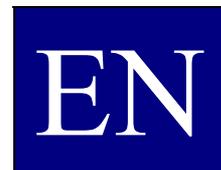




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 13 October 2006
13961/06 (Presse 286)

**EU-INDIA SUMMIT
Helsinki, 13 October 2006**

Joint statement

1. The seventh EU-India Summit was held in Helsinki on 13 October 2006. The EU was represented by Mr Matti Vanhanen, Prime Minister of Finland, in his capacity as President of the European Council, assisted by High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Dr Javier Solana; and by the President of the European Commission, Mr Jose Manuel Barroso, European Commissioner for External Relations Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner and European Commissioner for Trade Mr Peter Mandelson, Mr Erkki Tuomioja, Finnish Foreign Minister, and Mrs Paula Lehtomäki, Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and Development. The Republic of India was represented by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, Mr Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce and Industry, Mr Anand Sharma, Minister of State for External Affairs, and Mr M K Narayanan, National Security Adviser.

P R E S S

The leaders sent the following message:

2. The EU and India, as the two largest democracies in the world and global actors in the multipolar world, reiterated their commitment to the Strategic Partnership launched at the fifth EU-India Summit in The Hague. This Partnership is firmly based on the shared values of democracy, pluralism, rule of law and respect for human rights. The two sides adopted a comprehensive and forward looking Joint Action Plan at the sixth EU-India Summit at New Delhi. Since then the EU and India have been working together closely to build on and take forward their Strategic Partnership at a bilateral and global level. The two leaders welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Joint Action Plan and reaffirmed their commitment to take it forward.
3. The leaders welcomed the steady, significant intensification of the dialogue between the strategic partners. The level of engagement between India and individual EU Member States has also been qualitatively enhanced. Practical steps have been taken in setting up a number of new consultation mechanisms. The number of official visits has multiplied. Over and beyond this has been the marked expansion of formal as well as informal day-to-day contacts at working level between experts on subjects across the board. EU-India cooperation will be further enhanced through efforts to work towards facilitating the movement of businesspersons, professionals and tourists, as well as researchers, scientists, students and academics between India and the EU Member States.
4. The EU and India stand committed to the rules-based multilateral trading system. The successful outcome of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) multilateral trade negotiations remains their foremost trade policy priority, and they agreed to ensure that the deepening of bilateral trade relations supports the larger multilateral trading regime.
5. The rapidly growing flows of two-way trade and investment between the EU and India reflect the strengthening of bilateral ties. Leaders on both sides encouraged an expansion and deepening of trade and investment linkages. Recognising that stronger economic engagement is mutually advantageous and would buttress the Strategic Partnership, the leaders decided to advance their bilateral trade relations. The Summit welcomed the work done by the High Level Trade Group and endorsed the case made for a future broad-based bilateral trade and investment agreement. The Summit agreed that both sides move towards negotiations for such an agreement.

6. The close association of industry and business in EU-India cooperation as well as dialogue between businesses from both sides are crucial to achieving the common goal of enhancing trade and investment. The EU-India Business Summit, and the launch of the EU-India CEO Round Table held in Helsinki yesterday, have provided for useful and constructive interactions among key Business leaders from both sides.
7. The EU and India are committed to promoting international peace and security and working together towards achieving economic progress, prosperity and sustainable development, as well as promoting good governance. Both the EU and India are committed to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms. The two sides will continue, in a spirit of equality and mutual respect, the dialogue on human rights both in a multilateral and bilateral context.
8. The leaders welcomed the recently established EU-India Security Dialogue, held for the first time in May 2006, as a useful and important forum for an in-depth exchange of views on global and regional security issues, including disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as bilateral issues of common concern.
9. Emphasising the paramount need for effective multilateralism and their commitment to a rules-based international order, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to intensify cooperation at the United Nations and in multilateral fora to address issues of global concern, including in the areas of development and environment. The Summit underlined the importance of a strong, effective and efficient United Nations Organisation and the leaders also recognised the need for a comprehensive UN reform. The Summit agreed to work jointly towards strengthening the role of the newly established UN Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission, and stressed the need to maintain momentum in the efforts to adapt the United Nations to the needs of today's world. In this same context the leaders stressed the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system. They also agreed to continue to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, building on existing institutions. The Summit leaders also expressed their conviction of the need to eliminate impunity for the gravest international crimes.

10. The EU and India reaffirmed their shared interest in working together as partners for disarmament and for countering the proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems. They regard the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, including the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-state actors, as a major threat to international peace and security. In this context they emphasised the importance of full compliance by all States with their existing obligations through national implementation as well as UNSC (United Nations Security Council) Resolution 1540. They agreed that effective national export control measures for dual use goods, with due regard for cooperation for peaceful purposes, play a crucial role in preventing proliferation.
11. The leaders expressed deep concern at the reported nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in violation of its international commitments. They agreed that the test jeopardises regional peace and stability and highlights the importance of countering proliferation. Leaders urged the DPRK to return immediately and without preconditions to the Six-Party Talks.
12. The leaders emphasised the urgent need for the international community to promote a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East / West Asia, with the objective of reaching a comprehensive, just and durable peace and stability in the region. They reaffirmed their support for a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, including relevant UNSC Resolutions, the Roadmap, and the Arab League Resolution (Beirut 2002). The leaders discussed the situation in Lebanon and supported the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701. They also welcomed the reinforced UNIFIL for which EU Members contribute half the forces, along with countries like India, which have contributed towards UNIFIL since its inception more than two decades ago. They also stressed their determination to bring humanitarian assistance and recovery aid to the people of Lebanon in rebuilding of their nation.
13. In addition, the leaders discussed, inter alia, the situation in Sudan as well as Iran's nuclear programme. They also discussed Burma/Myanmar and agreed that progress towards democracy and inclusive national reconciliation in Burma/Myanmar would contribute to peace and prosperity in that country.

14. The EU and India reaffirmed their long-term commitment to assist the Afghan Government in the stabilisation and rebuilding of Afghanistan. In this context, both sides welcomed the holding of the second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECC) in New Delhi on 18-19 November 2006. They noted that although much has been achieved during the recent years, formidable challenges still lie ahead in the arena of security, governance, rule of law, economic and social development as well as human rights. They recalled the consistent need to assist the Afghan Government in establishing its control throughout the country and in curbing the ongoing insurgency. In this context the importance of counter-narcotics efforts was stressed.
15. The leaders welcomed the restoration of democracy in Nepal. This has paved the way for finding a peaceful political solution to the challenges facing that country. The Summit leaders welcomed the dialogue between all political groups for restoring political stability in an atmosphere free from violence. They also stressed the importance of consolidating the rule of law and respect for human rights in the context of multi-party democracy in Nepal.
16. Both sides are convinced that violence is not the answer to problems in Sri Lanka, and call on the parties to return to talks immediately. The ongoing hostilities have resulted in great suffering including the loss of life, internal displacement of thousands, and a refugee exodus to India. The leaders expressed strong, continuing support for the efforts of Norway as the facilitator to bring peace to Sri Lanka.
17. The EU welcomed India's support for the EU's application for observer status in SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), which was considered and approved by the 27th Council of Ministers Meeting in Dhaka on 1-2 August 2006. The EU looked forward to attending as an observer the 14th SAARC Summit, which will be held in New Delhi on 1-4 April 2007.
18. The leaders warmly welcomed the decision on ASEM (Asia Europe Meeting) enlargement taken at the sixth ASEM Summit in Helsinki on 11 September 2006. The leaders looked forward to India's future contribution to the ASEM process as it enters its second decade. They also noted that India's participation will further increase the representativeness, dynamism and innovative character of the ASEM process, which is the main forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe.

19. The EU and India stand united in facing the scourge of terrorism, which constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The EU and India condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose. The fight against terrorism can only succeed if it is sustained and comprehensive. The EU and India, therefore, attach great importance to counter-terrorism cooperation in the framework of the United Nations and share a commitment to universal ratification and full implementation of all international counter-terrorism conventions and related protocols. The EU and India continue to work actively towards a swift finalisation of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN. They also welcomed the adoption of the first UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly on 8 September 2006. The EU and India expressed their commitment actively to support implementation of the Strategy in all its dimensions. The leaders affirmed their commitment to combat terrorism with full respect of obligations under international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Both sides are committed to continuing their cooperation on counter-terrorism and look forward to holding their next regular consultations in 2006. Strengthening cooperation to combat terrorism continues to be one of the priority areas for the EU-India Strategic Partnership.

20. Both the EU and India attach high priority to energy security as a key to stable and sustainable development. Energy is an important area of ongoing and future policy dialogue and practical cooperation between the EU and India. Significant progress continues to be made within the framework of the EU-India Energy Panel and its working groups. Both sides agreed that the first EU-India Energy Business Conference was an important step in bringing together various stakeholders in the process. They also expressed satisfaction over the establishment of a fourth new working group on Petroleum and Natural Gas. The EU and India will continue work to develop the necessary knowledge and expertise for the use of clean coal technology and sustainable clean energy resources.

21. The leaders reaffirmed that urgent action is required by all countries to address climate change in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. They welcomed progress in the implementation of the EU-India Initiative on Clean Development and Climate Change. They agreed further to strengthen their dialogue and exchange views on key issues, in particular those related to processes initiated under the Montreal Action Plan. They are committed jointly to facilitate the development, transfer, deployment and dissemination of sustainable and efficient energy systems, promoting renewables, low emission technologies and energy efficiency, and the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms. They underlined the importance of encouraging and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production to lessen the causes and adverse impacts of climate change. They particularly emphasised the need to exploit, as appropriate, the synergies between the promotion of energy security, sustainable energy supply, innovation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in order to move to a low-carbon future.
22. The EU and India recognise the critical role of science and technology (S&T) in striving towards their respective knowledge-based economies and the mutual benefits of further strengthening joint research and S&T cooperation. The leaders look forward to the renewal of the EU-India S&T agreement in 2007. Both sides welcomed India's full membership in the ITER project.
23. Given the healthy growth and potential in two-way trade, tourism, research and student exchanges, and business between the EU and India, the leaders recognised the importance of strengthening transportation links in order to further promote and facilitate exchanges. The leaders took note of the progress achieved in 2006 in the area of civil aviation cooperation and reiterated the significant prospects of further strengthening cooperation in the aviation sector. The leaders also welcomed the joint organisation of the first EU-India Aviation Summit that will take place in New Delhi on 23-24 November 2006, and the prospect of a finalisation of a 'Horizontal Agreement' between the EU and India, as well as an agreement on the priorities for a new technical cooperation programme.
24. The leaders welcomed the launch of the negotiations for a maritime transport agreement between the EU and India and expressed their full support to the continuation of the negotiation process with a view to concluding a mutually beneficial agreement.

25. The leaders also welcomed the finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding on an EU-India Dialogue and Cooperation on Employment and Social Policy and looked forward to its signing at an early date.
26. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen bilateral economic cooperation and establish new policy dialogues in areas of mutual interest. They took note of the first meeting of the working group on Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology, with particular reference to Ayurveda (Indian traditional system of medicine) and to regulatory issues concerning data protection and development of innovation. They looked forward to a visit to India this year by a team of experts from the European Commission to study the Ayurveda system.
27. Within the broad context of EU-India economic cooperation, the leaders support the establishment of a regular macro-economic dialogue, which would allow both parties to discuss economic developments and policy challenges in their respective economies as well as developments in the world economy at large. Both sides reiterated their commitment to the continuation of their financial services regulatory dialogue. Recognising the benefits of closer cooperation in fostering the protection and promotion of intellectual property rights, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to develop an active dialogue in this field, including cooperation on capacity building activities, human resource development and public awareness programmes.
28. Referring to the 2004 Joint EU-India Declaration on Cultural Relations, both sides stressed the importance of cultural diversity and of the early ratification and implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as well as the growing importance of dialogue among cultures and civilisations in the new millennium.
29. Both sides welcomed the first EU-India Higher Education Fair to be held in November 2006 in New Delhi.
30. The leaders expressed their appreciation of the work of the EU-India Civil Society Round Table and acknowledged the valuable contribution of civil society to EU-India relations. They welcomed the launching of the EU-India Civil Society Internet Forum.