

Keynote address by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the EU-India Business Forum

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure to be here at this Business Forum and in this city. I know that a speaker is supposed to say that he is happy to be where he is. It is never true but this time it is true, because the last time I was here was back in 1999 and I am really happy to be here once again. This is my second visit to this great nation; it will not be the last. I will come back.

And I am really happy for having come back because I remember my first trip to India. I remember it vividly. Because I was then impressed – as I am now – by the energy of India, of the Indian people, both eager to grow, wanting to succeed. And when I left India in 1999 I sensed that this country was the future.

Coming back here today, I think my sense was right. India has embraced the 21st century – more than others. The Indian leadership is helping to shape the world and make it a safer place. You are home to some of the most innovative tech companies in the world.

As I stand here today, I am more convinced than ever of this country's enormous potential. I am more convinced than ever that India and the European Union, beacons of democracy and tolerance, must shape the world together.

India is one of the European Union's oldest partners and friends around the world, with diplomatic relations dating back to 1962.

We are – how could I say? Partners, natural partners in so many respects.

Natural partners because we share the same values of freedom and respect for human dignity.

Natural partners because we are two of the world's largest democracies and believe in the rule of law.

Natural partners because we face many of the same challenges and share many of the same opportunities in an increasingly globalised world.

Our cooperation in response to these challenges helps make the world safer, more prosperous and more sustainable.

Two examples.

Since we last met in Brussels, India and the European Union have tragically fallen victim to terrorist attacks. We may be thousands of kilometres away from each other, but we face the same enemy. Europe and India, India and

Europe must work together to fight terrorism in all its forms.

This is why this year we have deepened the cooperation between our security and intelligence agencies to fight terror financing and radicalisation. The Joint Declaration on Counter Terrorism we signed earlier today builds on that work.

India and Europe also have a shared responsibility when it comes to climate change. Both India and the European Union are unequivocal: the Paris Agreement is irreversible. Together with the other 195 signatories we will lead the way.

India has committed to increasing its share of renewable energy from 7% in 2012 to 22% by 2022. The European Union will support India every step of the way as your energy needs grow over the next decade and beyond that.

The European Investment Bank has already provided EUR 1.2 billion worth of loans to support energy and climate related projects in India.

These numbers include the EUR 200 million loan to the State Bank of India to support large scale solar power schemes across the country. This is just a part of the almost EUR 1 trillion that will be needed to be invested in clean energy in India by 2030 – this investment will create new opportunities for Indian and European businesses alike.

Working together across these areas makes sense for both sides. And in doing so both India and the European Union are charting a course to what I believe must be a shared future.

Prime Minister Modi's Independence Day speech set a clear course for India. This was a speech which was impressing me and which was inspiring me. As this country celebrates its 70th anniversary of independence, the Prime Minister has set out a bold and ambitious vision of the 'New India' ahead of your 75th Anniversary in 2022. He made a passionate case for international cooperation on security, counter-terrorism and other global issues.

Less than a month ago, more modestly, I delivered my own State of the Union speech about European future. I set out how Europe could become more united, stronger and more democratic. And I called for Europe to become the leading global voice for a rules-based multilateral system.

The Prime Minister and I, in our own ways, both argued for the same thing. We are natural partners because we share the belief that by working together we are stronger.

But we both know that we could also be doing so much more. We are only scratching at the surface of our common potential.

And we could start by learning a few lessons from how our businesses and people are working together.

European companies are already the second largest investor in India with an investment stock valued at EUR 51.2 billion in 2015.

European companies create jobs and growth right across India.

Bosch, Michelin, L'Oreal and others are setting up headquarters, manufacturing facilities and innovation hubs right across the country. They are only a few examples of the 6,000 European companies which are operating in India, employing 1.2 million people directly – and 5 million indirectly.

Europe is already the primary destination for Indian foreign investment. This reflects our shared values and common belief in global trade and investment.

But we know we can do more. And we know that you can do more. We would like to see more investment in the European Union coming from Indian companies.

The European Union is the world's biggest open market. We are the largest trading partner for 80 countries, including of course India. And we are the largest recipient and source of Foreign Direct Investment in the world.

The European Union's economy is growing at above 2% a year. That is not enough, that is too meagre, that is too modest. But with this growth we were outstripping the United States for the last two years. And never in its history was the employment rate in Europe as high as it is today – never, never before. So Europe is a place to do business. And that will remain the case after the United Kingdom's departure in March 2019.

The European Union of the then 27 will still be India's largest trading partner. It will be made up of 445 million consumers living in what will remain the second largest economy in the world.

The EU 27 – you have to become used to this kind of description – already import EUR 2.38 trillion in goods and services a year, the second most in the world. This will not change after March 2019. We will also remain by some distance the largest destination – and the number one source of – Foreign Direct Investment in the world.

We can be sure that Europe's economy will create new opportunities for India's businesses – both now and in the future, now and after March 2019.

But business cannot do it alone. There is a role for institutions and for governments. I am proud that the European institutions are investing in India and its future.

The European Investment Bank now has a regional office in New Delhi. Its loans helped to build the Lucknow Metro that opened just last month. For a previously non-metro city, the impact of European investment cannot be underplayed.

And just this summer a EUR 500 million loan was signed to help with the construction of 12 underground and six elevated stations in the Namma Metro, making social mobility easier and reducing congestion.

But it is not just about hard investment. It is also about the sharing of knowledge and best practice to help solve real problems.

European know-how is now contributing to the Clean Ganga project – and we have some experiences in this field: with the Danube, the Elbe, to give just two examples.

I am delighted that the European Union is providing technical, financial and business input to the reform of India's water sector. We know this is a major issue for India, where 75.8 million people have no access to clean water. This is not only the problem of India, this is a common problem both for India and for Europe and we are trying to help as much as possible to tackle this enormous problem.

Dear friends,

When I think back to when I was here in 1999 – for the younger amongst you: that was last century – the level of cooperation is remarkable.

But I believe it is now time to open a new chapter in our partnership, one that can cement the progress we have made and create jobs and growth in both India and the European Union.

Both the European Union and India believe in fair trade. It is a way of creating jobs, exporting our standards and values – values we share with our Indian friends.

When it comes to trade, we are once again partners, natural partners.

We have a significant and balanced trading partnership to build on. The European Union is already India's largest trading partner, accounting for more than 13% of India's overall trade. Trade in goods and services surpassed EUR 100 billion last year.

The trading of goods is almost perfectly balanced with exports and imports almost equal on both sides. And bilateral trade in commercial services has almost tripled over the last decade.

This is only a fraction of what we could achieve together. This is why I believe that a Free Trade Agreement between India and the EU would be the best way forward.

I really believe that today's Summit has given us fresh impetus and I am confident that our negotiators will establish a way forward in the next coming days because your Trade Minister and my Trade Commissioner will have a meeting in three days from now, I think in Marrakesh, and they have to have an in-depth look into this issue.

But I do not want to raise expectations we cannot meet. No nonsense. We will not restart talks for the sake of starting them; we want to conclude them. Once the circumstances are right – because the European Union cannot impose conditions on India because India has at least the same dignity as the European Union – once the circumstances are right, we will resume. And with good faith on both sides I am confident we can move forward.

A second goal that we should set ourselves relates to data protection.

Indian companies have created enormous wealth and thousands of jobs providing IT services to European companies. Many of the services they provide involve the exchange of personal data, the black gold of the 21st century.

This data needs to be protected. India and the European Union should work together on high standards of protection.

First, because data protection is about values. The rights that citizens enjoy offline should also be protected online. Second, because the closer our data protection standards are, the more freely personal data can flow between us. The business case is compelling.

If India's standards of data protection are converging with those of the European Union, the aim should be for the EU to recognise the adequacy of India's rules – conformity does not mean full identity with European rules but bringing together values, norms, systems. We have to build this “data bridge” to enable personal data to flow freely between us.

As both India and the European Union look forward to the next decade, I am convinced that India will play an increasingly important role in Europe's future – and vice-versa.

Today's Summit – the one we had, President Tusk and myself, with your Prime Minister – was an important step towards making that happen.

As a friend, ally and partner, natural partner, I believe that the European Union can help India make good on Prime Minister Modi's vision of a “New India” for 2022.

The European Union will be there every step of your way from now to 2022 and beyond. We are ready to help India achieve its ambitions, and we are counting on India that India will reach its ambitions. The benefits will be mutual. The opportunity should be seized.

Long live India!

Thank you.