



EU Public Diplomacy and Outreach
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Istituto Affari Internazionali in partnership with Gateway House

EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative
**Moving forward the EU-India Security Dialogue:
Traditional and emerging issues**

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ROUNDTABLE ON EU-INDIA SECURITY DIALOGUE

Report of the IAI-GH roundtable On EU- India Security Dialogue

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Introduction:

On 21 November 2016 a roundtable meeting was held in Rome as part of the “EU-India Think Tank Twinning Initiative”. This was the second of a series of three roundtables organized by Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in partnership with Gateway House, Indian Council on Foreign Relations (GH) to discuss on the findings resulted from the project “Moving Forward the EU-India Security Dialogue: Traditional and Emerging Issues”. The topic had four sub-themes selected for their potential to promote overarching reflections between the two think tanks over the coming years:

1. Maritime security and freedom of navigation from the South China Sea and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean;
2. EU-India cooperation on cyber-security and data protection;
3. Potential and challenges of the EU-India space cooperation;
4. EU-India defence cooperation: the role of the industry.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss over the final findings and provide policy recommendations in order to inform and advice policy-makers on practical ways to move the EU-India Security Dialogue forward.

Following a track II technical discussion in Mumbai where each policy paper has been thoroughly analysed, Rome’s track 1.5 discussion provided institutional inputs.

Opening Remarks:

- Ferdinando Nelli Feroci, President, IAI
- Anil Wadwa, Ambassador of the Republic of India

A general introduction was provided by Ferdinando Nelli Feroci, President, Istituto Affari Internazionali. First of all he presented a broad overview about EU-India relationship stressing on the need for both actors to enhance their cooperation in order to face common threats and to achieve shared goals. In the second part of his speech Nelli Feroci focused on the securitization of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as a driving factor for the prosperity and security in Europe. President Nelli Feroci also provided three main area on which European policy makers should focus: the improvement of EU capabilities regarding security and defence sectors; provide assistance for the development of neighbouring partner’s capabilities; increase the protection of EU citizens from unconventional threats by promoting the cooperation with strategic partners.

Other suggestions were provided by Anil Wadwa, Ambassador of the Republic of India in Italy, who stated that there is a shared growing interest regarding the development of the strategic partnership between EU and India however there are still some gaps that need to be solved throughout the establishment of a renewed trust-building process. According to Ambassador Wadwa the EU-India Agenda for Action 2020 provided a new momentum to the bilateral relationship that will intensify the cooperation on a wide range of areas such as foreign and security policy, trade and investment, economy, global issues as well as people to people contacts. The Ambassador closed the opening session highlighting the main issues that the Indian government will prioritize in the short term, namely: the containment of

Chinese claims over the Indian Ocean; the securitization of the Gulf of Aden; promotion of socio-political stabilization in Afghanistan throughout new direct investments.

Session I: Moving Forward the Eu-India Security Dialogue: Prospects and Challenges

Chair: Ettore Greco, Director, IAI

- Alexander McLachlan, Advisor Strategic planning unit, EEAS
- Vice Admiral Chopra, Distinguished Fellow, GH
- Fraser Cameron, Director, EU Asia Centre
- Nicola Casarini, Research Head for Asia

The first session focused mostly on the topic “Maritime Security and Freedom of Navigation”. Fraser Cameron opened the session talking about the need to rebalance the EU-India relationship in view of a partnership based on the sharing of know-how especially in security matters. According to Cameron the lack of mutual trust between the two actors is by now the most relevant gap that preclude the establishment of a potential cooperation. Both EU and India are undergoing major changes and they are trying to adapt to a new global scenario characterised by deep uncertainty. The unsuspected victory of Donald Trump and the growing rise of Chinese interest abroad could act as pivotal factors for this rapprochement. EU is a reliable partner which is able to provide a comprehensive partnership that encompass cooperation in different areas such as defence, economy, and social issues. On the other side, India’s growing relevance not only as a regional power but also as a global influencer would allow EU to deepen its presence in Asia.

Alexander McLachlan extended the conversation over the nature of the future relation between EU and India. He stated that even if both actors are facing major changes, their willing to boost the cooperation, demonstrated with the adoption of the Joint Statement, can help in charting a path for a future relationship. According to McLachlan the EU foreign policy can no longer be based solely on peace-building operations and aid missions. Europe needs to develop a more mature international posture, trying to become a more proactive security provider not only for its citizens but also for its strategic partners. However in order to be able to expand this kind of policy outside of the Union, the EU needs to rebalance the prioritization of each member state’ specific interest, thus reinforcing its internal ties. As stated by McLachlan, European Member States already cooperated in operations of this kind especially those who actively participated in NATO missions and this generates a precedent that can be used to build a security union. In the process of externalization of security cooperation India stands as a natural partner for the EU and both actors already cooperated in several scenarios such as Afghanistan and Somalia, therefore the EU and India should continue to build their relationship throughout the adoption of bilateral and multilateral agreements that focus not only on security issues but also on the enhancement of connectivity between actors which operate in private sectors.

Nonetheless there are external factors that can slow down this process. As highlighted by Vice-Admiral Chopra the existence of a wide range of shared interests doesn’t implies that it will be easy to start this trust-building process in the short term. The growing presence of China in the IOR is perceived by India as direct threat to its freedom of navigation and a possible military clash in the area will probably lead to a disastrous blockage of trade.

Security cooperation with the EU has always been restricted to the African coast and in the view of the new balance of power in the region this partnership needs to be moved toward a new level. According to Chopra, EU should actively condemn the Chinese claims in the Indian Ocean and in the South China Sea because they represent a threat to the existing law of the sea. Finding a solution to this problem is a priority for Modi’s India and therefore if the EU is willing to boost the security cooperation in the area it should diplomatically support India’s stands to avoid the further development of Chinese claims on the sea.

Nicola Casarini closed the session underlining that the concerns expressed by the Vice-Admiral Chopra regarding the Chinese expansion can be traced to a lack of a shared strategic vision between the EU and India. Casarini stated that China built over the past decade a naval strategy that extend from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. In order to exploit all the potential advantages of a security cooperation project, EU and India should adopt the same broad focus.

Session II: From Mumbai to Brussels: Presentation of the project’s key results and policy recommendations

Chair: Nicola Casarini, Research Head for Asia, IAI

- Stefania Benaglia, Associare Fellow for India, IAI
- Sameer Patil, GH Fellow
- Jean-Pierre Darnis, Head of IAI Programme Security and Defence
- Alessandro Riccardo Ungaro, Researcher IAI

The second session was focused on three core issues linked to the defence cooperation: space cooperation; the role of the industry and cyber-security cooperation. The discussion started with the intervention of Jean-Pierre Darnis which provided a general overview of the current European space programme. As highlighted by Darnis, the European approach demonstrates that the EU is more focused on the exploitation of the social benefits that a space programme can offer rather than reducing the space development into a mere defence matter. For this reason the space cooperation with India is still circumscribed only to the Galileo project. Nonetheless, there is a great potential for space cooperation between EU and India since the EU can offer a wide range of direct and indirect opportunities both in the military and in the civilian interests. While the European Union is still not perceived as a reliable interlocutor when it comes to talk about military cooperation, it is undeniable that the EU can offer some of the best research centre worldwide. From this point of view the space cooperation can be carried on throughout a Track-II cooperation based on the interaction between public and private actors.

Despite this kind of strategy seems to work in the space cooperation field, the same cannot be said when it comes to talk about the role of industries in the bridging process for the construction of defence cooperation. As highlighted by Stefania Benaglia the Indian defence market represent a highly profitable option for European industries since started to renew and expand its army, however there are still internal and external barriers that preclude these industries to operate efficiently in the market. The lack of a unified European strategy has lead EU’s firms to compete among themselves thus favouring industries from US, Russia and Israel. European industries are also forced to deal with some specific problems that

characterise the Indian economy such as unpredictable bureaucracy, corruption, and unclear procurement strategy. In order to provide more competitiveness to European companies the EU’ Member States should focus on the development of a unified framework that will regulate G2G negotiations and on the adoption of fiscal and tax incentives. The EU should also enhance the political engagement with India through the establishment of more frequent high-level exchanges and provide a more pronounced political weight during final negotiations of deals.

Moving forward from the idea that the EU and India should start building a new kind of relationship based on mutual trust, Sameer Patil introduced the issue of cyber-security cooperation. The participants convened on the fact that the absence of a global cyber security regime posed common challenges for both the actors and that the current level of cooperation between the EU and India is still inadequate. Patil suggested that the cyber dialogue needs to be carried forward with regular meetings and it should focus also on contingent issues such as the use of social media by terrorists. However moving toward a global agreement against cyber attack, Europe need to understand every country has different socio-cultural attitude in dealing with sensitive issues such as privacy. Rather than pushing for making EU regulation a global benchmark, Europe should push for a general agreement that leave the implementation of those principles to India’s policy establishment.

Alessandro R. Ungaro, concluded the session providing a final overview over the future challenges that the EU and India will face in short-medium term regarding the implementation of the defence cooperation. Overall the core problem seems to be the lack of a common strategy among EU’s Member States. In this context Brexit represent a further variable that can slow down the coordination between the different European agencies. British industries can rely on deep connections inside the Indian defence market and they are likely to become a strong competitor for the other EU’s industries. In order to regain market power and maintain its competitiveness the EU should follow and implement the four pillar of the EDA through the constitution of a new European security fund and the creation of an agency that can represent the EU’s industries as a whole.