

# India's Growing Diplomatic Relations In Europe

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## I. Abstract

With the rise and fall of global conflicts and superpowers, India's diplomacy has pulled through via solution-oriented dialogue, strategic development of trade routes and a reputation of credibility. This paper explores how this diplomacy is flourishing in the European Union by establishing Free Trade Agreements, investing in ports, the India middle-east Europe corridor, the implications of Britain's exit on India's and Europe's ties, and India's political balancing act in international forums. As India is steadily emerging as an economy the West is looking to diversify trade, away from the stagnated Chinese economy. This paper uses case studies as an example to explain how India is a viable alternative to China along with its challenges and opportunities.

**Keywords:** Diplomacy, European Union, Economy, India, Neutrality, Politics.

## II. Introduction

India is the world's fastest-growing economy today. Its global stance aims to provide support and encourage peace. India's approach to international diplomacy carefully balances its adherence to sovereignty and addressing complex global challenges. Dating back to the colonial era, the British monopolised India's external policies, defence, and political and economic relations. Post-independence until the 1960s, India enjoyed close ties with the British. Still, it avoided becoming too dependent on Britain and other former colonial powers by policy of their own design - Non-Aligned Movement<sup>1</sup>. Drawing references from the Cold War India's post-independent foreign policy was designed considering two clashing global ideologies. The Non-aligned movement also helped India build ties with China to decrease military tensions due to the growing US-Pakistan alliance.

The EU is one of India's largest trading partners and investors as well as its main source of technology transfer.<sup>2</sup> Without access to European technology and lacking a major trade boost, India is unlikely to achieve its 2047 target of becoming a developed economy<sup>3</sup>

The Schuman Security and Defence Forum is an initiative by the European Union to instil security and defence partnerships striving for mutual benefit and peace. Despite their differing positions concerning foreign policies, India and Europe are in a position to take joint initiatives through international summits such as the G20 and G7 through reformed multilateralism, and consensus. India's growing diplomatic presence in Europe reflects not just its economic growth goals, but also its strategic stance in the face of geopolitical confrontation with a changing climate, digital revolution, and the rise and fall of major superpowers contributing majorly.

## III. A Brief History

### A. Influence of the Cold War

The Cold War is an open yet restricted rivalry<sup>4</sup> between the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1961 India was a founding member of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) as a result of the Cold War distancing itself from the two major blocs - the Capitalistic West and the Soviet Communists. As well as providing a

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<sup>1</sup> [India EU Engagement and International Migration.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The FTA: A strategic call for the EU and India?](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Strategic tech cooperation between the EU and India](#)

<sup>4</sup> [What is the Cold War](#)

neutral option for newly decolonised countries. India's non-alignment signified not just a well-played diplomatic card but also:

1. A policy of peace over polarisation
2. Rejection of Radicalism (i.e.- avoiding extreme liberalism and extreme communism)
3. Rejecting the use of force.
4. A strong advocacy of Democratic Socialism by the Nehru government.

Despite being members of the Western bloc, nations such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany maintained commercial and geopolitical ties with India, seeing its rising importance in the developing world. Agreements on trade and cultural interactions thrived, even while Cold War tensions persisted. On the contrary, the Soviets maintained strong bilateral relations with India, subsidising the Indian oil sector by supplying India with the oil it needed via Iraq. The Soviet Union supplied India with sophisticated military equipment, further strengthening India's defence capabilities.<sup>5</sup> They also provided support to India when the United States allied with India's rival, Pakistan. India's Non-alignment thrived under these circumstances.

1. The NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) remains relevant concerning India's foreign policies:
  - a. The NAM caters to the global south by prioritising economic growth over conflict.
  - b. It holds relevance due to its adherence to principles of fundamental rights, justice and peace.
  - c. As long as there is an economic gap between first-world and third-world countries, the NAM continues to push for economic development, justice, and consensus, and hence, it retains its relevance.

2. The history of India's non-alignment concerning International organisations

Ever since the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, India has taken a neutral yet solution-oriented position during geopolitical turmoil. Taking the Russia- Ukraine war as an example, India has played its part by visiting both countries thereby strengthening India's bilateral relations with each of them as well as advising a ceasefire for the greater good of the global economy and citizen casualties.

India is a frequent attendee of peace summits but attempts to facilitate peaceful resolutions through diplomacy and dialogue.

Some examples of India's neutrality are discussed further in the paper.

## IV. Economic ties

### A. Implications of India's signing of the Free Trade Agreement with 4 of EU's countries

India and Europe have long been diplomatic and trading partners. The signing of the Free Trade Agreement with four of the European Union's (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland) countries marks a significant moment in the economic and strategic partnership shared by India and the EU. An FTA signifies mutually lowered restrictions on trade fuelling rapid development by focusing on exports, and geopolitically instilling a sense of trust between the two countries.

India has signed this agreement with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland in the EU. These agreements foster FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflows Most importantly, the FTA might enhance the prospects of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which form the backbone of the Indian economy, by granting them entry into untapped markets, stimulating innovation and competitiveness, and

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<sup>5</sup> [India's relations with USA and USSR during cold war](#)

bolstering job creation and economic expansion at the grass-root level.<sup>6</sup> Free trade with India decreases the West's dependence on China, decreasing the EU's bilateral deficit with China.

India needs to maintain a high level of trade agreement with the EU implies a collaboration with one of the global economic powerhouses and it can be to India's benefit in the long run.

A trade agreement with the EU implies a collaboration with one of the global economic powerhouses and it can be to India's benefit in the long run.<sup>7</sup> Future FTAs will likely focus on enhancing digital trade, with projections indicating that the digital economy could add USD 1 trillion to India's GDP by 2025.<sup>8</sup>

This collaboration with the EU holds great promise for India's economic growth and global standing.

## **B. Europe's indirect purchase of Russian crude via India.**

Due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, there have been several sanctions imposed on Russian goods and services as well as Russian gas by ceasing the Nord Stream pipeline. This means that European entities cannot sell certain products to Russia (due to export restrictions) and that Russian entities are not allowed to sell certain products to the EU (due to import restrictions).<sup>9</sup>

The Russian oil and gas import ban by the EU has shifted Europe's source input to the United States and Norway (mainly the US). Gas is mainly used for power generation, household heating and industrial processes. Over 30% of households in the EU are heated using gas.<sup>10</sup>

India's diplomatic strength and economic hold to be able to defy sanctions play a huge role here. The oil sanctions have opened up a new opportunity for Indian markets. In 2023, Europe saw a significant increase in its imports of refined oil from India, coinciding with a notable rise in India's imports of Russian crude oil.<sup>11</sup>

By purchasing oil from Russia, India is not only reaping the benefits of a cheaper source of energy but is also one of the leading exporters of oil to the European Union thereby adding to Indian net exports, broadening the country's market of supply as well as decreasing our current account deficit.

By acquiring significant amounts of Russian crude oil and gas India has taken up a considerable share of Russia's oil exports, which would otherwise be impossible for Moscow to sell owing to Western sanctions.

## **C. How India's presence is impacting the EU-China trade relations.**

India with its exceptional growth rate, economic size, and contribution to global GDP (Gross Domestic Product), India is looked at as a viable alternative to Chinese manufacturing. There is a growing interest from companies such as Apple and Foxconn to diversify and many are therefore keen to explore India's manufacturing future.<sup>12</sup>

EU has imposed heavy taxes on Chinese electric vehicles though, countries like Germany aren't pleased with this move as their core manufacturing of vehicles took place in China.

This could spark an EU-China trade war causing the EU to de-risk from China. This entails reducing critical dependencies and vulnerabilities, including the EU supply chains, and diversifying where necessary.

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<sup>6</sup> [Business Standard: India-EU FTA](#)

<sup>7</sup> [India-EU FTA is a win-win for both economies - Deccan Herald](#)

<sup>8</sup> [India's International Free Trade Agreements](#)

<sup>9</sup> [EU sanctions against Russia explained](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Where does the EU's gas come from?](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Europe bought Russian oil via India, record rates in 2023 despite the Ukraine war](#)

<sup>12</sup> [China-India relations and their impact on Europe](#)

India's diplomatic stance on key global issues, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Indo-Pacific, makes it a more balanced partner for the EU than China, whose moves in the South China Sea and the Belt and Road Initiatives are causing worries in Europe.

An added advantage India brings to the table is digitisation which counterweights China's tech dominance thereby diversifying and de-risking Europe from China's dominance.

As Europe diversifies its supply chains and reduces its dependence on China, India is emerging as a key partner for the EU in sectors ranging from manufacturing to technology.

## **V. Strategic Ties**

### **A. The possible outcome of India's Ports in Europe**

India is a peninsular country with a vast coastline. Along with this India has strategically invested in the building of Indian ports along the coastlines of global allies such as Iran, Bangladesh, and Israel. They act as trade facilitators and offer larger economic benefits such as useful information on logistics and the local economy. Investing in overseas ports provides strategic benefits since it tightens control over important sea and energy supply routes. It improves the bilateral relationship between the countries.<sup>13</sup>

These ports are a gateway to broaden India's exports across the world. It fosters connectivity, Though there aren't any ports situated in Europe currently, the possible outcomes of potential ports could be:

1. Competing with Chinese ports to tone down Chinese dominance in ports.
2. Diversifying trade links and boosting ties with South America and the Caribbean
3. Enables India to counterbalance China's Belt and Road initiative
4. With investments in European ports, India might become a more dominant participant in global maritime governance, contributing to trade facilitation initiatives.
5. There can also be a surge in Indian and European job creation in the maritime and logistics sectors.

### **B. How the IMEC strengthens India's diplomatic ties with Europe**

The India-Middle East- Europe- Corridor was recently signed at the G20 conference, in New Delhi. As the name suggests the corridor aims to connect the regions of India and Europe via the Middle East. The corridor is a passage not only for goods and services but also for electricity, hydrogen pipes as well as high-speed data. Its main objectives are:

1. To increase the efficiency of transport while lowering carbon emissions
2. To deepen India's strategic engagement with the Arabian Peninsula .<sup>14</sup>
3. To counterbalance China's Belt and Road Initiatives as well as its economic corridors with various other countries
4. The project aims to foster connectivity along the old Spice Route from India through the Gulf and on to Europe – a network that operated from antiquity until it was disrupted by the British partition of India in 1947.<sup>15</sup>

This collaborative strategy boosts India's soft power and develops diplomatic connections with European countries by demonstrating India's capacity to manage large-scale, critical projects. The pathway gets relieved from the Suez Canal. The Canal is susceptible to bottlenecks, and heavy traffic and was a victim of the Red Sea crisis. The IMEC offers a land and maritime-based route that bypasses the Suez, helping both

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<sup>13</sup> [India's Overseas Port Investments](#)

<sup>14</sup> [India-Middle East-Europe Corridor](#)

<sup>15</sup> [The infinite connection: How to make the India-Middle East-Europe economic corridor happen](#)

India and Europe avoid congestion and enabling more efficient trade. This also reduces shipping time significantly, increasing efficiency.

### **C. India's Role in the Schuman Security and Defence Forum**

The Schuman Forum is an initiative by the European Union to enhance dialogue on security and defence issues between Europe and its strategic partners. The Schuman Forum brings together politicians, senior decision-makers, military representatives from EU Member States and partner countries, and representatives from international and regional organisations with which the EU cooperates on peace, security and defence.<sup>16</sup>

India's role in this Forum aligns with Europe's Indo-Pacific Strategy. India is positioned as a critical partner for Europe in shaping peace, stability, and security in this strategically vital region.

The forum facilitates dialogue on counterterrorism and promotes the joining of security and intelligence to curb terrorism. At the same time, it shares military practices, equipment and capacity building, particularly in areas like peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid.

India can be one of the major partners for digital infrastructure being the third largest digitized country after the USA and China. With the emergence of India Stack, India holds enough experience, to support the EU digitally.

Participation in the Schuman Forum strengthens India's diplomatic contribution to security matters and enhances its soft power by contributing to international peace and stability efforts.

## **VI. Political Engagements**

### **A. BREXIT's implications for India and Europe**

Britain's exit from the European Union was implemented after a 51.3% majority in the referendum polls. Brexit did imply that the EU and the UK wouldn't be accustomed to free trade anymore and that the EU has lost a major net contributor and though the UK will gain the flexibility to shape its policies, it will lose some amount of influence in the member countries of the European Union. The UK loses the benefit of being able to influence both in and through the EU, impacting economic and foreign policy interests<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand in India, Britain's exit implies stronger bilateral trade with the United Kingdom, At present, India's trade with Britain stands at around US\$ 14 billion<sup>18</sup>. Contrastingly, India has focused on strengthening bilateral relations with important EU nations such as Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. These nations hold important economic and political influence inside the EU, and they act as vital partners for India in sectors such as commerce, technology, and defence. This has opened up another opportunity for India to diversify its exports due to the separation of the UK markets and EU markets. India's economic and geopolitical resilience is attracting both, the EU and the UK and could spur a competitive relationship between the EU and the UK India may face challenges in balancing its strategic interests between the UK and the EU, especially as both compete for global influence.

With the UK's exit from the EU, India has been obliged to reevaluate its approach to the EU while improving connections with individual member nations.

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<sup>16</sup> [Schuman Forum 2024](#)

<sup>17</sup> [BREXIT Impact on Indian Economy](#)

<sup>18</sup> [BREXIT Impact on Indian Economy](#)

## **B. India's balancing act between EU and Russia**

When it comes to India's diplomacy, the ultimate test lies in the act of balancing economic, political and friendly relationships between two countries with polarised ideologies and motives in a given geopolitical situation. India has achieved the sweet spot between the European Union and Russia amidst the Ukraine and Russia War.

Dating back to the Cold War, Russia has persisted in its alliance with India and even offered military support when tensions rose between India and the US-Pakistan alliance. Russia remains India's largest arms supplier, even though its share of Indian defence imports slipped from 62% between 2013-2017 to 36% between 2019-2023, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.<sup>19</sup>

The secret to India's non-alignment lies in its strategic autonomy- defined as the capability to make decisions independent from external pressure, especially from great powers, in the main policy areas. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasised that India does not always agree with the West and has its own independent foreign policy. The West 'must live with India's stance' on Ukraine and said that India is in favour of peace regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. This he said in context with severe criticism India faced by the West over the purchase of discounted crude oil from Russia and not condemning Moscow's actions in Ukraine<sup>20</sup>

To help achieve their ambitions and to diminish their dependence on great powers, India strives to build new, flexible partnerships. Indian policy has focused on a network of strategic partnerships characterized by defence cooperation that encompasses arms transfers, military exercises, and intelligence sharing but steers clear of integrating forces and war plans.<sup>21</sup>

India strategically avoids getting directly involved in sanction violations, emphasizing its non-aligned stance and energy security. It also seeks to diversify energy sources through partnerships with other nations, including the EU, particularly in renewable energy. On defence, India has maintained its ties with Russia by procuring essential military equipment while expanding defence collaborations with European countries like France.

## **C. Collaborations in various International forums**

India is a strong advocate of multilateralism, this is seen in India's participation and collaboration in various International summits. A few examples are as follows:

India's contribution to the G20 summit emphasised the importance of women-led development. The IMF estimates that raising the rate of female labour force participation by 5.8 per cent has the potential to boost the GDP of emerging and developing countries by 8 per cent over the next few years and substantially assist in recovering from the economic loss inflicted on countries by the pandemic.<sup>22</sup> This transition from Women's Development to Women-led Development implied shaping the female leaders of tomorrow. Instead of just empowering them, providing them with platforms to lead and inspire other women. This aligns with the Government of India's vision of a 'Developed India' or a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. India's reputation of being the diplomatic moderator and voice of reason, of non-alignment, against racism and colonialism, has stood well in the G20 negotiations.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> ['Geopolitical sweet spot'](#)

<sup>20</sup> [EAM Jaishankar on Delhi's stance on Ukraine war](#)

<sup>21</sup> [France and India: Two Nuances of 'Strategic Autonomy'](#)

<sup>22</sup> [India's Contribution to the G20 Process: Focus on Women-led Development](#)

<sup>23</sup> [What has India achieved in its G20 presidency?](#)

Despite having strong bilateral relations with Russia, India's diplomacy aims to prioritise peace over conflict. Despite India's clear global stance, Western media fails to acknowledge India's neutrality as an act of peacemaking, democracy and a solution to radicalism. India's diplomacy is called Elephant diplomacy for it is slow, large-scale and stable much like the elephant.

## VII. Opportunities

### A. The post-China Revolution: Can India Become the Next Global Manufacturing and Export Partner of the EU

With the emergence of the China Plus One strategy, companies are looking for diverse supply chains and establishing operations in other countries as well, amidst all the geopolitical tension India is one of the countries that stands out. With the EU seeking to diversify its supply chains due to trade frictions with China and pandemic disruptions, India has an opportunity to position itself as a key manufacturing and export partner for the EU.

Another important factor to take into consideration is the ageing demographic of China in comparison to the rather younger demographic of India. Precisely, the median age in China in 2023 is around 39, and India's is just above 28.<sup>24</sup>

Electric vehicles are rapidly increasing in production, and China attempted to capitalise by dumping huge amounts of EVs in Europe and the United States, even selling them below their production costs. To counter this The EU is considering increasing the tariffs to 48per cent which could spark a trade war. With the availability of surplus cheap labour, a young demographic and being an emerging economy, India is one of the countries bound to thrive as the next global manufacturing hub.

According to a BCG study on global manufacturing shifts, India enjoys a strong advantage in direct manufacturing costs as an export platform.<sup>25</sup> Apple's iPhone production in India started in 2017. In subsequent years, all the latest iPhone models were 'Made In India'.<sup>26</sup>

The EU in particular is leaning towards India in hopes of diversifying its supply chain due to India's stable political system consistent with the EU's democratic ideals, encouraging trust and long-term collaboration, Interests in Indo-Pacific stability, combating climate change, and global governance, driving strategic collaboration.

India has the potential to become a key global manufacturing and export partner for the EU by increasing focus on youth skill development, increasing human capital, cost advantages and high-tech advancements ensuring time efficiency and job creation.

## VIII. Case study

### A. Hungary's bilateral relations with India as well as Russia, being a part of the European Union

India's bilateral relations with Hungary have been relatively stable. Hungary's objectives align with the EU when it comes to relations with India. Through the years, both countries have formed significant ties in education, research, and technology there have been significant investments made by Indian companies in Hungary. Meanwhile, Hungary has been one of the only countries in the European Union to maintain bilateral relations with Russia despite the sanctions placed. Hungary's foreign policies show a more

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<sup>24</sup> [A Tale of Two Giants: How India's and China's Demographics Differ](#)

<sup>25</sup> [The year when the Make-in-India lion started roaring](#)

<sup>26</sup> [tatas-second-iphone-manufacturing-plant-may-begin-operations-in-november](#)



autonomic approach to global ties and are centred around Hungary's national interest rather than that of the EU.

Hungary relies significantly on Russian energy, namely natural gas. Russia provides a significant portion of Hungary's gas, making energy security a critical concern. Hungary may regard itself as a possible mediator between the EU and Russia by keeping excellent relations with Moscow and has the potential to serve as a bridge in diplomatic efforts.

Prime Minister Orbán's recent trips to Kyiv and Moscow, the first by an EU leader since 2022, have generated controversy. Orbán claims he is only seeking clarification on the conflict and is actively contributing to peacemaking between the two countries Russia and Ukraine.

There is an evergrowing competition for peacemaking as well. Few countries want to be the first to bring peace to the ongoing conflicts and they're trying their level best to do so. For example, China is eager to portray itself as a force for peace in the world, but its recent flurry of diplomacy is also consonant with another aim: bolstering China's influence and securing stability and peace where it suits their national interests.<sup>27</sup>

While distinct, Hungary's bilateral ties with India and Russia represent a larger approach to balancing national interests within the context of its EU membership.

Could Hungary's exit from the EU become the next BREXIT? Probably even bigger, Hungary has been economically intertwined with the EU since 2004. Approximately 78 per cent of its exports go to EU countries, especially to Germany, at 28 per cent<sup>28</sup> Prime Minister Victor Orban periodically emphasised that Hungary would like to stay a part of the EU, and there isn't any other alternative due to its economic interdependence.

Hungary's relationships with India have the potential for expansion, particularly in trade and technology, but its relationship with Russia is motivated primarily by energy security and the history it shares.

## **B. India's growing soft power in Poland.**

India with its plethora of cultures, languages, practices and mythology has never failed to fascinate the whole world. With the globalisation of Yoga, Indian Cinema, and Indian Classical Music, as well as the acquisition of international leadership posts, India has managed to leave a major impact globally. Poland is one of Ukraine's crucial allies. It is vital to understand India's soft power and the role of diplomacy in maintaining this relationship.

2024 marks the 70th year of diplomatic relations between India and Poland. The Indo-Polish Cultural Committee (IPCC) was formed in 2000 to promote Indian culture and strengthen the cultural bond between Indians living in Poland and the Polish people. The committee organises celebrations of major Indian festivals at a larger scale in major cities in Poland. In 2014 both countries decided to strengthen cultural ties by establishing museums, cultural fests, and increased collaboration in libraries and modern art. After the establishment of cultural diplomacy, cultural relations were given a further boost, reflected in the current level of engagement.<sup>29</sup> India is the second largest market for Polish foreign direct investments and though this may not represent a soft power it shows Poland's reliability on India.

What does this Soft Power imply? It establishes the subtle presence of Indian culture and values which could also help strengthen diplomatic ties with Poland. The recent visit to Poland by the Indian Prime Minister

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<sup>27</sup> [Take China's Role as a "Peacemaker" Seriously, not Literally](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Hungary and the EU: A deepening divide](#)

<sup>29</sup> [India-Poland Relations: Transformation of Cultural Relations to Cultural Diplomacy](#)

covered diverse areas of bilateral ties, including trade and investment, Science and technology, Defence and security, and cultural and people-to-people connections. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual concern.<sup>30</sup>

Poland borders Ukraine and by maintaining these strong diplomatic ties India could play a huge role in peacemaking as seen in the recent visits of the Indian prime minister to the conflicting countries. India could potentially establish itself as a stable and solution-centric country which could in turn attract more foreign investments and manufacturing plants.

## **IX. Challenges**

- A. The European Union expresses discomfort with India's balancing act between Russia and the West. India's abstention and non-cooperation against Russia has left the EU frustrated and disappointed.<sup>31</sup> But instead of antagonising India, the EU has agreed to disagree. However, this does highlight India's 1. dependence on Russia.
- B. Despite India's diplomacy, India's FDI inflows have declined because of the low ease of doing business. Certain sectors require government permission, large amounts of paperwork, and variations of FDI caps for different industries.
- C. The Western media is being fed negative information about India. Allegedly disrespecting India's press freedom, commenting on India's democracy and political state, and repeatedly emphasising India's poverty. This affects how the rest of the world perceives India<sup>32</sup>

## **X. Recommendations**

- A. Due to the shrinking fertility rate in Europe, the average age demographic has increased to 44 years. Therefore India to help out, and benefit from this economically can deploy some of its semi-skilled labour to Europe opening up a window of job opportunities for immigrating professionals. To increase awareness and accessibility of government schemes like the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana to prepare Indian workers for international opportunities.
- B. By signing Free Trade Agreements with France, India could increase its exports to France, particularly in sectors such as IT services, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. France, on the other hand, could increase its exports of aerospace technology to India. By fast-track negotiations, the FTA can be prioritised within existing diplomatic frameworks to address tariffs, intellectual property rights, and market access concerns.
- C. India must invest in the building of ports in key strategic locations of Europe considering Maritime strategy, bordering major sea routes for example- France's cities Nice, Marseille, and Cannes, located on the Mediterranean coastline. This boosts India's presence in crucial trade routes, improving transport and logistics efficiency.

## **XI. Conclusion**

India and Europe have come a long way regarding strategic cooperation, economic ties, defence and security forums and many international conferences to maintain a diplomatic consensus as explored in this paper. Irrespective of multiple rifts, challenges and attempts to get India to pick a side, India has maintained its

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<sup>30</sup> [India, Poland elevate ties to strategic partnership; express concern on Ukraine conflict](#)

<sup>31</sup> [India's balancing act in the Ukraine war: Implications for EU-India relations](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Europe, West being fed negative stories about India: British journalist](#)

diplomacy. Though some may argue its diplomacy is synonymous with fence-sitting, in actuality India chooses to maintain sound relations with every country prioritising the well-being of its citizens first visible evidently in its foreign policy. Furthermore, India's history of neutrality makes it an accountable region with the added advantage of its geographical proximity to the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean as it handles around 40% of global seaborne trade and 80% of the world's oil shipments. India's growing diplomatic relations in Europe give India a golden opportunity to become the next global manufacturing hub for the EU and eventually for the whole world.

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