EU political relations with India

2017/2025(INI) - 28/06/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Cristian Dan PREDA (EPP, RO) on EU political relations with India.

The EU and India are the world's two largest democracies. They have built, over the last two decades, a Strategic Partnership founded on shared values and interests. They are important economic, trade and investment partners and have been engaged since 2007 in negotiations for an ambitious free trade and investment agreement.

A stronger partnership: the report stressed that the partnership between the Union and India has not yet reached its full potential. It advocated a stronger political commitment on the part of both parties for a more dynamic and valuable relationship with regard to the challenges they face at regional and international level.

Members welcomed the adoption of the EU-India Action Plan 2020 and the re-launch of cooperation in 2016 in many areas such as security, counter-terrorism, migration and mobility, trade, technology transfer, culture, climate change, development, energy and water. They called for the effective implementation of the action plan following clear steps and deadlines.

In addition, Members reiterated their support for the **conclusion of a comprehensive and ambitious free trade agreement** (FTA) between the EU and India. Such an agreement should be concluded as soon as possible in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit and take into account the international standards which both sides have undertaken to respect, including those set out in the framework of the Agreement, The World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as the principle of corporate social responsibility.

Members also recommended adopting a **coherent strategy** based on clear priorities in the light of the Union's relations with India.

A broad cooperation programme on foreign and security policy: the report highlighted the important potential of the areas of foreign and security policy with a view to increasing synergies between the Union and India.

In particular, both parties should:

- intensify their efforts in promoting effective and rule-based **multilateralism** at global level; the High Representative of the Union is invited to support India's bid for Permanent Membership on the UN Security Council;
- cooperate to **support democratic processes** in Asia and coordinate their humanitarian and development policies in order to contribute to the political, economic and social advancement in the countries concerned, including for minorities or stateless persons, such as Rohingyas;
- pursue cooperation between the EU's and India's **security and law enforcement services** under the existing arrangement within Europol with a view to combating radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism;
- deepen cooperation to contribute to the establishment in **Afghanistan** of a peace and reconciliation process under Afghan control and responsibility;
- work towards a rapprochement and the restoration of **good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan** through an in-depth dialogue;
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- further cooperation on **universal disarmament**, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear security;
- continue their exchanges of views, as part of their regular consultations on foreign policy and security issues, on the situation in the Middle East and on areas of possible cooperation which could improve the stabilisation of the region;
- strengthen their cooperation in areas such as **maritime security**, cybersecurity and data protection as well as migration and mobility;
- intensify co-operation in the field of **energy**, in particular in the field of renewable energies in the wake of the Paris Climate Agreement;
- increase the number of **student exchanges** under the Erasmus + programme, which should be further expanded.

Strengthening exchanges on the human rights dimension of the partnership: Members welcomed the reaffirmed commitment to intensify exchanges on the human rights dimension of the EU-India Strategic Partnership.

While acknowledging the authorities' efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, Members stated that **caste-based discrimination** continues to be a source of abuse. They therefore encouraged the Indian authorities to increase their efforts to eradicate this violation of human rights and to ensure the full protection of minorities, especially ethnic and religious minorities.