

First comprehensive defence, security pact

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India and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday signed a first-of-its-kind overarching defence and security partnership aimed at deepening cooperation across maritime security, the defence industry, and technology, as well as domains ranging from cyber threats to counter-terrorism.

The signing of the India-EU Security and Defence Partnership, alongside the conclusion of negotiations on the India-EU free-trade agreement, took place during the state visit to India of European Council President António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who attended the 77th Republic Day celebrations as chief guests, on the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a further sign of growing trust and of both sides viewing each other as reliable partners — qualities highlighted by the leadership during the joint statement on Tuesday — negotiations were launched on a “Security of Information Agreement”, which, the statement said, would facilitate the exchange of classified information and pave the way for stronger cooperation in security and defence.

When the EU regularly exchanges classified information with third countries, it does so under legally binding agreements that ensure both the exchange and protection of such information. These agreements are known as Security of Information Agreements.

“The leaders welcomed the signing of the India-EU Security and Defence Partnership, the first such overarching defence and security framework between the two sides that will deepen ties in the domains of maritime security, defence industry and technology, cyber and hybrid threats,



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INDIA AND EU ADOPTED THE “TOWARDS 2030: INDIA-EU JOINT COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC AGENDA,” WHICH IS INTENDED TO ELEVATE STRATEGIC COOPERATION

space, and counter-terrorism, among others,” said the India-EU joint statement.

Underscoring the point that geopolitical realities and growing cross-regional security threats called for closer India-EU cooperation, both sides said that, as they strengthened their security and defence capabilities, they would enhance preparedness across domains ranging from maritime security to hybrid threats, counter-terrorism, space security, and transnational crime. They also committed themselves to deepening crisis-management engagement and pursuing enhanced “mutually beneficial defence-industry collaboration”.

The leaders of India and the EU also adopted the “Towards 2030: India-EU Joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda”, the statement said, noting that it was intended to elevate strategic cooperation between the two sides.

“The Joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda is aimed at accelerating progress

across five key pillars: prosperity and sustainability, technology and innovation, security and defence, connectivity and global challenges, as well as enabling factors such as skills, mobility, business and people-to-people ties,” the statement added.

These developments come as New Delhi looks to strengthen security ties and bolster defence self-reliance, while EU member states embark on a rearmament drive.

The European Commission’s “ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030”, presented in March 2025, proposes to leverage over 800 billion euros in defence spending. This comes amid growing concern among EU member states over what they view as Russian aggression within and beyond Ukraine, and an increasing sense of unreliability regarding the United States under President Donald Trump.

Europe’s growing focus on defence preparedness has benefited Indian defence firms — state-run and private — particularly manufacturers of munition. An executive at a private defence company that produces artillery shell casings said that in recent months European nations had lined up to sign letters of intent, prompting the firm to expand its production capacity.