

India, EU speed up work on FTA talks

India and the European Union (EU) accelerated work on negotiating texts for a free trade agreement (FTA) and initiated discussions on the modalities of the exchanges of offers on market access in goods, services, investment, and public procurement during the fourth round of negotiations that concluded last month in Brussels.

While both sides have a “deeper understanding” of the sensitive issues in the trade

chapter, divergences remained. Both India and the EU agreed to continue internal discussions to bridge as many differences as possible during the next round, according to the report on the fourth round of negotiations released by the European Commission.



Under digital trade, “good progress” was achieved on several provisions.

Negotiators also discussed the government procurement chapter, based on the EU draft text with a few additions proposed by India. The two sides held “fruitful discussions” on all elements of the text that are yet to be

agreed upon. This included the non-discrimination principle.

The EU wants binding commitments from India in government procurement, while India has not been keen on showing flexibility in the sensitive non-discriminating principle — to treat foreign and domestic bidders at par. “Only very few provisions remain to be discussed and most of the text is already agreed,” it said.

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