

15th EU-India Virtual Summit



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The leaders of the European Union (EU) and India met for the 15th EU-India summit virtually on July 15, making it the primary ever-virtual EU-India summit. That the summit happened, given the coronavirus crisis and therefore the domestic preoccupations of both partners may be a sign of how far the EU-India relationship has come.

Why is that the meeting amidst Chinese aggression?

- This 15th EU-India summit comes at an important time, as both entities face increasing **Chinese aggression**. While India is handling a serious military crisis on the border with China, the EU is additionally coming to terms with China as an aggressive power.

What are the concerns that both India and therefore the EU have vis-a-vis China?

- **India is looking to develop a comprehensive response to Chinese power by strengthening partnerships, economic decoupling (from China), and diversification (of trade).**
- **At an equivalent time, attitudes in Europe are shifting decisively far away from China, after a few years of economic integration. during this respect, the EU is often an important partner for India on several fronts.**

What are the contrasting outcomes of the EU summits with China and India?

- The recent EU-China summit didn't even yield the customary joint statement, with the EU talking of "defending EU interests and values" during a "complex partnership" with China.
- **In stark contrast, the meeting with India is about to supply a replacement road map for the partnership and a slew of initiatives on security, trade, and investment, digital economy, infrastructure connectivity, coronavirus crisis response, and therefore the climate crisis.**



What have been the results of the EU's changing perceptions of India and China?

- The difference between the 2 summits highlights how Europe's perception of India has been changing in tandem with increasing tensions with China.
- In 2018, the EU released a replacement strategy for cooperation with India, calling it a geopolitical pillar during a multipolar Asia, crucial for maintaining the balance of power within the region. Leading nations of Europe are actively pushing Europe to ascertain India as a very strategic partner.

What is the misunderstanding in India about the importance of the EU as a possible partner?

- In the public consciousness and strategic circles in New Delhi, the worth of the EU as a partner is consistently underestimated. because the EU isn't a standard hard power (like the US, Russia, or maybe France and Germany), many don't see a task for Europe in handling the pressures India is facing.
- There are misunderstandings on capabilities of the EU as an entire as compared to France or Germany individually, when it involves delivering on Indian interests.

Can the EU be a valuable partner to India in strategic areas?

- As India deals with the China challenge, the EU is often a valuable partner in several strategic areas. for instance, on 5G technologies, as India reconsiders Huawei thanks to security concerns, European companies like Ericsson and Nokia are going to be important players.

What alternatives are being provided to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

- As India deals with rising Chinese influence in its neighborhood, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) investments and infrastructure connectivity are within the spotlight. The EU has its connectivity strategy, providing around 414 billion euros in aid globally, and is already partnering with Japan and the US to supply alternatives to BRI.
- This is often an important opportunity where Brussels (headquarters of the EU) can deliver what India needs. Entities like the EU Investment Bank are active in India, investing in metro and other infrastructure projects.

How does the EU check China's influence on international institutions?

- On the pandemic and China's response, India and therefore the EU has similar concerns. there's huge apprehension in Brussels on the disinformation campaign led by China round the origin and responses to the virus. there's also an increasing recognition that Chinese influence in international organizations must be countered.
- **The EU and Australia coordinated to push for an independent inquiry into the origins of the virus at the planet Health Assembly. As India takes the chair of the planet Health Organization's executive board, the EU is often a strong ally in checking Chinese influence at WHO and beyond.**

What is the strategic cooperation within the Indo-Pacific?

- **With troubles in EU-China relations, debate on the Indo-Pacific is additionally learning in various European capitals besides Paris. The EU has several programs on maritime domain awareness and information-sharing within the Indian Ocean.**
- The German navy has shown a lively interest in contributing to Indian Ocean security and collaborating with partners. Japan and Australia are working diplomatically to urge Europe to require up a more active role within the Indo-Pacific.

How does the EU-India Summit affect trade between both parties?

- **The EU is India's largest trading partner and therefore the second-largest destination for Indian exports. As Europe looks to diversify supply chains and move faraway from China, India should not miss the chance to draw in investments and deepen its relationship with the world's largest trading bloc.**
- EU has already negotiated FTAs with Vietnam, Japan, and Singapore. As India looks to prop up domestic capabilities and strengthen its economy, it should consider the trade agreement (FTA) with Europe which has not begun despite many rounds of failed negotiations.



Can the EU be a promising partner to India?

- **As Europe doesn't face a territorial threat from China, European policy towards China won't be adversarial. However, the very fact that India and therefore the EU cannot have perfect alignment on China should not limit Europe-India cooperation.**
- Europe has decisively moved far away from a China policy that was based solely on economic engagement towards one that involves containing Chinese influence domestically and internationally.
- India must rethink what it wants its partnership with Europe to seem like and yield. Europe is often an unlikely but useful partner as India deals with the China challenge.

Key Takeaways

- India is looking to develop a comprehensive response to Chinese power by strengthening partnerships, economic decoupling (from China), and diversification (of trade).
- At an equivalent time, attitudes in Europe are shifting decisively far away from China, after a few years of economic integration. during this respect, the EU is often an important partner for India on several fronts.
- The EU and Australia coordinated to push for an independent inquiry into the origins of the virus at the planet Health Assembly. As India takes the chair of the planet Health Organization's executive board, the EU is often a strong ally in checking Chinese influence at WHO and beyond.
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