



INDIAN AND EUROPEAN UNION ENGAGEMENTS: POTENTIAL FOR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract

The EU-India Collaboration Agreement was signed in 1994, and it strengthened political, economic, and sectorial cooperation between the two entities. It also serves as the legal basis for EU-India relations. Since the beginning of yearly summits in the year 2000, there has been a dramatic shift in the state of ties between the EU and India. The relationship advanced by one step in 2004, when an official statement was made of a strategic partnership between the EU and India. In addition, there have been ongoing conversations on regional and global problems that concern our common interests. The European Union and India engage in frequent meetings over their foreign policy and security, and they work together on a variety of security-related topics, including the fight against terrorism, cyber security, anti-piracy and maritime security, non-proliferation, and disarmament. There are exchanges at regional or international events, as well as close connections in multilateral forums, and there is a shared commitment to further cooperation on common goals, especially those pertaining to human rights. India and the European Union have been long-standing allies and both are dedicated to maintaining an active engagement in all areas of mutual interest. Both are important actors in their own regions and both are global participants on the international arena. The United States and China, the two greatest democracies in the world, both adhere to a core set of shared values and concepts, including democracy, freedom, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the encouragement of peace and stability. The EU-India Summit in 2017 was an important event that pushed forward the strategic alliance between the two countries. It reaffirmed cooperation on problems pertaining to politics, security, human rights, as well as global and sectorial concerns, such as information and communications technology, research and innovation, renewable energy and climate change, and sustainable urbanization. In the light of the above significance between EU and India the present paper analyzed the election results in various EU nations and its implications for India in a realistic lens.

Keywords: *Collaboration, Democracy, Multilateral Forums, Right-Wing Politics, Strategic Alliance.*

Introduction

In recent times, the European Union has not only been shaken up on one front but on other fronts as well. It was first enveloped by the financial crisis, then by the crisis of the Euro zone, and last by the Grexit, which was followed by the Brexit. The threat posed by terrorism has been one of the most widely discussed problems that different regions of the EU have had to face. It seemed as if ISIS had won over the support of many people in Europe. Terrorism was responsible for the refugee crisis that erupted as a result of the actions of ISIS in Syria. Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and Pakistan were the primary countries of origin for the migrants. The members of the EU were required to discuss and find accommodations for the influx of migrants among themselves. The economic crisis in Greece created headlines in relation to the future of the Union in its current configuration; this eventually resulted in a vote on Brexit, which was followed by the departure of David Cameron as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Brexit vote was a direct blow to the core of the European Union. Due to the fact that the United Kingdom was one of the primary driving forces behind the creation of this continental initiative, its choice to withdraw might very well result in a greater loss for the United Kingdom than for the continent as a whole.^[1] Another defeat befell the Union when, one morning, it was forced to confront the bleak fact that the United States had severed the most intimate of the transatlantic relationships. As president of the United States, Donald Trump became the third president to shift US policy away from Europe. Even Barack Obama had less time to devote to the EU.^[2]

The most significant change that had the potential to alter the political contours of the European Union was the number of elections that took place in the member countries since the elections to the European Parliament in



2014. These elections took place after the European Parliament elections in 2014. This created a pre-election atmosphere in the national elections of the member states in which the development of political parties with right-wing ideologies was anticipated to occur on a larger scale. Because of how high this expectation was, at one point in time a number of experts predicted that right-wing forces would soon control Europe, which would lead to an escalation of interreligious disputes and perhaps the demise of the Union. This anticipation was so high. Many journalists have written that a right-wing-controlled European Union would act in the same manner that the United States will under Trump. The Eastern and Islamic worlds have reason to be afraid of this development. At the very least, the results of the elections gave the impression that everyone in the Union was on the same page. is now in the process of remapping itself.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945, the concept of the European Union was first proposed. A unified Europe was the solution to the problem that was caused by Germany's continuous efforts to expand its territory, which ultimately led to two world wars. It began with the European Coal and Steel Community and later evolved into the European Free Trade Area. In 1975, the European Council was established, and in 1999, the Euro, a unified European Currency, was introduced. The first euro bills were printed in 2002. Britain has been a roadblock in the formation of a political union.^[3]

In the same vein, the EU's connections with the rest of the globe have been poorly handled. The European Union as a whole ignored the growing economic importance of India in the Asia-Pacific region, which resulted in the Chinese being given a fairly expansive market to operate in. The European Union didn't become aware of this fact until after India had already developed its ties with the United States of America and had become a strategic partner of the US. As a direct result of this, the European Union was compelled to include India as one of its strategic partners after the ascent of India on the world arena, from the United States to the World Trade Organization. This distinction was bestowed in order to provide significant impetus to the EU-India ties, as well as to acquire a focus on the long term. Both parties came to the conclusion that there are sufficient advantages to be shared. Under these conditions, both sides began to make movements in an effort to smooth out the very little regions of friction that existed between them.

Because of this, the social, political, and economic development that has taken place within the EU on the one hand, and the growing concentration of the EU on its relations with India, has made it a subject of analysis for any astute observer of the development that has taken place within the EU and its relations with the rest of the world. The political landscape of Europe as a whole looks considerably different now compared to what it did in 2002, before the financial and economic crisis that engulfed the continent and brought to light the weakness in its design. Not only has Europe been experiencing a rise in anti-immigrant populist groups throughout the continent, but it has also been watching a far greater anti-establishment movement, with tangible resentment over the status quo. In recent years, Europe has seen both of these phenomena simultaneously. Recent history has also contributed to the rise of significant anti-Muslim sentiments among the member nations. The political landscape across the continent of Europe is in a state of upheaval as a result of recent events such as the ascent of Jeremy Corbyn to the position of leader of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, the ascent of comedian and head of the Five Star Movement Bepe Grillo in Italy, and the ascent of Far-Right leader of the Front Nationale head Marine Le Pen in France, to name but a few of these events.^[4] In this article, we will attempt to give an analysis of the political evolution occurring inside the EU as well as growing imperatives for India.

European Union Parliamentary elections

In May of 2014, the eighth round of elections for the Parliament of the European Union took place. Since 1979, it was the first time that European Political Parties fielded candidates for the office of President of the Commission. This event took place for the very first time in 1979. The European Parliament is one of the biggest democratically elected legislatures in the world thanks to its membership of 751 members who have all won their seats via direct election.^[5] Along with the EU's other institutions, the EU Parliament wields a significant and ever-increasing amount of legislative and executive influence on national governments. This control is the cause for the rising hostility to it, which has reflected itself in the general turnout for the election, which has been declining



with each succeeding election. The final turnout for the 2014 elections for the European Parliament recorded an all-time low of 42.54%, marking a sustained lower turnout trend since the first direct election.

The outcome caused the European People's Party, which is on the center-right of the political spectrum, to win the most seats, even if it did not win a majority. Right-wing organizations who are hostile to the European Union have achieved unprecedented levels of success in Denmark, France, and the United Kingdom. In other areas, populist parties were successful in winning major seats. In all, almost one quarter of all seats were awarded to parties that have a negative stance against the EU or to protest groups. This election was widely viewed as one that would be anti-establishment in nature. This change inside the EU was anticipated to take place in the future national elections of member states, but it did not take place. The scuffle that broke out among the member states of the European Union (EU) over the selection of the next leader of the influential European Commission was fallout of the elections for the European Parliament, which revealed a surge in support for Euro skeptic candidates among the general population. The political parties that fall on the right side of the political spectrum did somewhat better in the wealthier nations of northern Europe, which have been less severely impacted by the effects of the economic crisis. This large group includes Euro skeptic and ultranationalist groups, who are considered to be representatives of the extreme right, as well as Angela Merkel's center-right coalition, which is headed by the Christian Democratic Union (DCU). These parties capitalized on the fears held by the working class in major EU nations over immigration flows from less developed and debt-ridden European economies.

As a result, in France, the far-right Front Nationale party led by Marine Le Pen gained 24.95% of the vote and 24 out of 74 seats in the European Parliament, relegating the Socialist Party led by Francois Hollande to the position of third place. The anti-immigration and anti-EUUKIP party, led by the controversial and outspoken Nigel Farage, came on top in the United Kingdom with 26,770/0 of the vote. This victory was also achieved in the European Union. In Austria, the euro skeptic and far-right Freedom Party won the election, receiving 27% of the vote. The Danish People's Party, led by Morten Messerschmidt and vehemently opposed to immigration and Euro skepticism, came out on top in Denmark, with 26.6% of the vote share and four of the country's 13 seats in the European Parliament. The far right had a big showing in Finland, Belgium, Greece, and even Germany, where the right triumphed and the extreme National Democratic Party earned seven percent of the vote share and seven seats, coming from nothing in 2009. In Germany, the far right won. The Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi party, was successful in winning seats for Greece in the European Parliament. Therefore, with very few exceptions, the elections for the European Parliament did indicate a spike in support for the extreme right, which consisted mostly of those who were opposed to the establishment, opposed to immigration, opposed to Islam, and distrustful of the status quo.^[6]

Elections in Britain: The Right Is Put at a Disadvantage

On June 8, 2017, elections were held for the 650 seats in the House of Commons, which is part of the parliament of the United Kingdom. Before beginning discussions with the EU, Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, wanted to ensure that she had the support of an unambiguous majority. However, the final results were not what she had hoped for since the Conservatives lost their majority in the House of Commons, which they had had before to the election. Since 2010, the Conservative Party has served as a senior coalition partner, and since 2015, it has held the position of majority party in government. The politically astute decision that Theresa made ultimately resulted in a poor calculation on her side, as shown by the fact that her party lost approximately 13 seats as a result of the elections. In their battle against the Labour Party, the Conservatives were defending a majority of 12. She expressed a desire to improve her position in the ongoing discussions with the EU about Brexit. The divorce from was the most important topic of discussion during the election campaign, which also saw major terrorist attacks in Manchester, London, and becoming. This ultimately led to the election as well as the fight for national security. Concern that became more obvious as we approached the end Therefore, the government was established by Arlene Foster's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), who, as a result, gained 10 seats and became the majority party. The far-right conservatives grew to rely on Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party. Because of this, the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which is also considered to be part of the center-right, was unable to enter the legislature, and the possibility of an organized right opposition inside the House of Commons was eliminated. The far-right UKIP party also saw significant losses, which, based on its



performance in local elections held in May 2017, were indicative of how well it would do in the general elections to the House of Commons. Nevertheless, there are some voices advocating for rights inside the Conservatives, Labour, and other minor parties like as the Liberal Democrats. Consequently, the election that took place in the United Kingdom in 2017 demonstrated a containment of the emergence of rightist elements in the mainstream politics of the country. This was the case in spite of the fact that the Conservatives were reliant on the Democratic Unionist Party to form the government. Even though they came in second place in the election behind the Labour Party, who obtained 30 more seats, the Conservatives nonetheless managed to create the government.^[7]

The Right in France Was Defeated in the Elections

The win of Emmanuel Macron in the second round of voting for the French presidency has been viewed in a number of different ways. The undeniable truth is that his decisive victory against the far-right, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim candidate Marine Le Pen is evidence that far-right populism has been unsuccessful in its attempts to gain power in Europe. In the first round of voting, Emmanuel Macron received 24 percent of the vote, while Marine Le Pen received 21.3 percent. In the second round of voting, Macron received 66.1% of the votes, while Le Pen received just 33.9% of the ballots. Later on, Macron and his party were successful in the general elections for the National Assembly as well, when he gained 308 seats and received 53.38% of the total votes cast. This win was a repetition of the earlier one. This went a long way against what the media and other watchers of the growth of the En Marche! movement in France had predicted would happen. As a result, he was able to secure a decisive majority in the 577-person National Assembly. Macron accomplished this feat in a competition in which his party fielded men and women in a ratio of 0:50, including a substantial number of individuals (52%) who were new to politics and had occupations ranging from law to education and the police force. The triumph contradicted the results of all exit polls and the predictions made by observers.

One possible meaning to give it is that it is an indication of the considerably more intricate dynamics at work in European politics that the far-right forces throughout Europe have been defeated, and that the components of the center-right and others have won as a result of this. The first round of voting for president in France revealed the decline and demise of the two-party system, which has controlled the nation since the foundation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The system has been in place since the country was initially established as a republic.^[8] It was the first time in the history of presidential elections that neither the mainstream established socialists nor the Right-of-Center parties advanced to the second round of voting. This was the case for both parties. The most significant shift was the elimination of Francois Hollande's Socialist Party, which was led by Benoit Hamon and received little over 6% of the vote. This was the most remarkable change. Overall, the high degree of unhappiness with the status quo as well as with politicians who are regarded to be from inside the mainstream assured that Macron would climb to the seats of president and Assembly. In the process of elections that have taken place throughout Europe over the course of the last two years, this very high degree of unhappiness with the party in power has been obvious. Nevertheless, in spite of such circumstances, the right could not triumph, and Macron could establish the government.^[9]

Dutch election results

The national elections held in the Netherlands in March 2017 were won by Mark Rutte of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), which is located on the center-right of the political spectrum. He triumphed against Geert Wilders, the head of the Freedom Party on the Extreme Right (PVV). In the House of Representatives, which have 150 members, Rutte received 21.3% of the vote and gained 33 seats. In spite of a drop from 41 seats to 33 seats, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte was still able to retain his liberal party in the lead in the national elections that were held in the country. In contrast, Greet Wilders, a member of the PVV, was able to boost his position on an anti-European and anti-Muslim platform, moving from 15th to 20th place. Despite the fact that Wilders increased his total, Rutte, the head of the center-right party, was the one who established the government.^[10]



Lessons Learned from Recent Elections from the EU

Recent elections in countries that are part of the European Union have taken place in the midst of instability and complexity, making them more difficult to understand. It is possible to draw the following conclusions from the events that have taken place: first, there is a high level of dissatisfaction among the citizens as a result of the status quo, particularly with the politicians perceived to be from within the mainstream, as was evident explicitly in elections to the French presidency and National Assembly; second, the problems, such as a high level of unemployment, have made the youth desperate for a change that could generate adequate employment for them or could provide for them; and third, the status quo is The rise in the power of far-right groups may be attributed to the elements that have been outlined above. Even if they have not been successful in forming a government, this may serve as a warning signal since it is possible that they have developed into a force that can be reckoned with. It is now abundantly clear that the elections for the European parliament showed a surge of rightist forces, which were to a large part mitigated in the elections for national offices. However, a significant number of commentators based in Europe believe that the decisive factor in these elections was the rise of the euro skeptic vote. It is possible that this is irrefutable; nonetheless, it is not accurate to categories all anti-EU parties as anti-immigration and ultranationalist political organizations. For instance, centrist and far-left parties in Spain and Greece are undoubtedly Eurosceptic and anti-establishment, but they are neither anti-immigration nor xenophobic.^[11] With a vote-share of more than 40 percent, the incumbent center-left Democratic Party of Italy achieved a convincing win in the country's general election. Because of this, what was clear in the elections for the European Parliament could not be reproduced in the elections for the member states' national governments. There is also a division inside the EU itself, between the North and the South. People who are antiestablishment tend to be those who are losers from globalization. A complete generalization of the political growth that has taken place inside the EU is thus unnecessary and maybe not suitable.

Emerging Characteristics resulting from the Political Developments in the EU:

First and foremost, there have been advancements made by those on the political left. One prominent example of this is the rise of Jeremy Corbyn to the position of Labour leader in the United Kingdom. Under his leadership, the party gained 30 additional seats in the House of Commons in the most recent midterm elections. Another illustration of this would be the ascent of Podemos, a political party on the left in Spain. A political party that had only been around since March 2014 took part in the elections for the European Parliament in 2014 and ended up winning 7.98% of the national vote as well as 5 seats. Podemos won 21% of the vote at the elections for the National Parliament on December 20, 2015, making it the third biggest party in the Parliament after capturing 69 seats out of a total of 350. The results of the election in 2015 could not be definitively determined, thus another election was held in 2016, in which Podemos was successful in keeping its seats.^[12]

Second, those on the right benefited as well since they were able to effectively capitalize on the migrant crisis and broaden its scope to encompass the scape-goating of the immigrant community throughout the continent. In addition to it, it brought up other concerns, such as terrorism. This was more visible in the success that Rutte had in the Netherlands, which rested in part on the definitely rightward drift of his politics as he too took a harsh stance on immigration. Rutte's success in the Netherlands hinged in part on the decisively rightward drift of his politics.

Thirdly, it has increased Angela Merkel's prospects of running for a fourth term as German chancellor, even though the next election for that position is not until September 2017. It is possible for Merkel to win the elections in September based on an image of being the strong, no-nonsense, beacon of stability in an uncertain world, and she may then assume the lead position in further integrating the EU. She must have been keeping up with the latest news in her community and adjusting her game plan appropriately in order to succeed. Even though she is now in first place, she is up against a formidable opponent in the form of the Social Democrat candidate Martin Schulz. He is being promoted as the next leader of the AfD (Alternative for Germany), which is now being headed by Frauke Petry, who labels herself as a "nationalist conservative." Since its founding in 2013, the AfD has been able to secure seats for its members in ten of Germany's 16 state legislatures. Ms. Petry is a climate change denier, an opponent of Islam, and a Euro skeptic. She also believes that global warming is a hoax.



Fourthly, despite its success at the polls, the political right in Europe does not even come close to functioning as a unified bloc. It is composed of a variety of parties that are located at various locations along an axis that is nationalistic, anti-immigration, anti-Muslim, and euroskeptic. It spans the relatively moderate UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the United Kingdom all the way to the neo-Nazi Jobbik in Hungary.^[13] Even on the floor of the European Parliament, it is quite doubtful that the parties would work with one another or come together. Between the elections for the European Parliament in 2009 and 2014, far-right parties only gained an average of 1.8 percentage points among all 28 member states together as a whole. In addition to this, far-right parties in the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and even Italy fared far worse in these elections than they did in the elections held in 2009.

Fifth, an extreme right-wing party in Europe has never been able to form a majority coalition government and take power there. Everywhere it has been successful, it has never received more than 15–30 percent of the vote and has only been able to join government by forming coalitions with other parties. The mainstream parties of the center-right and center-left in Europe continue to get support from an overwhelming majority of Europe's voting population. 23 Therefore, the fact that such forces have achieved some level of success throughout the Union is not a catastrophe but rather a cautionary tale that political elites ought to heed.^[14]

The most noteworthy finding was that the outcomes of the European elections followed closely on the heels of a much larger democratic exercise in a completely different area of the globe, despite the fact that many aspects evolved as a consequence of the political evolution throughout EU. The elections for the European Parliament and the Indian Parliament could not have been more unlike in terms of their objectives, magnitude, and organizational structure. There were certain similarities, such as the motivation of voters. In both cases, the vote sent a loud and unambiguous statement that it was against the establishment. It is interesting to note that voters in India and Europe, in different but similar voices, have rejected policy packages that have had a negative influence on their national economy and the lives of their citizens over the course of the last five years. As a direct result of this, India's very own right-wing party was elected to power in 2014. The new administration, which is led by Narendra Modi and has plans to provide a tremendous surge to India's international identity along with progress in other aspects of national life, has taken foreign policy into its own stride. In an effort to redefine India's ties with the West, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been to a number of nations inside the European Union (EU) thus far. He also accepted the task of maintaining a healthy equilibrium in India's ties with the United States of America, the European Union, and Russia individually. As a result of the growing environment throughout the EU, which has been posing complicated problems, India has to be careful and engage in smart diplomacy in order to get the most possible value from it.

Relations between the EU and India

The European Union established diplomatic ties with India at a very early stage in the bloc's history. It is now the economy that is expanding at a pace that is the highest in the world, and it is a vital partner for the EU. It is a huge and dynamic market that has 1.25 billion people. Without a shadow of a doubt, India and the EU are dedicated to significantly enhancing their bilateral trade and investment via the implementation of the Free Trade Area (FTA).⁽¹⁵⁾ The discussions for the same thing were first started in 2007, and since then, a significant amount of progress has been accomplished. Discussions are now centered on resolving some of the most pressing open questions, such as how to increase access to markets for certain products and services, how to enhance government procurement, how to safeguard intellectual property, how to ensure investors are treated fairly, and how to promote sustainable development.

The European Union was India's most important commercial partner in 2015-2016, accounting for 13.5% of India's total trade with the rest of the world. This statistic represented a significant margin of victory over China's 10.8%, the United States' 9.3%, and Saudi Arabia's 4.3% share of their total commerce with the EU over the same time period. India was also the 9th commercial partner of the European Union in 2016, accounting for 2.2% of the EU's total commerce with the globe. This places India third after South Korea and Canada, which each had 2.5% and 1.9% of the EU's trade correspondingly. The value of European Union exports to India increased from 24.2



billion Euros in 2006 to 37.8 billion Euro in 2016, with engineering items, gems and jewellery, and other manufactured goods and chemicals placing at the very top of the list. The value of EU imports from India surged as well, going from 22.6 billion Euros in 2006 to 39.3 billion Euro in 2016, with textiles and clothes, chemicals, and engineering items making up the top three categories. Trade in services has almost tripled in the previous decade, going from 10.5 billion Euros in 2005 to 28.1 billion Euro in 2015. This growth may be attributed to the globalization of the service sector. The value of EU investment equities in India increased to 51.2 billion Euros in 2015, up from 44.1 billion Euro the year before. 26 Additionally, India is a favored partner with regard to problems of innovation, such as energy or scientific research.^[16]

Although the degree of intimacy of India's ties with individual countries that are members of the EU varies, India views the EU as a whole as a global partner. In 2004, India and the EU formalized their relationship as strategic partners. In 2005, the parties involved reached an agreement on a collaborative action plan, which was then revised in 2008. Following the India-European Union Summits in 2009 and 2012, joint statements between India and the European Union were released.^[17]

As a result, this reveals a great deal about the amount of interaction that exists between the EU and India. However, India will not be able to be pleased with this amount of volume since it is not adequate. Each of the 28 countries that make up the EU has a diplomatic presence based in Delhi. The strategic alliance between India and the EU is not living up to expectations, despite the high level of engagement and optimism on both sides. It is imperative that India makes a concerted effort to strengthen its ties with the European Union in such a way that, on the one hand, it is able to secure benefits for its commercial and industrial sectors, and, on the other, it is able to secure investments and technological advances for its civilian and military infrastructure. There is more work to be done before India's strategic cooperation with the EU can be considered significant.

India has started a process of economic reform and gradual integration with the global economy in order to put it on a route that would lead to fast and sustainable development. The goal of this process is to place India on a path that will allow it to become a superpower. According to the majority of international organizations and trading partners, India's trade policy and regulatory environment continue to be rather restrictive. India is an ideal partner for the EU to pursue in the negotiation of a free trade agreement because to its mix of fast economic development, complementary trade baskets, and a relatively high degree of market protection.^[18] Therefore, in order for India to realize its dream of integrating its economy with the global economy and playing a nearly dominant role, India will need to take adequate care of its regulatory features and capitalize on opportunities presented by developments such as those occurring in the EU at the present time.

Important Considerations for India

Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, was one of the attendees of the 13th EU-India Summit, which took place in March of 2016. The summit, like its predecessors, culminated in a comprehensive joint statement that covered the whole scope of India's relations with the European Union. The document addresses a wide variety of issues, such as trade and investment ties, security cooperation, climate and energy cooperation, science and technology cooperation, and even people-to-people ties; however, it does not contain any landmark accomplishments that would suggest that the EU-India relationship has broken out of its relative stagnation. As a result, it would not be out of place to assert that the strategic dialogue between the two has, up to this point, performed below the expectations that were set for it and has been characterized by a high emphasis on rhetoric and a low emphasis on substance due to a number of factors on both sides of the argument.^[19]

The current situation in the EU has presented India with an ideal opportunity to elevate the strategic discussion and collaboration to a level that is in line with its requirements, objectives, and goals. Dealing with the European Union as a whole has always been more challenging for India than dealing with individual partners such as the United Kingdom, Germany, or France. Nevertheless, at this opportune juncture, Prime Minister was more than suitable when he reminded EU leaders at the 13th EU-India Summit in 2016 that India was the "lone beacon of



hope" in the global economy. He said this at the summit. Therefore, India should make its way back into Europe at this exciting time for the following reasons:

First off, there is now a lot of room for India to intervene due to issues like anti-incumbency, the Euro zone Crisis, unemployment, terrorism, and immigration that have caused dramatic changes in the presidential and parliamentary election outcomes throughout Europe. When a new leader comes into office, bringing with them fresh ideas and a strong dedication to the people, it is much simpler to forge relationships with that person. India which has leverage in the form of the fastest expanding economy and soft-power potentials, may tread into Europe in a manner that is simpler, by nurturing both the EU and individual member states. Since of this, the diplomatic community in India has to seize the chance because it will bring investments, technological advancements, economic opportunities, and employment to the people of India.

Second, if Germany is the economic powerhouse of the European Union, then France is the country that should naturally take the reins in terms of politics and strategy. Nevertheless, without the economic strength of Germany, France does not matter for very much. Merkel is fully aware of the reality of the situation. As a result, it is using all of her efforts to restore stability to the French economy and get it back on track. It is also aware of the reality that the future of the Union is dependent on the economic stability and expansion of France, and it is acting accordingly. India has the potential to play a very significant role in assisting Germany and France with their economic needs.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom is on the verge of leaving the European Union, which will make it easier for Germany and France to take the position of leadership in the Union. Under these conditions, India is obligated to devote a heightened level of attention to the EU. In point of fact, it would not be wrong to state that India ought to begin exploring the possibility of doing business with the EU via Merkel's Germany, with the expectation that Berlin would be able to untangle tangles that are now beyond India's comprehension. This became abundantly clear during Modi and Merkel's encounter, when Modi lavishly lauded Merkel's leadership, and Merkel, for her part, received the compliments in the appropriate spirit. In this moment of upheaval inside the Union, when Merkel is taking on the mantle of European leadership, Modi made a shrewd move by firmly sticking by Merkel's side. This must be carried out in a manner that is consistent with logic in order to construct and fortify the connection.

Fourthly, India and other countries like it have no other option than to strive toward the containment of carbon emissions and the arrest of global warming in order to ensure a cleaner future. As a result, the United States of America's decision under Trump to withdraw from the Paris Accord on Climate Change has presented India with a significant opening to take the initiative in establishing a more sustainable future. In this endeavor, India will benefit greatly from having strong positive connections with Germany, especially given Merkel's position as head of the European Union. The most recent meeting of the G-20, which turned into a debate between the G-19 and the United States on matters relating to climate change, has further demonstrated this point. As a result, India has to take the side of Germany and France, which will allow it to recast its position in international affairs and give its international identity even more importance.

Fifthly, the manner in which India and China battle for economic and geopolitical space in South Asia, South East Asia, and many other parts of the globe is comparable to the manner in which they may compete in Europe as well. An official from Germany is quoted as saying, "China is constructing a global commercial and political system all by itself." Even though it is the greatest trade partner, it does not provide any sense of security. Therefore, given this mindset, India has to become more proactive and organize its movements to raise the degree of connectedness and engagement with the Union in general and with member states in particular. Once again, this is why India should have this mindset. Under these conditions, India has to engage with the Union without taking China into account. Instead, India should strive to squeeze out a place for itself beside China within the EU.



Sixthly, since the EU does not have a clear strategic vision when it comes to defining its place in the world, it finds it difficult to effectively adapt to emerging challenges, such as the emergence of India. It is time for the EU to make good on its pledge to make India a strategic ally in the truest meaning of the word. India can use its rising economic & political prominence in the international system to persuade the EU that this is the case. India could do this by leveraging its increasing presence in the international system. An essential first step would be to quickly come to terms on the terms of a free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the EU. If there is a true political resolve to accomplish this goal, the energy of Prime Minister Modi might serve as a catalyst in this respect. The FTA will lead to an expansion in commerce and ties between India and the EU, as well as a more well-rounded agenda and a more robust relationship in all areas of cooperation in due time.

The seventh point is that India has sufficient leverage in terms of its soft power. Since the middle of the 1st century, when it was first brought to Europe, Ayurvedic traditional medicine and Yoga have continued to enjoy widespread popularity. Additional aspects of India's soft power potentials have the potential to be sources of attraction for people living in the EU. As a result, India needs to make an effort to communicate with the EU and its individual members by conceiving of ways and mechanisms. An aggressive strategy might be used by India to develop its own resources of soft power in the EU. This will bring about trade and business, as well as boost people's interaction with one another.

Eighthly, Germany did not object to Greece leaving the euro zone, and it is also not taking a harsh stance against Brexit. In fact, Germany may even be willing to let other countries, such as Italy, follow in the footsteps of the United Kingdom. It is possible that the commencement of a new "Pax Germanica" will coincide with Germany's acquisition of a more loyal hinterland to the east of its territory. When the smoke clears in Europe, the newly emerging multipolar world will have established itself for good. The Asian Financial Crisis that took place in 1997–1998 helped to solidify China's position as a dominant force in Asia. As a consequence of this, the ongoing financial crisis in Europe will eventually result in the strengthening of Germany's position as a geo-economic force in Europe. Under these conditions, India should work to improve its one-on-one connections with Germany, on the one hand, and its relations with the EU as a whole, on the other. The recent visit by Modi to Germany has undoubtedly reinforced the Indo-German relations, and it is an astute diplomatic move on the part of India toward Germany. Therefore, the spirit that resulted from this must be preserved with Germany as well as the EU.^[20]

The ninth point is that the crises of Grexit and Brexit have provided enormous lessons for the decision-makers in charge of the economy in India. In the years 1990-1991, the economy of India was on the point of collapsing, but now it is not only resilient but also one of the economies that is expanding at the quickest rate. The discussion on the level of global interdependence that India ought to foster and uphold ought to be let to proceed in any case. The takeaway from this is not that India should cut itself off from the rest of the world's economy; rather, it should carefully manage its interactions with the economies of both the region and the globe. As a part of this course, you will learn how to manage its ties with the EU on the one hand, and with individual members on the other.^[21]

If India were to pursue the imperatives outlined above, it would face a sufficient number of obstacles along the way. The problem of the mindset of the EU, which continues to perceive India as a regional South Asian force and continues to associate India with Pakistan, would be the first obstacle to overcome. The inclination to equate India with Pakistan has caused the EU to see security challenges through an outdated lens, which has caused them to struggle to find a happy medium between the two neighbors. Therefore, it would be necessary for India to design strategies for kicking off a shift in mindset on the part of the EU, which can only be achievable if India takes the initiative to pursue this goal. The second big roadblock to the free trade agreement that has been in the works since 1997 is British Prime Minister Theresa May's restrictive visa policy targeting Indian professionals. This policy has been a major source of contention between the two countries. If India is unable to anticipate the requirements and goals of the EU and its members in the context of changing circumstances, it is possible that similar difficulties will continue to be put in India's path in the years to come.



Conclusion

Due to the extraordinary progress that has been made toward integration, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. It has been really wonderful and incomparable to anything else. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 was a watershed moment that marked the beginning of the transition from the European Economic Community (EEC) to the European Union (EU). The adoption of the Euro, the shared currency, made the year 1999 an important milestone in the history of the European Union (EU). The development of the European Union (EU) since 1957, when six countries—Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands—came together to establish the European Economic Community (EEC) has been remarkable. However, as of late, the organization has begun to form factions among it, and the situation is now somewhat chaotic. The European Union (EU) is now displaying a more divided image. The number of members does change as a result of the impending departure of the United Kingdom. Even the 27 appear to be having difficulty accommodating their differences and keeping them together. Their lofty goals of having a unified foreign policy, security policy, and defence policy seem to be going through the cracks, and the bulk of them would rather handle their own independent foreign and defence policy. EU members would be left to fend for themselves as a result of the Brexit, which has served as a warning signal against the mantra of "greater Europe." The development of far-right forces has turned out to be yet another warning signal of an impending escalation and, as a result, the dissolution of the Union, if the situation is not brought under control and properly handled at the appropriate time. At this time, the political elites who are involved in governance throughout the Union should not chase after the polarizing and xenophobic language of the extreme right. Instead, they should focus their attention on the things that unite them and consider how they might confront big concerns like as climate change and economic development together. The same sort of spirit was exhibited during the G-20 meeting in July 2017, and it is imperative that this spirit not only be preserved, but also be brought forward inside the Union. The danger posed by the far right has a beneficial aspect in that it compels political leadership, particularly of the left kind, to concentrate their thoughts on the ways in which the challenges facing Europe might be overcome. In this endeavor, India could be able to provide a helping hand.

Despite the fact that it is successfully managing economic development, the EU nevertheless faces challenges such as recession, deflation, sluggish growth, and internal strife. One group of observers believes that the EU is slowly disintegrating; another group believes that the integration will expand in due course because it has huge potentials to emerge out of the crisis; and a third group believes that the status quo may persist because it is impossible to establish unity among such a diverse group with such contrasting conditions and aspirations. Regardless of what happens with the EU, the new circumstances have presented India with a wealth of possibilities, all of which need to be used to their full potential.

India has the potential to strengthen its standing, its reputation, and its significance for the European Union. However, in order for India to have more connectedness with the EU, it is necessary for India to consider the possibility of some economic give and to have knowledge of the way Europeans think. The post-cold war period has seen a steady transformation in India's foreign policy, with the country moving far away from the non-alignment doctrine, self-identification with the developing world, and suspicion of the West. Think West, often known as "Connect with the West," is now the most important tenet of India's foreign policy. The dissolution of the Soviet Union has helped India become more aligned with the United States and the European Union. The image that is presented of Prime Minister Modi is that of a pragmatic leader who has a great desire to construct a new India in terms of its personality on the world stage. The only way to know how far he will be able to go is to wait and see what the future holds. The degree to which India is proactive on the economic, social, political, and security fronts as well as the cultural front in the context of its ties with the rest of the globe will determine a great deal. This would only be achievable if the Indian bureaucracy strongly backs the measures that the Prime Minister of India proposes. Enhancing collaboration on foreign policy, security, and human rights; finalizing the FTA to resolve trade and investment irritants; bolstering cooperation on energy technology transfer, skill development, urban development, educational and cultural exchange are all urgently needed to further improve the political components of the relationship. For India's ambition to get a permanent seat on the Security Council and



participation in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, it is also necessary for India to win the backing of the European Union and each of its members.

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