

Press Briefing by Secretary(West) on the 15th India-EU Summit

The 15th India-EU Summit has just concluded. It was held in virtual mode and attended by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, the President of the European Council, Mr. Charles Michel and the President of the European Commission, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen. Our External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, National Security Adviser, Shri Ajit Doval and the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Josep Borrell also attended the Summit.

Our relationship with the European Union is a very active one. It covers virtually all dimensions – political, economic, security, trade and investment, environment, research and innovation, education and culture underpinned by strong people to people ties. The EU is our largest trading partner for goods with trade exceeding 100 billion dollars. We also have a large service trade of about 40 billion dollars. EU is one of the largest investors in India with cumulative investment of over 91 billion dollars. The EU is also an important source for technology and innovation.

The Summit was held in a very cordial atmosphere marked by mutual respect and appreciation between the leaders, which has been a hallmark of past interactions between them. The discussions covered joint response to the pandemic, strengthening India-EU Strategic Partnership & its various dimensions, as well as our convergences and our collaboration on the global arena covering multilateralism, international organizations & contemporary developments.

In the context of the pandemic, both sides recognized the value of joint, collaborative responses at the global level. PM appreciated EU's global coronavirus initiative for accelerating access to Covid-19 Tools – vaccines, treatment and diagnostics. Recognizing each other strengths and mutual synergies such as our role in pharmaceuticals & research, the EU and India agreed to intensify cooperate in response to coronavirus, including availability, accessibility and affordability of Covid-19 tools. Both President Michel and President von der Leyen greatly appreciated the timely assistance provided by India in terms of supply of medicines to EU countries. They south India's active engagement in the initiative of universal and affordable vaccine for all.

The leaders on both sides affirmed their strong interest and full commitment to develop the India-EU strategic partnership to new levels. They adopted the Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025 as the new framework to upgrade the relationship in diverse fields – foreign policy, security, trade & investment, economic collaboration, cooperation on innovative & climate-friendly solutions, digital technologies and connectivity.

The Joint Statement adopted by the leaders summarizes the conclusions of the Summit meeting. An important outcome of the Summit is the decision to establish a High Level dialogue at the level of the Ministers to guide development of trade relations as well as trade and investment agreements in the context of the Broadbased Trade & Investment Agreement. The Leaders recognized that post Covid economic recovery priorities offer opportunities to unleash the full potential for their economic ties, including discussion on supply chain linkages between India and Europe. PM invited European companies for FDI in India taking into account our efforts to improve ease of doing business, regulatory environment and our aim to integrate India with global value chains.

Ongoing cooperation and intensifying it for modernization and sustainable development priorities were also discussed between the leaders covering investments, financing, technology, best practices and capacities. India welcomed European participation in urban transport project such as metro projects in Pune and Bhopal, renewable energy covering several solar & wind power projects, smart city projects and waste recycling. The EU conveyed its strong commitment to the climate-friendly future “European Green Deal” and its interest in collaborating more closely on such solutions. EU appreciated India’s initiatives of International Solar Alliance and Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and both sides agreed to reinforce their cooperation on these initiatives. The Leaders adopted a Joint Declaration on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy.

The development of the digital economy was discussed and upgrading bilateral dialogue on technology such as artificial intelligence & 5G was agreed by the leaders. They appreciated ongoing research & innovation cooperation which involves projects in areas such as healthcare, water, energy, transport, food and information & communication technologies. The leaders decided to renew the India-EU Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation that will enable further research collaboration. The leaders also welcomed the conclusion of Agreement between Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community) and India for cooperation in research and development in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The leaders agreed for the two sides to explore a future comprehensive connectivity partnership. President von der Leyen proposed an India – EU Joint Working Group on Artificial Intelligence which was welcomed by Prime Minister Modi.

The leaders noted the ongoing exchanges and cooperation in the area of foreign policy and security such as political consultations, naval cooperation and agreed to strengthen maritime cooperation further through a new dialogue on maritime security. They underlined the need to preserve the stability and safety of the Indian Ocean. Combating terrorism, terrorist financing, countering radicalization and abuse of

internet for these purposes was also discussed. The two sides will intensify their exchanges and cooperation in this area.

The leaders discussed the contemporary global environment and the need to strengthen multilateralism and joint, coordinated responses based on dialogue and cooperation and respect for a rules-based international order. In the context of India's upcoming membership of the UN Security Council and G20 Presidency, there was mutual interest in more active engagement and cooperation between the two sides.

In overall terms, the 15th India-EU Summit has helped consolidate our partnership with the European Union and provided a new roadmap to upgrade the relationship in all areas. As two large unions of diversity, sharing values of democracy, pluralism and rule of law and a commitment to a rules based international order and effective multilateralism, the partnership between India and the EU is a force for good in our complex world.

Five documents were concluded during the virtual summit. I will now give brief details of each of them.

i) The Joint Political Statement summarizes the deliberations and convergences between the two sides on various dimensions of bilateral cooperation, global issues of common interest and joint coronavirus response.

ii) The India-EU Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025 summarizes the framework of our dialogue and cooperation covering wide ranging areas including foreign and security policy, trade & investment, modernization, sustainable development, research and innovation, education and exchange of scholars, migration and mobility, and global governance.

iii) The India-European Atomic Energy Community Agreement on research and development cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy will enable collaboration between the Department of Atomic Energy and EURATOM on issues such as civil applications of atomic energy in areas such as (agriculture, healthcare, industry), radioactive waste management, fusion, nuclear safety & security.

iv) Renewal of Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement for another 5 years will enable continuation of scientific projects and research exchanges in areas such as biotechnology, clean energy, e-mobility, energy efficiency, marine sciences, etc.

v) Joint Declaration on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy will enable dialogue and cooperation in areas such as policy & regulations, exchange of best practices and

capacities, and technical exchanges in areas such as energy efficiency, waste management, recycling, circular business models in areas such as mobility, ICT, mobility, construction, food and textiles sector.

* * * * *