



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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“I/A” ITEM NOTE

From : The General Secretariat of the Council

to : Coreper/Council

Subject : Draft Council Conclusions on the Commission’s Communication “An EU-India Strategic Partnership”

1. At its meeting on 5 October 2004, the Political and Security Committee agreed, within the scope of its responsibilities, the annexed draft Council conclusions.

2. Coreper is invited to :
 - confirm and approve the annexed draft text ;
 - forward the draft conclusions to the Council ;
 - recommend their adoption by the Council at its meeting on 11 October 2004.

Draft Council Conclusions
on the Commission's Communication "An EU-India Strategic Partnership"

1. The Council welcomed the thorough and comprehensive Communication from the Commission on an EU-India Strategic Partnership. The Council fully supports the overall objectives of the Communication and will work with the Commission towards their implementation.

2. The Council notes with satisfaction that in recent years, notably since the first EU-India Summit in Lisbon 2000, the relationship between the European Union and India has developed fast and substantially. The Council recalls the ambition of the European Security Strategy to move towards a strategic partnership with India, taking into account the country's role in international relations.

3. The Council welcomes the reaction that the Indian Government has formulated in response to the Commission's Communication. The Council stands ready to launch in the near future the elaboration together with India of a comprehensive EU-India Action Plan and a new joint EU-India Political Declaration for approval at the next Summit meeting.

4. The Council shares the Commission's analysis that there is great potential for developing the substance of the EU-India relationship in several key areas. Accordingly, the Council endorses the priorities set out in the Communication:
 - strengthening the economic partnership and boosting trade and investment, including through better market access and continued economic reform;

 - working towards more effective EU-India co-operation in the UN and other multilateral fora, including on conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction;

 - increasing co-operation on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and on the fight against terrorism and organized crime;

- pursuing the dialogue on democracy and human rights in a mutually respectful and constructive manner;
- deepening the cultural relations, based on expanding people-to-people contacts;
- promoting sustainable development and the good management of globalization;
- supporting India's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through a more focussed development cooperation;
- reinforcing the dialogue on all aspects of international migration.

5. The Council confirms the essential interest of a stable, peaceful and prosperous South Asia. The Council emphasizes the importance that the EU attaches to closer dialogue and co-operation with India in addressing regional crisis situations. The EU should reflect on developing a strategic approach to the region that would contribute to peace, security and prosperity and support regional integration. The Council reiterates the value, which it attaches to an invigorated SAARC as a motor for regional integration and stability in the sub-continent.

6. The Council notes with satisfaction that the EU and India share a vision of economic development rooted in the wider society. It points out that the EU and India have much to gain from working together to tackle the challenges of sustainable economic reform, while ensuring that our societies' values are maintained.

7. The Council welcomes the pledge of the Indian Government to pursue economic reform with vigour. The Council reiterates the EU's firm intention to continue and extend the already existing dialogue in strategic sectors across a range of areas. Furthermore the dialogue on regulation and cooperation in research and the promotion of mutual business interests should be enhanced. The Council supports the Commission's proposal that the EU should seek to achieve greater convergence with India on the key issues crucial to a positive conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda.

8. The Council acknowledges the need to ensure that the competitiveness of our economies will continue to be enhanced. The best way to achieve this on a sustained basis is by investing in innovation and research. Many targets, which the EU has set itself in the area of research (eg. information technology, sustainable development, biotechnology) are areas where India has proven expertise. The Council invites the Commission to look at how we can enhance EU-India collaboration in science and technology. The Council emphasizes the importance of cooperation on climate change and energy efficiency.

9. The Council notes that the fight against poverty is at the top of the agenda for the Government of India. Despite impressive economic growth in the last years, around 300 million people live below the internationally agreed poverty line. The benefits of India's rapid economic development should be spread more equitably between all Indian states.

10. The Council supports the Commission's intention in making social and economic cohesion a possible priority topic in its future development strategy for India.

11. The Council recalls the European Union's commitment to strengthening the role of the UN and notes with satisfaction that India shares this goal. The Council supports the reinforcement of the dialogue between the EU and India on major issues related to the UN, with the aim of reinforcing the United Nations and developing an effective multilateralism, and with a view to co-ordinate and harmonize positions in the preparation, negotiation and implementation of major multilateral conventions and conferences on security, trade, environment, development, human rights and cultural affairs. The Council endorses the proposal to engage India with a view to establishing a more regular and formalized co-operation on conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction and peace building efforts and would like to take this matter forward.

12. The Council recalls that in January 2003 in Athens the EU and India agreed on a format for a dialogue on human rights and supports the initiatives which have been undertaken by the EU Heads of Mission in New Delhi together with the Indian Government. The EU considers it important to develop cooperation with India also in multilateral human rights fora and on thematic issues.

13. Reiterating its commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, the Council notes the proposal in the Commission's Communication to seek increased co-operation in this area and agreed to work in line with its strategy on the non-proliferation of WMD to reinforce the consistency and effectiveness of export control measures for dual use goods and to strengthen the political dialogue with India on non-proliferation and other weapons of mass destruction issues, including the universalisation of international instruments.

14. The EU reaffirms its commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Council will consider the Commission's proposal for the inclusion of India in its list of priority countries for a strategic co-operation agreement with Europol.

15. The Council shares the Commission's analysis on migration and its proposals for taking forward work with India in this area. Furthermore, the Council considers that the proposed dialogue with India should include discussions specifically on the re-documentation of illegally residing persons. The Council also invites the Commission to explore the possibilities of negotiating a readmission agreement with India.

16. The Council shares the Commission's concern about the threat posed by the spread of HIV/AIDS in India which will require a strong political commitment and firm response in terms of information, preventive measures and treatment. The EU is ready to assist India in this endeavour.

17. The Council emphasizes the cultural dimension of the EU-India relationship and the importance of preserving cultural diversity as part of the EU-India process of dialogue. It welcomes the intention of the EU Presidency to submit for approval at the next EU-India Summit a draft Joint Declaration on Cultural Relations.

18. The Council acknowledges that - notwithstanding the dynamic evolution of the EU-India relations - the EU faces the challenge of raising its profile in India and deepening the understanding of the EU's role and nature, which includes emphasizing its cultural and linguistic diversity. Accordingly, the Council fully supports the Commission's proposals to increase mutual understanding between India and the EU through parliamentary exchanges and increased co-operation between political parties, trade unions, business associations, universities and civil societies.
