

International workshop

India and Italy: Perspectives, Priorities and Venues for Cooperation Second Edition | November 11, 2024

Outcome Report

Session 1: India Facing A New Geoeconomic Landscape

- **India's Rising Economic and Strategic Position:** India's economic power is on the rise, and it is strategically positioning itself in a multipolar world. India's "multi-alignment" approach enables it to navigate the US-China rivalry while balancing relationships with the EU, Russia, and Middle Eastern partners.
- **India-US Partnership:** India and the US share concerns about China's influence, leading to increased cooperation in strategic technologies like AI, quantum computing, and semiconductors. However, India remains cautious, maintaining strategic autonomy and avoiding a formal military alliance.
- **Potential of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** IMEC is viewed as a transformative trade route that could deepen India-Europe connectivity. Both India and Italy see IMEC as a means to reduce dependence on China and foster economic ties, presenting a new avenue for cooperation.
- **India-Europe Convergence on Security:** India and the EU acknowledge shared security concerns, particularly around China's assertiveness and maritime security. Collaboration is increasing in defence areas, including naval operations and technology sharing.
- **EU-India Cooperation in Emerging Technologies:** There is significant interest in collaborating on emerging technologies like semiconductors, cybersecurity, AI, and quantum computing. These sectors are seen as pillars for future EU-India engagement, fostering resilience and reducing dependence on China.
- **Challenges in EU-India Defence Perceptions:** India perceives the EU's defence capacity as less decisive compared to individual member states, like France and Germany, with which India has more established bilateral defence relationships. Addressing this perception gap is critical for EU-India relations.
- **Overcoming Mistrust and Dependency Concerns:** Mistrust on both sides, particularly concerning technology transfers and India's historical reliance on Russian military equipment, presents a challenge. Increased EU-India dialogue could help address these concerns and clarify expectations.
- **Need for High-Level Engagement and People-to-People Links:** Building trust through frequent high-level interactions and fostering people-to-people links, such as student exchanges, are recommended to strengthen India-EU understanding and collaboration.

- **Shifts in Global Trade and Supply Chain Resilience:** India is positioning itself as an alternative manufacturing hub, especially for European companies seeking to diversify away from China. The focus on resilient supply chains post-COVID and in response to geopolitical tensions benefits India-EU trade prospects.

Session 2: India and Italy: The Bilateral Relationship and Beyond

1. **Leadership Rapport and Shared Values:** The strong connection between leaders—PM Modi and PM Meloni—is pivotal, fostering a positive outlook for deeper collaborations. Both nations also champion a multipolar global order and a commitment to democratic values, setting a solid groundwork for cooperation.
2. **Economic and Industrial Collaboration:**
 - Industry 4.0 and Manufacturing: Italy’s advanced manufacturing aligns with India’s ambition to be a global production hub, particularly in automation and robotics.
 - Renewable Energy: Italy’s green technology in solar and wind energy supports India’s ambitious renewable targets.
 - Space and Defence: Italian expertise in satellite technology and defence industries offers an avenue for collaboration with India’s space and defense sectors, especially under the “Make in India” initiative.
 - Luxury Goods: Italian luxury brands can leverage India’s craftsmanship to tap into the growing luxury market.
3. **Addressing Bureaucratic Challenges:** Both nations recognize obstacles in bureaucracy and visa issues, seeking streamlined processes to bolster investment and ease professional mobility, which is essential for smoother collaboration.
4. **Strategic Alignment in a Multipolar World:**
 - Third-Way Approach: Italy and India envision a “third way” that circumvents dependence on the US or China in technology and trade, instead promoting digital sovereignty, open-source technology, and responsible AI.
 - Geopolitical Navigation: By strengthening ties in the Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean regions, Italy and India aspire to enhance maritime security, counterbalance Chinese influence, and support freedom of navigation.
5. **Beyond Bilateral Ties:** Italy is seen as a bridge for India to the European Union, opening avenues for broader economic and strategic engagement. The IMEC Corridor, if fully realized, could further solidify India-EU trade connections, reinforcing Italy’s role as a crucial link.
6. **Technological Cooperation as a Growth Path:** Italy and India are keen on expanding their technological partnerships, particularly in space, digital infrastructure, and open innovation ecosystems. The ISRO-ASI partnership, as well

as initiatives in AI and sustainable technology, reveal both countries' commitment to leverage innovation for mutual benefits. Such cooperation aims not only to bolster their domestic industries but also to foster global technological equity.