sponsoring insurgent movements in Baluchistan province in front of the EU. This will help in providing a counter narrative to India's policy of maligning Pakistan's image internationally. Pakistan has also underutilized the GSP plus status it was awarded in 2014 which gave tariff free access to certain Pakistani goods. Although Pakistan's exports to EU have increased by 38% since 2014,<sup>14</sup> but the full trade potential that the European markets can offer has not been achieved yet. Furthermore, the EU authorities are worried about the recent increase in human rights violations and have strongly opposed death penalty in Pakistan. It should not be ignored that

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<sup>9</sup> European Commission, "President Juncker at the," *European Commission – News*, October 6, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Arun. K. Singh, "European Union and India are natural allies," *Hindustan Times*, October 10, 2017, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/european-union-and-india-are-natural-allies/story-SiKS0rWQAply5e0cAhs82N.html>.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, "President Juncker at the," *European Commission – News*, October 6, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Arun. K. Singh, "European Union and India," *Hindustan Times*, October 10, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Shazia Hasan, "Pakistan among 10 countries enjoying EU's GSP Plus facility, says envoy," *Dawn*, September 27, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1360246>.

the current GSP plus status awarded to Pakistan is subject to compliance with 27 core UN conventions related to human rights, political rights and labor laws. As the GSP plus review is underway, it is pertinent that the Pakistani government ensures the implementation of 27 UN conventions. Considering Pakistan's falling exports and reduced competitiveness in the international market, Pakistan cannot afford to lose its GSP plus status.