

# CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



## RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: NAVIGATING ITS RAMIFICATIONS IN EUROPE AND INDIA



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# **Russia-Ukraine War: Navigating its Ramifications in Europe and India**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page No</b>
Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	5
2. Security Structure of Europe and the Five Scenarios of the Russia-Ukraine War	7
3. Energy Security: Decoupling from Russia	14
3.1 India a “Friend in Need” or a “Friend Indeed”?	14
3.2 Green Energy as Long-Term Solution	15
4. Europe’s Increasing Defence Budget	18
5. NATO’s Expansion: Finland and Sweden	22
6. Policy of Neutrality: Switzerland and Austria	25
7. EU in the Indo-Pacific	27
7.1 Strengthening Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region with Operation ATALANTA and Combined Maritime Forces	27
7.2 EU Strengthens Collaboration with ASEAN	28
8. NATO’s role in the Indo-Pacific	30
8.1. NATO and Japan	30

8.2	NATO and Republic of Korea	32
8.3	NATO and India	32
9.	Determinants Impacting the Duration of the Russia-Ukraine War	34
10.	Evaluating the Mistakes and Lessons for Ukraine and Europe	37
11.	An Assessment of the Conflict for Russia	40
11.1	Major Impact	40
12.	Navigating the Impacts and Challenges India faces with the Conflict in Ukraine	43
13.	Recommendations for Europe	51
14.	Recommendation for India	54
15.	Areas of Collaboration between India and the EU	57
15.1	Cooperation in Climate and Energy	57
15.2	Cooperation in the Space Sector	58
15.3	Cooperation in Advanced Technology	59
15.4	Challenges	60
15.5.	Future Course of Action India and EU can Initiate to Collaborate in these Sectors	61
16.	Conclusion	63



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Russian-Ukraine war is seen as a disruption of the three decades of global cooperation, triggering profound economic and geopolitical repercussions across the world. This led to the inflation of defence spending in European countries including Germany. Finland and Sweden officially became members of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). While Switzerland faced criticism for abandoning neutrality. The war also emphasised the need for European Union (EU) cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, the Israel-Hamas war could complicate the global geo-political landscape. This would undoubtedly have implications for India and advocating methods to restore global stability and strengthen EU-India partnership remains salient.

2. The war has prompted the EU and NATO to update their defence policies to Strategic Concept and Strategic Compass respectively. Ambassador Thomas Greminger stated that the battle has increased the threat of a new arms race, maybe involving nuclear weapons. He outlines five scenarios. The first scenario may foresee a protracted conflict in which Russia may occupy other territories, including the Donbas. The second scenario may indicate low-intensity combat, with or without a formal truce. In the third scenario, nuclear weapons may be deployed predictably with cyber, electronic, and space warfare. The fourth scenario suggests that either Russia or Ukraine might win the conflict. The fifth option is a negotiated/diplomatic settlement. Since it incorporates the global community, it suggests that India would fit in nicely. This suggests that New Delhi is not simply a passive observer, but rather actively engaged in dealing with the complicated geopolitical scene. PM Modi's diplomatic effort demonstrates India's positive approach to dispute resolution. Meanwhile, India has avoided taking a side while maintaining its

strategic autonomy. It can also be viewed from another aspect, in which India has fulfilled its obligations and the onus is now on Russia and Ukraine to take more action.

3. Europe was heavily reliant on Russian energy supplies before the conflict, particularly natural gas. As the crisis worsened, Europe understood how urgently it needed to reassess its energy policies and how its reliance on Russia would leave it vulnerable. The EU has correctly applied the phrase 'A friend in need is a friend indeed'. Those who supply fossil fuels to the EU are referred to as 'friends in need,' but those that collaborate with the EU on renewable energy sources are referred to as 'friends indeed'. So far, India has been 'a friend in need' but not 'friends indeed'.

4. Since 2014, Europe has seen a notable increase in its defence spending with a sharp rise in 2023. Munitions worth €100 billion were collectively contacted by the European countries between 2022-2023. This marked a rise of 33 percent which reflected heightened security concerns in the region.

5. Following decades of neutrality and non-alignment, Finland and Sweden finally joined NATO in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. With this, both countries want to reap the benefits of the alliance's collective defence agreement.

6. Sweden and Finland have already joined NATO. As a result, these two countries are no longer considered neutral or non-allied European states. This leaves Switzerland as Europe's only permanent neutral state that does not accept the European Union's 'Common Foreign and Security Policy' (CFSP). Switzerland opposed the EU and US sanctions imposed in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. It did, however, take steps to prevent sanctioned persons and groups from using Switzerland to evade the penalties. Furthermore, Switzerland was the leader of the OSCE at the time, making it a key role in conflict resolution. However, the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marks a significant shift in European security. It raised the question of how long Switzerland can maintain its neutrality and how it will aid Ukraine while condemning Russia. The Swiss populace has shown strong support for

Ukraine. According to reports, at least 77 percent of Switzerland's population backed the sanctions.

7. The EU's security concerns have stretched to the Indo-Pacific, particularly in the Indian Ocean. To improve collaboration with the region, numerous naval activities have been launched. EUNAVFOR ATALANTA is one of them. The operation includes both European and non-European members, with India serving as a vital partner. The 'EU-India Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2020-25' seeks to strengthen the strategic partnership across a range of areas, including maritime security cooperation. India launched the 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR) in 2015 and the 'Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative' (IPOI) in 2019, which have garnered pace. Meanwhile, to protect the Rule-Based International Order (RBIO), the US established the 'Combined Maritime Forces' (CMF) with 42 other member and partner states, including India and a few European countries.

8. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has increased collaboration between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-Pacific. The EU recognises the importance of being able to form new alliances as well as reinvigorate and reinvent existing ones in order to successfully implement its Indo-Pacific policy in the region. The EU's strategy in this area might be built on a long-standing collaboration with ASEAN.

9. NATO's perception of China has changed as a result of the crisis in Ukraine. Apart from the pre-existing problems with China, a new dimension has emerged i.e., China's involvement in Russia's support. This now has a direct bearing on Europe's security. Indo-Pacific countries like Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand participated in NATO Summits and showed enthusiasm to collaborate in various areas. Regarding India, it should not completely deny its relationship with NATO as long as it avoids acting in the region like a Cold War-era security alliance.

10. Russia's intention to attack Ukraine was evident. Even after Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, there was a lack of solidarity between the EU and NATO. There are a few issues that Ukraine and Europe have failed to understand.



11. Russia assumed that the Ukrainian government was weak, corrupt, and would succumb under duress. It was also expected that Europe, largely dependent on Russian oil and gas, would never have a desire for war. Although it was anticipated that the sanctions would have a significant influence on Russia, they did not totally affect Russia's war objectives. There is also a paradox-while Russia's defence capabilities are expected to expand, the country's economy may collapse. In addition, China shows interest in trading with the US and Europe apart from Russia.

12. The Russia and Ukraine conflict has far-reaching consequences not only in Europe but also around the world. India's refusal to overtly criticise Russia has garnered international attention. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India has boosted its oil imports from Russia, which is the major crude oil provider. India has an independent foreign policy that is heavily marked by its strategic autonomy. India does not believe in establishing coalitions, particularly when it comes to defining its foreign policy.

13. Europe has a variety of economic and strategic interests. They do not agree with each other. To deal with the region's current geopolitical turbulence, a 'Comprehensive Security Order' is required, which would entail certain basic principles and obligations from all nations. Threats and deterrence may not always work to prevent or end a war. Negotiations and peace negotiations may be part of the system.

14. India may start building tank engines, but it will take years to match the efficiency of Russian engines or the intricacy of a Rafale fighter jet. India can never dismiss its strategic measures touching the intelligence front while keeping the war in mind. The 21<sup>st</sup> century demands an enmeshment of traditional and modern warfare capabilities.

15. Despite the complicated geopolitical situation, India and the EU can engage in a number of crucial sectors. Climate, energy, space, technology etc., remain some of those key areas.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In his unprecedented move three years ago, President Vladimir Putin's decision to initiate a large scale re-invasion of Ukraine caught the global community off-guard. This act, as highlighted by Chatham House director Bronwen Maddox, signified the sudden cessation of three decades of international collaboration and globalisation.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the conflict has not only jeopardised European stability but has also resonated globally, affecting food and energy resources, notably in the Middle East and Africa.

Europe has witnessed inflation much above than they could have ever imagined. The war is not merely between Russia and Ukraine, but between Russia and NATO led by the US. Ukraine has been receiving foreign assistance to fight the war, especially from NATO.

While discussing about the fears of Russia's neighbours, Alice Billon-Galland, a research fellow in the Europe programme opined that Moscow's invasion of Ukraine rightly judged the danger of Moscow's regional aspirations.<sup>2</sup> In response, European countries notably increased their defence spending, with Germany, in a major shift announced by Chancellor Olaf Scholz in his pivotal 'Zeitenwende' speech, pledging to allocate two percent of its GDP to defence. This has marked a significant shift in Europe's security policy.

With the war, the EU has already started to decrease its reliance on Russia for oil and gas. This was followed by numerous alternative oil supplies to Europe. However, Europe's concern is not just limited to oil and gas but a push towards the development of renewable energy sources, which means it also needs to establish partnerships with countries that can provide clean energy.

The war, encouraged Finland and Sweden to shed their longstanding neutrality and non-alignment and apply for NATO membership. Meanwhile, Switzerland who has been known for maintaining neutrality since 1815 being the first European country to choose this status, was criticised by Russia. Russia stated that Switzerland was no longer neutral since it had joined the economic sanctions along with others.

Nonetheless, the EU realises the necessity to strengthen its industrial competitiveness while addressing its reliance on external sources for critical minerals essential for digital and green technologies. The international security landscape shaped by the Russia-Ukraine War emphasised the critical need for cooperation between the EU, the Indo-Pacific region mostly involving Japan, Republic of Korea and Australia. This would also be in terms of ASEAN's position in the region and the EU's strategic approach to it.

The repercussions of the war was not only observed in Europe but at a global level including India. India and Russia have always maintained a cordial relationship. Russia remained one of the largest arms suppliers for India. India came under criticism from around the world for its neutral stance towards the conflict. India abstained from voting against Russia in the UN General Assembly, which indicated that India indirectly supported Russia. But India maintains an independent foreign policy, of which strategic autonomy is a key component.

This paper delves into the significant shifts in Europe's security due to the Ukrainian conflict. It also makes an effort to navigate the impacts and challenges India faces due to the war. Recognising the challenges, the paper offers a few takeaways and pivotal aspects for reinstating peace and stability in Europe and the world along with the areas of collaboration between India and the EU.

## **2. SECURITY STRUCTURE OF EUROPE AND THE FIVE SCENARIOS OF RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR**

The invasion of Ukraine by Putin marked a turning point in European security history. Both EU and NATO have amended their key security and defence policy documents to 'Strategic Compass' and 'Strategic Concept' respectively. The two defence policies have reaffirmed the significance of transatlantic unity and gave the strategic partnership between the two organisations a new impetus.<sup>3</sup> The war has catalysed the unity between EU and NATO which can be witnessed through the expansion of NATO.

Nonetheless, the southern neighbourhood remains a concern for the Europeans and the Americans especially the destabilisation in Balkans, the Middle East and Russia's growing relationship with countries like Iran. Furthermore, as China expands its influence in the Middle East and Africa, the EU and NATO are concerned about its growth.<sup>4</sup> The focus of the 'Strategic Concept' has thus shifted from 'conflict management' to 'crisis prevention and management'. With the war, there has been an increase in the number of soldiers in NATO. Soldiers from NATO have been dispatched to Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, etc. The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO would enhance their security in addition to expanding NATO. However, the EU's sanction mechanism may come under pressure if there is no coordinated response from the EU to address the economic fallout. The EU has initiated defence project funds such as the European Defence Fund which would encourage countries to invest in defence without impacting their budget limit. However, the question remains how much are the European countries reliant on the EU in terms of protection from Russia. The US and NATO still remain significant factor when it comes to safety and security of Europe. Basically, the war reflects how Western forces may encounter difficulties in a combat if their equipment is not uniform. NATO should step up its efforts to standardise equipment, and the EU should use its financial resources to persuade member states to include interoperability and standardisation in project designs. Potential enemies are strengthened when various partners and allies are unable to collaborate effectively.<sup>5</sup>

According to Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and former Secretary General of the OSCE, there are

few basic steps which cannot be overlooked while discussing on Europe's security architecture.<sup>6</sup> This would mostly involve gradual building of trust, agreement on military de-escalation tactics, reinvigoration of security and mutual confidence measures along with start of comprehensive arms control talks. In addition, it is critical to create and improve crisis communication and deconfliction channels in this conflicted environment. Moreover, segmenting the security domains to the greatest extent feasible is of utmost salience.

Amb Greminger stated that the war has raised the possibility of a new arms race that might involve nuclear weapons. The amount of money available to achieve the 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) could be decreased by this increase in defence spending. This is one of the greatest challenges that the region might face.<sup>7</sup> There is still uncertainty about when the war would end as the course of the war is unexpected. In such a situation, Amb Greminger discusses five scenarios which are shown in Table 1.

- The first scenario might predict an ongoing conflict where Russia could be involved in occupying more territories including control over Donbas.
- The second scenario could indicate a low-intensity combat, either with or without a formal ceasefire.
- In the third scenario, nuclear weapons might be used predictably in conjunction with cyber, electronic, and space warfare.
- According to the fourth scenario, there is a chance that either Russia or Ukraine will win the conflict.
- The fifth scenario could be a negotiated/ diplomatic settlement. If there is any such diplomatic negotiation then the involvement of just Russia and Ukraine would not suffice rather the inclusion of the world community as a whole, including the West. The settlement would also be expected to resolve few other complex issues such as territorial disputes over regions like Crimea, Donbas, and other places taken by Russia, the political future of Ukraine and assurances regarding security and the relaxation of sanctions in an effort to provide assistance.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, the fourth prediction of either side being victorious remains contested in terms of Ukraine's victory. Russian forces launched their largest

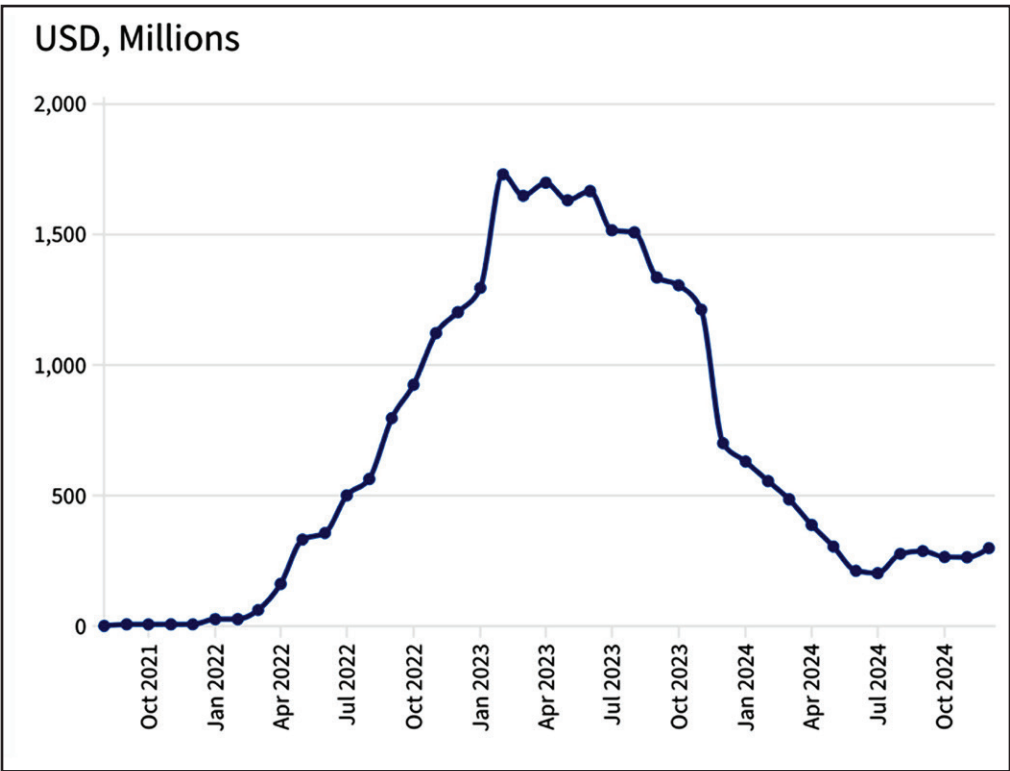
<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Description</b>
1. <i>Continuation of High Intensity Conflict</i>	<i>High level of conflict with Russian Federation aggressively trying to gain control over Donbas, while UAF works to retake occupied land. Strong military engagement on both sides.</i>
2. <i>Continuation of Low-Intensity Disagreements</i>	<i>Low-intensity, protracted conflict due to exhausted military resources. Characterised by fewer military confrontations, potentially leading to a prolonged stalemate.</i>
3. <i>Escalation of Warfare</i>	<i>Involves military escalation, cyber and infrastructure warfare, space and electronic warfare, and potential use of nuclear capabilities.</i>
4. <i>Military Victory of Either Side</i>	<i>The war could end with a military victory for either Russia or Ukraine. Opinions on the likely victor have evolved over time.</i>
5. <i>Negotiated/Diplomatic Settlement</i>	<i>A diplomatic resolution involving not just Russia and Ukraine, but the global community, including the West. Aims to resolve territorial disputes, the political future of Ukraine, and relaxation of sanctions.</i>

**Table1. Source:** Thomas Greminger, (2023), “Reintroducing Elements of Cooperative Security in the Future European Security Order”, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

bombardment of the war against Ukrainian sites on December 2023, using 122 missiles and numerous drones. Russia has modernised its fighters and other aircraft using digital technology across a variety of platforms, such as the strategic missile carriers Tu-160 and Tu-95MS, the long-range bombers MiG-31 and Tu-22M3, the tanker aircraft Il-78, and training and transport aircraft.<sup>9</sup> According to reports, Russian forces are ‘regaining the initiative on the front in the northeast and east,’ but their territorial gains are still modest.

Ukraine has received financial support from the US and the EU in the forms of emergency, military, economic, humanitarian, and energy aid. Hungary, on the other hand, has strong ties to Russia and has resisted both the EU membership and the EU's financial commitment of €18.5 billion. Furthermore, the \$61 billion in aid for Ukraine has become politically divisive in the US, since the Republican-controlled Senate would not approve President Joe Biden's proposal unless he makes major immigration concessions.<sup>10</sup>

Russians have already initiated clash in Avdiivka, a town in the Donetsk area. The decline in funding indicates that although Ukraine will receive the already committed munitions but its capability to initiate operations against Russia would be impacted significantly.<sup>11</sup> Ukraine has already seen failure in terms of counteroffensive and it has been anticipated that Ukraine will face difficulties to conduct local counterattacks.



**Figure1.** *Source: Centre for Strategic and International Studies, URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/impact-ending-military-aid-ukraine-gradual-decline-then-collapse>*

Figure 1, shows a sharp rise in delivery of US equipment to Ukraine in mid 2022 worth \$1.5 billion. This peak is followed by some fluctuations and falls dramatically from mid 2023. The year 2024 shows a level which is just above zero.

The fifth scenario includes the global community which means that India could fit itself well into it. It is believed that the more stability and confidence Russia gains, India will be more at ease. This is mostly because a stable Russia would be able to ensure the continuity of critical weapon supplies to India along with energy and oil. In addition, India can also see Russia as a counterweight to Western influence while maintaining its strategic autonomy.

New Delhi realises that there exist points of convergence and divergence with Moscow. Regarding a multipolar world both the countries believe it to be a good idea but when it comes to China, they share completely divergent views. Despite the differences, New Delhi suggests that both the countries should work together without impacting their long term friendship. However, the concern remains if Russia starts bandwagoning with China. Therefore, New Delhi has always been making efforts to persuade Moscow to consider itself as an Asian and not just as an European.

At the same time, it cannot be overlooked that the war in Europe brought certain benefits for India especially the discounted rates of crude oil from Russia. India influence Russia in its dealings. India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Russia on December 2023 is relevant to understand that during the war time Putin met the Foreign Minister of China too, which in a way exhibits Russia's interests in India along with China. These interests are mostly related to India's importance as a defence industry partner. In addition, India's growing economy cannot be overlooked by Russia and gives Moscow the leverage to reduce its dependency on China completely. On the other hand, India's alliance with Russia offers New Delhi the power to demonstrate its strategic autonomy and the fact that it would not compromise its national interests in order to maintain its partnership with the West.



The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia in July 2024 is considered significant because of its influence in global diplomacy. The White House urged India to use its ties with Russia to push President Vladimir Putin to cease the fighting in Ukraine although the West to an extent get infuriated by Modi's Russia-friendly approach. However, the West also does not want India to lose its influence in Moscow, as it may act as a counterbalance to China when attempting to persuade the Kremlin.

New Delhi has been considered as a significant player who is capable of engaging both the Western power and Russia. Moscow believed that the visit was 'historic and game changer' as it was monitored by the entire globe, and it was clear how important the trip was.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, India and Russia signed nine MoUs and agreements on trade, science and climate. Both countries also pledged to increase bilateral trade to more than \$100 billion by 2030 by reviving investments, using national currencies for trade, and expanding collaboration in industries ranging from energy to agriculture and infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

In totality, apart from the visit being a move to initiate balance in international relationship the visit enabled India to gain both economic and strategic gains in the midst of a geopolitical turmoil.

In the following month, PM Modi visited Ukraine and the visit was seen as a part of India strategic balancing between Moscow and Kyiv. India's request for Putin and Zelensky to meet together indicates a desire for direct dialogue, as opposed to unrepresented peace conferences such as the one held in Switzerland's Burgenstock.<sup>14</sup> Such discussions are required to resolve the conflict rather than merely exchanging statements with each other. However, such an initiative would be a little challenging, considering Russia's strategic advantage since late 2023. Additionally, the Joe Biden government is overly preoccupied with its domestic political agenda, given that the US elections are scheduled for November 2024. In this particular setting, India is a participant in the global geopolitical power play alongside China.<sup>15</sup>

This in a way indicates that New Delhi is not just a passive observer but is playing an active role to deal with the complex geopolitical landscape. PM Modi's diplomatic overture exhibits India's constructive steps towards conflict resolution. It can also be regarded from another perspective, where India has fulfilled its responsibilities and the onus now falls on Russia and Ukraine to take further action.

There has been a lot of discussion on the multifarious implications of the war in and outside of Europe. However, its influence on world energy supply is enormous and needs to be widely discussed and highlighted.

### **3. ENERGY SECURITY: DECOUPLING FROM RUSSIA**

Europe was significantly dependent on Russian energy supplies before the conflict, especially natural gas. As the crisis intensified, Europe realised the urgent need to review its energy policies and how its reliance on Russia would lead to a serious vulnerability. Energy became a significant weapon and European countries quickly started to lessen their reliance on Russian oil and gas.

Throughout the first year of the conflict, the EU actively looked for substitute large suppliers to act as ‘friends in need’. The US accounted for the largest absolute rise in gas supply especially in terms of exports of more liquefied natural gas (LNG). Before the war, Norway was EU’s second-largest gas provider following Russia. In 2021, Norway’s share of EU’s gas import was 25.1 percent.<sup>16</sup> There were few other countries on which the EU depended on gas including Angola, Trinidad and Tobago, and Egypt.

Despite the Europe’s shift in energy policies and emphasising ‘Friends in need’, there are several challenges which the EU might face in terms of external energy cooperation.<sup>17</sup> The first challenge EU would face is in purchasing oil and petrol, the price of which is skyrocketing. Although a few countries have committed to supply oil and gas to EU but these nations themselves face several difficulties, with the US being an exempt.

#### **3.1 India a “Friend in Need” or a “Friend Indeed”?**

The EU has rightly used the proverb “A friend in need is a friend indeed”. Countries that would supply fossil fuel to the EU would be termed as ‘a friend in need’ and countries who would partner with EU for renewable sources of energy would be termed as ‘a friend indeed’. There were anticipations that Europe might dry up due to energy shortage. However, the issue arises as to how Europe avoided drying up. At this point, India’s role in preventing this energy scarcity in Europe cannot be overlooked. Kpler, an analytics firm, revealed data that India had become Europe’s largest exporter of refined

petroleum. The data released that in 2023 India exported 360,000 barrels of oil per day to Europe<sup>18</sup> with an increase of 115 percent from 2022 to 2023.<sup>19</sup>

It was reported that around 30 percent of the refinery's exports from India went to Europe. In the year 2023, it was observed that 20 out of 27 EU members purchased refined goods from India, with the Netherlands making up 24 percent of the total imports. France came next with 23 percent, followed by Romania with 12 percent, Spain with 11 percent and Italy with 9 percent.<sup>20</sup>

In the above backdrop, India could certainly be called as a 'a friend in need' if one goes by the proverb.

### **3.2 Green Energy as Long-Term Solution**

In November 2015, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande created the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to promote solar energy. India being a host country plays a significant role in extending the ISA initiatives. However, the issue arises whether India will be able to supply renewable energy to Europe. ISA has several challenges including supply constraints, lack of funds, inadequate infrastructure etc. However, in August 2022, ISA, the EU, and France encouraged the introduction of two new capacity-building projects aimed at increasing solar energy adoption through knowledge sharing, creating business, academic, and financial networks in member countries.<sup>21</sup> In May 2022, ISA and BSW Solar signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to promote renewable energy technology in ISA Member Countries at Intersolar Europe, the world's premier solar industry expo.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, India in its current state might not fall into the category of 'a friend indeed' but a 'a friend in need'.

The war in a way also encouraged EU to convert to 'green energy'. The focus was to reduce carbon emission and enhance the usage of renewable energy sources. To make this shift happen, EU had to look into few aspects. First, an increased investment especially in solar, hydroelectric and wind power. Second, to focus on securing a future in energy that would be more resilient and sustainable. Third, the development in infrastructure and

technology. For example, the EU needs to make significant investment in LNG infrastructure such as terminals and interconnectors. This way, the EU can divert its gas lines from Russia. Fourth, energy conservation and efficiency remains equally salient in achieving its energy targets. This could even involve grid resilience and energy storage in its policy and awareness. This also resulted in battery technology innovation, smart grid technology and other storage methods.<sup>23</sup>

Although the EU's major suppliers are at the forefront of the global renewable energy development, the others are still far behind. There is an anticipation that the countries leading in renewable energy might want to supply more oil and gas to the EU while developing their own renewable sector. This is because those countries aspire to increase their investment in green projects meanwhile reducing their domestic dependency on the fossil fuel. This way they also free themselves from the upstream fossil fuel projects. Norway leads globally where 100 percent of its electricity is generated from hydroelectric and wind power. The US is the second largest with 20 percent generated from renewables. Turkey is also dependent on hydroelectric, solar, biomass, wind and geothermal power plants. These power plants contribute to generate at least 42 percent of Turkey's electricity.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, countries like Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Algeria have a very modest share of renewable sources in electricity generation. Libya's electricity generation has 0 percent contribution from renewable sources. However, despite their significant reliance on fossil fuel, these countries have the ability to invest in their renewable energy industries. These could eventually open the door for the export of fresh electricity sources to the EU. In that case, European companies can grab the opportunity to initiate projects there especially in countries like Kazakhstan.

It has been observed that since the war, a limited number of green agreements have been signed between the EU and other countries. According to a report released by the European Council on Foreign Relations in April 2023, only 61 agreements had green component out of 110 agreements. In

addition, these agreements lack a strong commitment between the EU and the suppliers with only two of them being binding in nature. Countries like Algeria, Nigeria, Azerbaijan also suffers from limitations in funding for these green projects. Private investment is a significant requirement for the growth of these projects. If sufficient funding is provided, some of the African nations including Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia exhibit their willingness to decrease emissions and expand renewable energy. Infrastructure remains a great challenge for these countries.

These economic models and the social costs of radical changes would act as obstacles for the EU in its energy transition from fossil fuel to green energy. There are expectations from these countries that the EU might support in covering the costs of their green projects. In addition, EU may initiate efforts to strengthen the regional energy integration especially in Africa and Central Asia. <sup>25</sup>

With the disruption in the energy supply, military preparedness and enhancing fighting capabilities became equally important. This has eventually led to inflation in the defence budgets throughout Europe.

#### **4. EUROPE'S INCREASING DEFENCE BUDGET**

While there has been an upward trend in Europe's defence expenditure since 2014 but a sharp rise has been witnessed in the year 2023. Countries like Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, Slovakia, Austria and Baltic states, saw an increase in their defence budgets. However, Poland in particular saw a stunning 46 percent increase from 2022 to 2023.<sup>26</sup>

Reports show that from the period between 2022-2023, the total ammunitions contracted by European countries was worth €100 billion (\$107 billion). This is an increase of € 21.5 billion (\$23.01 billion) which is approximately an increase of 33 percent within the same period.<sup>27</sup>

According to the data provided by Forecast International, the defence spending of the European NATO countries were \$263.5 billion in 2022, \$308.7 billion in 2023 and projected to be approximately \$326.7 billion in 2024.<sup>28</sup>

The purchase of military equipment will depend on few elements such as the situation in Ukraine both in terms of fighting and negotiations, opinion of the EU countries who have purchased ammunition both qualitative and quantitative wise, and the financial sustainability of these countries. The US has been a big contributor to supplying ammunition to the EU. The EU imports 78 percent of its arms from outside and the US alone contributes 63 percent to this share. Within the EU members, Germany leads in supplying equipment and accounts for 50 percent of this supply.

Fast-paced agreements are emerging between the US companies and the European suppliers to produce the US defence systems in Europe, especially in Germany. In addition, there is also a rapid growth in South Korea's defence market share in Europe. It is making an effort to bridge a short-term manufacturing capacity imbalance in the US and Europe.<sup>29</sup>

	Evolution of defence budgets				Evolution of defence investments				Inflation 2022
	Budget 2022 <sup>6</sup> excluding extensions (Billion €)	Budget 2023 (Billion €)	Evolution (Nominal values)	Evolution (Real values)	Invest. 2022 (Billion €)	Invest. 2023 (Billion €)	Evolution (Nominal values)	Evolution (Real values)	
Austria	2.71	3.38	+24.3%	+12.26%	0.428	0.712	+66.2%	+49.73%	11.1%
Belgium	4.40 (Estimated)	4.77	+8.5%	+0.38%	1.29	1.42	+10.6%	+1.92%	8.0%
Bulgaria	1.14	1.295	+13.9%	-2.86%	0.306	0.322	+5.2%	-9.98%	16.9%
Croatia	1.00	1.04	+4.0%	-8.05%	0.066	0.070	+6.1%	-6.22%	13.1%
Cyprus									7.1%
Czech Republic	3.93	Law to be adopted							17.5%
Denmark	3.76 (DKK 27.965)	4.36 (DKK 32.438)	+16.0%	+7.67%	0.576 (DKK 4.289)	0.856 (DKK 6.375)	+48.6%	+37.99%	7.7%
Estonia	0.77	1.10	+41.3%	+20.45%	0.126	0.133	+5.5%	-11.0%	18.6%
Finland	5.10	6.10	+19.6%	+9.63%	0.621	1.60	+157.7%	+136.16%	9.1%
France	40.9	43.9	+7.3%	+1.26%	14.5	15.4	+6.0%	+0.20%	6.0%
Germany	50.3	50 + 8.3 (Special fund)	15.9%	+6.58%	9.6	8.1 + 8.3 (Special fund)	+70.8%	+57.16%	8.7%
Greece	6.43	5.65	-12.3%	-18.03%	3.40				7.2%
Hungary	1.00	0.756	-24.4%	-39.86%	0.322	0.124	-61.5%	-69.36%	25.7%
Italy	25.90	27.720	+6.9%	-2.79%	5.41	6.10	+15.3%	+2.41%	10.1%
Latvia	0.76	0.98 (Provisional)	+29.4%	+6.13%	0.241	0.272	+12.9%	-7.11%	21.5%
Lithuania	1.20	1.78	+47.7%	+21.88%	0.236	0.304	+28.5%	+5.85%	21.7%
Luxembourg	0.39	0.509	+30.5%	+23.83%	0.017	0.024	+41.2%	+33.94%	5.4%
Netherlands	12.30	15.04	+22.3%	+13.64%	4.95	6.521	+31.7%	+22.43%	7.6%
Norway	6.33 (NOK 69.000)	6.95 (NOK 75.800)	+9.9%	+2.61%	1.87 (NOK 20.346)	2.22 (NOK 24.143)	+18.7%	+10.95%	7.0%
Poland	12 (PLN 57.052)	20.49 (PLN 97.400)	+79.7%	+46.44%	3.89 (PLN 18.515)	7.70 (PLN 36.616)	+97.8%	+69.76%	16.6%
Portugal	2.39	2.584	+8.3%	-0.26%	0.413	0.430	+4.2%	-3.95%	8.4%
Romania	5.98	7.104	+17.3%	+2.06%	2.13	3.136	+47.2%	+26.49%	16.4%
Slovakia	1.33	2.11	+58.7%	+37.48%	0.189	0.346	+83.1%	+58.64%	15.4%
Slovenia	0.69	0.896	+29.9%	+18.05%	0.132	0.223	+68.9%	+53.58%	10.0%
Spain	11.34	12.825	+13.1%	+6.90%	4.58	5.869	+28.1%	+21.12%	5.8%
Sweden	6.90 (SEK 76.600)	8.47 (SEK 93.953)	+22.7%	+9.31%	1.85 (SEK 20.518)	2.08 (SEK 23.112)	+12.6%	+0.12%	12.3%
United Kingdom	47.8 (£42.3)	51.8 (£45.9)	+8.5%	-1.93%	21.2 (£18.8)	23.6 (£20.9)	+11.1%	+0.74%	10.5%

**Table 2. Source:** Policy Paper, IRIS France, URL: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnipcajpcgicfindmkaj/https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/19\\_ProgEuropeIndusDef\\_JPMaulny.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnipcajpcgicfindmkaj/https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/19_ProgEuropeIndusDef_JPMaulny.pdf)



Table 2 shows that apart from two countries, Hungary and Greece, the rest 25 countries saw an increase in its defence budget from 2022 to 2023. Poland saw a sharp rise of 45 percent, meanwhile, the Baltic countries along with Finland and Sweden saw a rise of 20 percent. This definitely indicates these nations' growing fear of Russian aggression.

With the exception of Estonia and Latvia to an extent, a modest percent of the increase can be mostly explained by additional infrastructure expenditure. This is mostly to accommodate soldiers and equipment.

It is observed that Germany is one of the countries defying the conventions of the recent past. The country saw the largest rearmament process for the first time since World War II. In late February 2022, the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a "Zeitenwende", a revolution in German foreign policy and post-war European history, in a momentous speech to the Bundestag.<sup>30</sup>

According to a report released by the Spiegel magazine, the German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius confirms to boost the defence budget in 2024 by € 10 billion. The Minister stated that Chancellor Olaf Scholz made no mention of purchase of munition while declaring the "€ 100 billion special funds".<sup>31</sup> After the US, China, Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom, Germany's military budget ranked seventh in the year 2022, and further significant increases in spending are anticipated. In 2023, Germany created an extra-budgetary fund of \$105 billion, which would be utilised to improve the military prowess of its armed forces. With \$68.5 billion in military spending, UK led all countries in Central and Western Europe. However, the UK sent an estimated amount of \$2.5 billion, or 3.6 percent, out of that share to Ukraine as financial aid.<sup>32</sup>

A report released by SIPRI stated: "Europe as a whole, including Russia and Ukraine, increased its expenditure by 13 percent year on year, the largest annual increase in total European spending in the post-Cold War era".<sup>33</sup>

A senior researcher with SIPRI's military expenditure, Dr Diego Lopes da Silva, stated: "The invasion of Ukraine had an immediate impact on military spending decisions in Central and Western Europe. This included multi-year plans to boost spending from several governments. As a result, we can

reasonably expect military expenditure in Central and Western Europe to keep rising in the years ahead.”<sup>34</sup>

Even though it is predicted that these nations would spend a lot of money on weapons, it is unclear how long they will have the resources to do so. This could be explained by four factors. First, at the NATO summit 2023, Vilnius, the NATO countries committed to “make an enduring commitment to invest at least 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually on defence”.<sup>35</sup> At least 23 NATO allies were expected to surpass the target spending of 2 percent of GDP as per the 2024 NATO Summit.<sup>36</sup> The Baltic countries along with Poland aspired to do beyond their target meanwhile others set a target to do less than what was committed. Second, the EU targeted to use 20 percent of its defence budget for investment long back in 2007. However, this percentage varies with countries. The countries which are involved in making their own weapons or in collaboration with others have a different budget than the ones that are completely dependent on the import of ready-made equipment system. Third, a country has to always balance its spending between its public sector and the private defence sector. This mostly depends on the amount of debt a country can afford to take. While talking about the EU countries not everyone stands on the same platform. In addition, not all of them are situated in the same physical proximity to Russia and the frontline between Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, not all of them have the same resources for raising fund. It is likely that southern European countries like Greece, Italy, and Spain will not spend significantly on defence acquisition mostly due to their economic fragility and distance from the front lines. Fourth, the increase in defence budget in Europe is closely connected to the shock the region has faced with Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

Thus, the period it takes to reach a war settlement and the nature of that settlement will also determine how long-lasting the trend is. There is also a probability that the defence budget of the countries might increase if Russia does not agree to a settlement.

However, the inflated defence budgets did not suffice certain countries and decided to be active members of the NATO to enhance their security.

## **5. NATO'S EXPANSION: FINLAND AND SWEDEN**

After decades of neutrality and non-alignment, Finland and Sweden eventually decided to seek membership of NATO in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Both countries seek to achieve the benefits of the Alliance's collective defence agreement. On May 18, 2022, both the countries simultaneously submitted their official letters of application to join NATO. The Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg affirmed that they were already NATO's closest partners and actively participated in various NATO exercises and joined NATO's peace programme in 1994. Both the countries realised the necessity to release reports reviewing the security landscape.<sup>37</sup>

The report released by Finland on April 2020 stated that the security and operational landscape of Finland and Europe have undergone a significant transformation in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Thus, the government report to Parliament made an effort to evaluate the impacts of the altered security situation on the economy, supply chain resilience, internal security, cyber security, hybrid influence activities, and vital infrastructure.

The report also supplements other government reports related to defence, internal security, the EU policy, and Finland's foreign and security policy. Finland's foreign, security, and defence policies continue to be fundamentally based on upholding the country's freedom of choice. Finland still has the freedom to apply to join NATO, a military alliance. Finland highlights the value of adhering to international law and the international rules-based system in its continuously human rights-based foreign and security policy. In addition to examining multilateral defence cooperation projects, the report also looks at the growth of national defence capability, the EU as a security policy actor, and stronger bilateral cooperation with the US, the UK, Sweden, and other Nordic nations. Enhancing collaboration with NATO and evaluating the implications of Finland potentially joining NATO are also evaluated. The report also affirmed Finland's proactive diplomacy, efforts to bolster its defence capabilities, and step up collaboration with important allies.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, the Government of Sweden resolved to form a working committee on March 16, 2022, to discuss the geopolitical turmoil in the wake of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Ann Linde, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,

led the discussions along with the participation of Peter Hultqvist, the Minister of Defence.

There were six meetings that the working group convened. The schedule and working techniques were approved during the first meeting. Russia was the topic of discussion at the second meeting. The third meeting discussed the actions and initiatives of the Western players in the current security environment. Additionally, it was decided that the report needed to be completed by May 13, 2022. Sweden's defence and security policy cooperation was included at the fourth and fifth meetings, along with the potential NATO accession of Sweden. The whole report was eventually discussed in the last meeting. Basically, the main motive of Sweden's security policy was to protect the nation's independence and self-determination, protect their sovereignty and core principles along with maintaining their freedom of action in the face of external pressure, whether military, political, or otherwise.<sup>39</sup>

By releasing such reports and security policies both the countries aspire to strengthen their relationship with their partners and especially with NATO. They believe that NATO had the ability to provide them with collective defence agreement as mentioned in Article 5 of the 'Washington Treaty'.

The two countries received the official invitation to join the Alliance at the June 2022, Madrid Summit. The Summit declaration stated: 'The addition of Finland and Sweden will make them safer, NATO stronger, and the Euro-Atlantic area more secure'.<sup>40</sup>

In July 2022, Finland and Sweden concluded their accession negotiations. The Accession Protocols for Finland and Sweden were soon signed by NATO Ambassadors representing all 30 Allies. By September end, all the NATO members except Turkey and Hungary had approved the accession protocols. The ratification documents for Finland were deposited with the US State Department by Hungary on March 2023, and Turkey in April 2023. However, for Sweden, Turkey and Hungary did not ratify and deposit the instrument of accession whereas the other members had done it in April 2023.<sup>41</sup>

Although Finland officially joined the 30-member alliance after its application was approved, Sweden's route to membership in NATO was still obstructed by Turkey and Hungary. Turkey has issues with the protests that took place

in Stockholm involving the burning of the holy Quran and the hanging upside-down of an effigy of Erdogan.<sup>42</sup> In the above backdrop, although Turkey had been hesitant to approve Sweden's NATO membership, Sweden was accepted by the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Turkish parliament.<sup>43</sup>

There are few reasons why Hungary had not ratified Sweden's membership. According to Hungary, Sweden was antagonistic to Budapest for a long time. It was infuriated at the Swedish government's criticism of Prime Minister Viktor Orban regarding the alleged breakdown of the rule of law which was completely refuted by Orban. Although Hungary does not have a list of demands, in contrast to Turkey, but has stated that unresolved issues must be resolved before it can approve Sweden's NATO membership.<sup>44</sup>

According to Sweden, despite the rejections from Turkey and Hungary, its security situation improved since it applied to join NATO. Sweden believed that it received some support from the US, the UK, and Germany, after its application.

NATO believed that Sweden's incorporation had another positive factor i.e., Sweden's robust air force and submarine fleet, which are suited to the circumstances of the Baltic Sea. Eventually, in March 2024, Sweden officially became a NATO member with an expectation to enhance collective security in the region.

Such developments exhibit the changing idea of neutrality in Europe. Nevertheless, in contrast to Finland and Sweden, nations like Switzerland and Austria wished to keep their neutrality.

## **6. POLICY OF NEUTRALITY: SWITZERLAND AND AUSTRIA**

A former US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles in 1956 stated 'neutrality has increasingly become an obsolete conception'. With the end of the Cold War, Dulles's assertion was supported by the fact that very few European nations wished to declare themselves to be neutral. Although neutrality was once chosen by Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden, only Austria and Switzerland were recognised as permanent neutral states under international law as a result of the Cold War. Austria, along with Sweden and Finland, retained its neutrality based on its constitution, but upon joining the EU on January 1, 1995, it ceased to be an ally.<sup>45</sup>

Sweden and Finland have already joined NATO. Therefore these two nations are no longer neutral and non-allied European states. This leaves only with Switzerland being the permanent neutral state in Europe that does not support the 'Common Foreign and Security Policy' (CFSP) of the European Union.

In 2014, Switzerland did not support the EU and the US sanctions following Russia's annexation of Crimea. However, it took action to ensure that sanctioned individuals and organisations could not use Switzerland as a means of evading the sanctions. In addition, Switzerland was also leading the OSCE at the time which meant that it was a major player in managing conflicts.

However, the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 signifies a fundamental change in European security. It spurred the question as to how long Switzerland can continue with its neutrality and how it will help Ukraine while condemning Russia.

A huge support from the Swiss population is seen for Ukraine along with international pressure to the Swiss government to support the sanctions. Reports show that at least 77 percent of the Swiss population supported the sanctions.<sup>46</sup>

However, with regard to the export of war material, the Swiss authorities forbade the transfer of war material made in Switzerland from a third party to Ukraine. Naturally, this sparked new debates about Swiss security strategy and how neutrality fits into this newly 'degraded' European framework.

In addition, the Swiss government reiterated that ‘a membership of NATO, which would mean the end of neutrality, is not an option for Switzerland,’ in contrast to Sweden and Finland, who have submitted applications to join the alliance. Two thirds of Swiss people agreed with this, yet, the majority of Swiss people (55 percent) support a first-time rapprochement with NATO.<sup>47</sup>

In this regard, it might be claimed that although Switzerland and the West collaborate on economic sanctions on Russia, they do not collaborate on military matters. Despite this, the Kremlin was dissatisfied with Switzerland’s wartime strategy.

Maria Zakharova, the Spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in February 2023 stated that Switzerland lost its neutrality when the war in Ukraine began. Zakharova specifically attacked Switzerland for participating in the EU sanctions and freezing Russian assets.

However, it may be stated that as long as the conflict in Ukraine persists, the Bern government will take precautions to preserve its neutrality. It should be noticed that unlike Finland and Sweden, Switzerland’s security paradigm has neither undergone significant modifications nor will it ever send weapons to Ukraine.<sup>48</sup>

The war spurred Europe and NATO to consider security issues beyond Europe. Considering the geo-political and geo-strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific, their interest in the region grew significantly besides other related areas.

## **7. EU IN THE INDO-PACIFIC**

### **7.1 Strengthening Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region with Operation ATALANTA and Combined Maritime Forces**

The EU's security concern has expanded to the Indo-Pacific especially in the Indian Ocean. To enhance cooperation with the region various naval operations have been initiated. EU Naval Force Operation ATALANTA (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA) is one of them which was launched in 2008 and is a significant element of the EU's maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean.<sup>49</sup> Operation ATALANTA has made important contributions to the fight against piracy and develops measures to combat unlawful trafficking, a major source of funding for criminals and terrorist organisations. The operation consists of both European and non-European members with India playing the role of a vital partner. India plays an important role as critical partner.<sup>50</sup>

The 'EU-India Strategic Partnership Roadmap 2020-25' aims to strengthen the strategic partnership in a variety of fields, including maritime security cooperation. India initiated its Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) in 2015 and the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) in 2019 and has gained traction.<sup>51</sup> EU joined the IPOI on October 2023 with an objective intended to address the common challenges in the region. This is a significant initiative to boost the EU-India bilateral partnership in the region.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, to defend the Rules-Based International Order (RBIO), the US has initiated the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) along with 42 other member and partner nations which include India and few European countries too.<sup>53</sup> EU's engagement with both Operation ATALANTA and CMF exhibit its interest in commencing collective efforts to combat common challenges in the Indian Ocean. India being a partner to both the initiatives has the leverage to strengthen its maritime cooperation with both the US and the EU. This enables India to expand its reach in the maritime domain especially in protecting the significant sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) from terrorism and piracy. At the 'fifth U.S-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue' in New Delhi on November 2023, India's full membership was applauded in the CMF, which has its main base in Bahrain.<sup>54</sup>



## **7.2 EU Strengthens Collaboration with ASEAN**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has encouraged the cooperation between the EU and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Indo-Pacific. The EU realises the necessity to be able to forge new alliances as well as revitalise and reinvent current ones in order to successfully carry out its Indo-Pacific strategy in the region. The cornerstone of the EU's approach in this regard could be a long-standing partnership with ASEAN.

The 'EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit' took place on 14 December 2022, the first-ever summit between the leaders of the EU and ASEAN member nations. The Summit commemorated the 45 years of diplomatic relations between the two blocs. The European Council President Charles Michel stated: "The EU and ASEAN are the world's two most advanced regional integration organisations. We understand each other very well, we share the same values and the same spirit of cooperation".<sup>55</sup>

During the Summit, leaders of the EU and ASEAN reaffirmed their shared values and principles, which included respect for territorial integrity, an international order based on rules along with successful and long-lasting multilateralism. In addition, the 'Joint Leader's Statement' made special mention of the Russia-Ukraine war. The General Secretariat of the Council stated: "This year, we have also witnessed the war in Ukraine further adversely impact the global economy. There was a discussion on the issue. We reiterated our positions as expressed in other fora, including the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly... Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy... We continue to reaffirm, as for all nations, the need to respect the sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine".<sup>56</sup>

In this regard he also affirmed their commitment to the goals of achieving a 'nuclear-weapon-free zones' which would definitely include the 'Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone'. He also emphasised the significance of advancing talks between the Nuclear Weapons State and the ASEAN countries on the 'Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty'. In this context, the use or threat of the use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.<sup>57</sup>

In 2020, the long-standing partnership between the EU and ASEAN underwent a new phase when they became Strategic Partners.<sup>58</sup> Though the EU and ASEAN relationship has been upgraded to a strategic partnership apart from the diplomatic partnership, it is important to note that ASEAN does not agree with the EU's ambitions to play a more strategic role in the Indo-Pacific. Although the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy gave eminence to ASEAN's centrality, but issues persist. There are a few challenges, such as the various opinions related to the security posture of the EU, political differences following the war in Ukraine, and the EU's multifaceted foreign policy.

A number of ASEAN nations are apprehensive about the sustainability of the EU's involvement in the Indo-Pacific. This is mostly in light of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the worsening security circumstances in Europe. Although the EU has made significant efforts to persuade ASEAN to adopt a strong stance opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but reservations from ASEAN persist. Apart from this, the China factor is salient in understanding the relationship between the two blocs. ASEAN wants to keep it clear that the EU should not emphasise on creating an anti-China coalition but rather focus on addressing shared issues like climate change and supporting ASEAN with its economic potential.

However, the EU keeps up its attempts to improve cooperation by holding various meetings and forums. In May 2023, 'EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum' was held in Stockholm. The Stockholm Forum gave new political impetus to strengthening partnerships between the EU and the Indo-Pacific while promoting regional peace and security, stability, and shared prosperity, and creating a shared vision for the Indo-Pacific. The EU also wished to make it clear through this forum that in an interconnected globalised world nobody can expect to remain unharmed against a disruptive shock in one part of the world. Any instability in one region of the planet will have an adverse effect on the rest of it.<sup>59</sup>

In the preceding paragraphs, it can be seen that the EU insists on the significance of respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty. In a way, the EU has made an effort to commence shared values and multilateralism in the region as it condemned Russia's action in Ukraine.

## **8. NATO'S ROLE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC**

NATO's perception of China has changed as a result of the crisis in Ukraine. Apart from the pre-existing problems with China, a new dimension has emerged i.e., China's involvement in Russia's support. This now has a direct bearing on Europe's security. Ever since NATO published its 2010 'Strategic Concept,' there have been substantial changes in the geopolitical landscape. China was not mentioned at that time, and Russia was still considered a potential friend. The leaders of the allies realised at the Madrid Summit in 2022 that China's rise would have an impact on trans-European security, and that Russia was no longer an ally but a threat.<sup>60</sup>

The 'Vilnius Summit Communiqué', was issued at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Vilnius on 11 July 2023 by the NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting. The communiqué mentioned the significance of the Indo-Pacific as a region. The Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Alliance stated: "The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. We welcome the contribution of our partners in the Asia-Pacific region – Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea – to security in the Euro-Atlantic".<sup>61</sup>

The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the meeting of Vilnius also stated: "NATO is a regional Alliance between Europe and North America but the challenges we face are global and our security is interconnected. What happens in the Euro-Atlantic region matters for the Indo-Pacific, and what happens in the Indo-Pacific matters to the Euro-Atlantic".<sup>62</sup>

### **8.1 NATO and Japan**

NATO and Japan aspired to strengthen their collaboration with the goal of signing an 'Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP)'. The two parties focused on coordinating in developing disruptive and emerging technologies, strengthening their cooperation in combating cyber threats, and share strategies for countering misinformation.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida initially discussed the idea of opening a liaison office during

the former's visit to Tokyo at the end of January 2023. However, the French President Emmanuel Macron later blocked the outpost in Japan stating that such a regional expansion runs the risk of deviating the Alliance's initial North Atlantic objectives.<sup>63</sup> Japan even intended to establish an independent NATO mission in Belgium and suggested a new ambassador to take Masahiro Mikami's NATO duties off his plate.<sup>64</sup>

In addition, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force has already conducted training exercises in the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean with NATO vessels. Japan has assigned a liaison to the Maritime Command of NATO.<sup>65</sup>

Tokyo has recently passed its new proposals agreed by a working group led by Komeito, the coalition partner, and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Under these new proposals Japan intends to relax its regulations on the arms trade by allowing shipments of all defence equipment made under foreign licenses to the nations where the patent holders are located. These relaxations in arms trade are observed for the first time since the formation of its 'Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology' in 2014.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, this would encourage Japan to permit countries to transfer the equipment they acquire to a third country or region with prior authorisation from Japan. However, Japan does not permit to transfer weapons to a third country or region which is directly embroiled in hostilities.

This implies that the US may supply Patriot missiles manufactured in Japan to European nations to restock the ammunition and weaponry that have been expended as a result of aid to Ukraine. The US defence contractors Lockheed Martin and RTX, formerly Raytheon Technologies, created the Patriot missile. In Japan, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries manufactures them under the license.

The Japanese policymakers believe that these alternatives will reinforce Japan's alliance with the US and increase its contribution to world security.

Restocking US inventories with Patriot missiles manufactured in Japan would allow Washington to keep supplying Ukraine and other nations. As a result, Japan can assist Ukraine inadvertently.<sup>67</sup>

## **8.2 NATO and Republic of Korea**

Apart from Japan, the Republic of Korea also has developed cordial relationship with NATO. It has opened a diplomatic mission to NATO in November 2022, expanding its chances for political communication with the Alliance. Some of the sectors which RoK and NATO focus on non-proliferation, cyber defence, science and technology, counterterrorism, interoperability, and defence against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) agents.<sup>68</sup>

Poland has placed large orders for K2 Black Panther tanks, K9 self-propelled howitzers, and FA-50 fighter planes with South Korean arms manufacturers. Warsaw used to resort to the US for large arms sales, but since South Korea could fulfil orders more quickly than the American companies, Warsaw shifted its focus to South Korea.<sup>69</sup> It was estimated that in 2022, Seoul sold arms worth \$13.7 billion to Warsaw.<sup>70</sup> There is hardly any check on supplying these weapons by the US and Poland to Ukraine.

## **8.3 NATO and India**

India has slightly different views about NATO's presence in the region. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated: "India has no plans of joining NATO".<sup>71</sup>

He mentioned that the military alliance does not suit India's security interests. NATO is a military alliance comprising of thirty nations, predominantly from North America and Europe. In order to oppose the Soviet Union and its allies, it was established in 1949. NATO's primary objective is to use military and political cooperation to thwart attack and safeguard its members. "NATO template does not apply to India," affirmed as S Jaishankar. However, NATO's pivot to Indo-Pacific shouldn't be major concern for India.<sup>72</sup> The 'Strategic Concept 2022' discusses various aspects which converge with India's goals and opportunities. Some of them are:

- 14<sup>th</sup> point discusses freedom of navigation.
- 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> points discuss technological problems in the new information age.
- 19th point discusses NATO's plans to mitigate with the climate change.<sup>73</sup>

- **NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program.** Through science, technology, and knowledge sharing, NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program promotes dialogue and real-world collaboration between member states and partner nations.<sup>74</sup> In terms of cutting edge and disruptive technology, NATO has collaborated with nations in the Indo-Pacific, including South Korea and Japan. With India's increasing emphasis on developing its technological skills, cooperation with NATO programs like as SPS might greatly augment New Delhi's endeavours in this domain.
- **India is in line with NATO's enhanced readiness to combat transnational terrorism in its counterterrorism efforts.** Terrorism was emphasised as a major threat in the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, which was reaffirmed at the NATO Summit in Washington in 2024.<sup>75</sup> As a result, the counterterrorism guidelines have been revised to take into account the latest risks. This is similar to how New Delhi is combating terrorism in its surrounding areas. There is a brave worldwide agreement to counter such threats. India's proactive counterterrorism approach is in line with NATO's efforts to start enhancing preparation to counter such problems, which reflect the global understanding of the transnational nature of terrorism.<sup>76</sup>

NATO's expanding relations in the Indo-Pacific offer India both opportunities and challenges. Thus, India shouldn't go on a complete denial with NATO as long as it avoids engaging in the area like a security alliance from the Cold War.

Apart from the implications, it has become crucial to analyse the factors that influence the war. Understanding those factors would also provide necessary solutions to cease the war.

## 9. DETERMINANTS IMPACTING THE DURATION OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

The unity observed between the EU and NATO during the Russia-Ukraine War is remarkable. The support from the US too have provided significant military strength to Ukraine to fight the war. However, there are few elements which might have constrained the scale of support received by Kyiv.

- **Electoral Politics.** Domestic politics such as electoral politics could be one of them. It has been anticipated that the presidential elections in the US could impact the steady assistance offered by the US to Ukraine. The US President is one significant individual who matters in this conflict as much as Putin is. In precise, the US is the driver of the Western side. Neither peace nor diplomacy can be expected unless US itself is convinced that there has to be a change in its position.<sup>77</sup>
- **Putin's Landslide Victory.** Meanwhile, Putin's concern has never been about the elections and managed to achieve a landslide victory in March 2024 . This definitely has boosted his confidence and enabled Moscow to prepare for a protracted war in Ukraine. To prevent the losses incurred in Kherson, Russia is prepared to strengthen readiness for a fresh offensive.
- **Hungary's Reservations.** The EU member, Hungary maintains a reserved position towards Ukraine due to certain domestic, historical and political factors. In December 2023, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban threatened to "pull the handbrake" on further financial aid to Ukraine after vetoing a €50 billion (£43 billion; \$55 billion) EU package meant to support his neighbour for the next three years.<sup>78</sup> This has been perceived as potentially undermining the cohesiveness of the EU and NATO.
- **The Israel-Hamas Conflict.** The Israel-Hamas conflict has serious implications for both the nations as well as for the US backing for Ukraine's defence. The international community

is keeping a close eye on who is endorsing Hamas and Israeli operations and who is condemning. There are a few aspects which have strengthened the position of Russia in the conflict discussed in the following paragraphs:

- **Disunity in the EU.** The US led Operation Prosperity Guardian is initiated to prevent attacks in the Red Sea by the Houthis. However, not all the EU members are on the same board and exhibit varied responses. The UK and Italy joined and had sent vessels to join the operation. France was first eager to take part but then became reticent.<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile, the Spanish Ministry stated that Spain cannot make the decision alone and must abide by EU and NATO agreements.<sup>80</sup>
- **Impact on the Oil Price.** The Israel-Hamas war may have a direct impact on the oil price. The war in Gaza has involved the large oil-producing countries including Iran. This definitely will increase the price of oil as it has been already observed in the US. There has been an increase of \$87 per barrel.<sup>81</sup> This is an opportunity for Moscow to increase its oil revenue which in return would help continue its military operations in Ukraine.<sup>82</sup> Ann Marie Dailey, a policy researcher at Rand Corporation affirmed:

“As oil prices go up, this enables them to continue spending on arms production and it also helps them cover some budget deficits. Russia absolutely gains an advantage from this in the short-term”.<sup>83</sup>
- **US Congress Blocks Bill for Ukraine Assistance.** More than \$110 billion has been authorised by Congress for Ukraine since Russia invaded the country in February 2022. However, in December 2023, Republicans in the Senate blocked a package of funding for Ukraine worth \$61 billion.<sup>84</sup> During President Zelensky’s visit to the White House in the same month, President Biden stated: “Without supplemental



funding, we're rapidly coming to an end of our ability to help Ukraine respond to the urgent operational demands that it has."<sup>85</sup> This highlights the fact that the Israel-Hamas War has diverted the US attention and resources to help Ukraine.

- **High Demand for Arms.** The Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas War will definitely boost the demand for weapons which will have a direct impact on the global arms manufacturing companies. In this context, Russia being one of the largest suppliers of arms could play a role in taking advantage of the situation. Furthermore, it is not just Russia, but these conflicts could boost the arms industries of great powers like US and China too.

## 10. EVALUATING THE MISTAKES AND LESSONS FOR UKRAINE AND EUROPE

That Russia would attack Ukraine was very much clear. Even when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, the level of unity observed between the EU and NATO was fragmented. There are few aspects which Ukraine, including Europe failed to understand. They are discussed in the following paragraphs:

- **Europe Ignored the Early Indications:** A distinguished fellow of the United Services of India, Maj Gen (Dr) AK Bardalai (Retd) has opined that “Russia invaded Ukraine on February 22, 2022 and exactly one year before the invasion, in February 2021, the international community had some level of indication that the conflict might happen. Despite that, there was a significant failure on their part to assure Russia that the security concerns could be addressed through discussions and diplomacy rather than using military force”.<sup>86</sup>

The Ukrainian politician and a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, 67-year-old Viktor Medvedchuk’s daughter regarded Putin as her godfather. He was charged with treason in Kyiv in May 2021. He was accused of stealing natural resources from Crimea which had been annexed by Russia and of selling military secrets to that country.

Putin accused Kyiv of “purging the political field of all the forces that stand for a peaceful resolution” of the Russia-Ukraine war as soon as he was placed under house arrest.<sup>87</sup>

His arrest was observed as a salient political move which possibly commenced the escalation of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. Maj Gen (Dr) A K Bardalai further added, “When Medvedchuck was arrested and all his assets were seized, the entire media channels were taken off. This was immediately followed by the invasion of Russian troops along the Ukrainian border”.<sup>88</sup>

Although the arrest may not be the sole reason behind the Russian invasion but this definitely had impacted the larger political and diplomatic dynamics. It had made the matter more complex and further strained the relationship between the two countries.

The legendary American diplomat George Kennan is renowned for his ability to predict the fall of the Soviet Union. In 1948 the diplomat warned that no Russian government would ever recognise Ukrainian independence.<sup>89</sup> Anticipating a stalemate between Moscow and Kyiv, Kennan made specific recommendations regarding what should be Washington's course of action in a battle that put Russia against an independent Ukraine. Half a century later, he reviewed this topic again. In his 90s at the time, Kennan issued a warning, claiming that NATO's eastward advance would destroy Russian democracy and spark a new Cold War.<sup>90</sup>

- **International Community Failed to Give Assurance.** There was hardly any assurance provided by the international community to both the sides. There was no attempt to assure Russia that Ukraine would not join NATO, neither was Zelensky assured that Ukraine would not face any kind of Russian invasion. The international community including the United Nations Secretary General could have done much more but did not do much to address the issue. In the very beginning, there was no effort to prevent Russia from being aggressive and attacking Ukraine. In a way, it could be said that it was a failure of the UN Security Council.
- **Zelensky's Failure of Negotiated Settlement and Excessive Reliance on the US and the EU.** Geographically, the US is far away from Russia and Ukraine. And therefore, it is not threatened directly by the war in Europe. Although, US did not participate in the war directly but it supported Ukraine by supplying military ammunitions and instigated Zelensky to fight for his land.

Ukraine's reliance on the EU has been multi-faceted in nature. Apart from providing military equipment, EU provided financial

support and humanitarian aid too. Most importantly the sanctions imposed against Russia boosted Ukraine's confidence. This definitely encouraged the Ukrainian President to create his own political narrative to achieve assistance and support from the international community, especially the US. Ukraine became so reliant on the US supply of military equipment, that it believed only in military force rather than a negotiated diplomatic settlement with Russia. Zelensky was blind to the fact that the people who died were the Ukrainians, not the others who supported Kyiv with arms.<sup>91</sup>

A French General (name hidden for confidential purpose) in May 2022 stated:

“We support Ukraine as per the war is concerned. But it is Ukraine who has to decide what they want and how far they want to be supported.”<sup>92</sup>

The statement from the General reflects that the European countries place the onus on Ukraine to determine the objectives for fighting the war keeping in mind the casualties it has suffered both in terms of life and property. These nations would prefer to take a distant stance and avoid direct involvement in the war. The Ukrainian side would make a mistake to think that its massive aid from the US and Europe would enable it to undermine Putin's military and economic power. Further, Ambassador Venkatesh Verma has noted that Ukraine could be rather compared with Pakistan which dared to challenge an even larger country like India.<sup>93</sup> In the beginning, Kyiv was highly ambitious and believed that it would win against Russia because of its close relationship with the NATO countries especially the US. But, unfortunately Ukraine is facing the consequences of such a decision it made. This scenario resembles what happened to Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, and it reflects a pattern that is currently resurfacing in Europe.<sup>94</sup>

## 11. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONFLICT FOR RUSSIA

Russia had a general assumption that the Ukrainian government was weak, corrupt, and it would capitulate under pressure. It was also anticipated that Europe being heavily reliant on Russian oil and gas would never have an appetite for war. The five major mistakes committed by Russia are:

- The first mistake Russia made was that, it failed to understand Ukraine's strength to resist and did not expect the kind of support Ukraine received from the EU and the US.
- Second, Russia and Ukraine do not have a physical geographical barrier like the Himalayas which India and China have. Therefore, Russia believed that invading Ukraine wouldn't be that difficult.
- Third, there is a huge mistrust in Russia regarding Ukraine's potential of joining NATO. Moscow believed that this would be one of the greatest security concerns for Russia with US influence on its borders. This greatly encouraged Russia to initiate an invasion in the Ukrainian borders.
- Fourth, it was further reinforced by the belief that Ukrainian military was weak as they were in 2014 and that the ethnic population based in Kharkiv and Sumy would never oppose Russia. However, these observations did not turn out to be true.
- Fifth, Russia failed to define clear objectives and limitations to fight the war. In this context, Russia needed to learn the significance of strategic foresight and the long-term consequences it might face due to fighting the war.
- Sixth, weak/faulty conduct of the ground and air offensive.

### 11.1 Major Impact

- **Russia's Defence Industry has Bounced Back.** Although it was anticipated that the sanctions might impact Russia greatly, but it failed to change Russia's war objectives completely. Analysts claim that they might not significantly impact in the current times,

but dissension will have an impact on Russia's economy in the mid to long-term objectives. Although Russia has kept armament reserves since the Soviet era, its supplies are diminishing. Sourcing resources to construct new weapons has also been difficult, since the old Soviet armaments supply chain no longer exists.<sup>95</sup> However, Russia still has more artillery than Ukraine, but its weapons are decaying, and it lacks the resources to upgrade them.

- **Weakening Economy.** There is a paradox - while Russia's defence capabilities are only predicted to grow, the country's economy may decline. The first reason for sanctions against Russia is to weaken its economic growth. The oil revenues of Russia are declining, and it is receiving lesser money from all the exports it is doing to countries like China and India, compared to the international prices. However, Ambassador Verma affirmed that the impacts of sanctions may not be like on smaller countries like Iran, Venezuela, or Syria. This is mostly due to Russia being a vast country with its linkages with the global economy in various ways. Another significant aspect observed is that Russia's oil export outside the West i.e., countries like India, China, the Gulf, Southeast Asian countries, Iran, Turkey, etc. have proven to provide Moscow with a safety valve.<sup>96</sup>
- **China's Declining Trade Interest with Russia.** Western analysts believe that China is more interested in trading with the US and Europe than it is with Russia. This is mostly due to the huge trade relationship China shares with the US and Europe. The trade between China and Russia is \$200 billion,<sup>97</sup> whereas in 2022, the US and China traded \$758.4 billion worth of goods and services. Reports showed that \$562.9 billion was imported, while \$195.5 billion was exported.<sup>98</sup> In 2022, China was the third largest partner for the EU's exports of goods (9.0 %) and the largest partner for the EU's imports of goods (20.8 %).<sup>99</sup> This depicts that Russia is significant, but when it comes to trade, especially the greater economic returns, then China would preferably look forward to engaging with the US and Europe than Russia.

- **Supply Chain Resilience Impacted due to Sanctioning of Semiconductors.** It seemed that Russia had used a number of American made chips in its drones, radios, missiles etc. In an attempt to weaken the Russian military apparatus waging war on Ukraine, the US significantly expanded sanctions against Russia. This also included Chinese companies that sold semiconductors to the Russian government.<sup>100</sup> Russian chip design companies outsourced their manufacturing to foreign contract manufacturers like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), producing chips primarily for government customers.<sup>101</sup> Due to sanctions, this small-volume trading has largely ceased.<sup>102</sup> This in a way encouraged Moscow to use unfair means such as creating new smuggling routes. It is believed that this would put Moscow in a disadvantageous position in the battlefield especially in terms of operational capabilities.

## 12. NAVIGATING THE IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES INDIA FACES WITH THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

The Russia-Ukraine war has significant implications not just in Europe but at a global level. India's stance on not criticising Russia openly has drawn attention at the global level. However, it is also crucial to remember that Moscow would have invaded Ukraine even if New Delhi had imposed sanctions. Russia's operations in Ukraine are motivated by a number of causes including political, military, and economic ones. These variables surpass India's stance alone.

India and Russia have shared a longstanding relationship ever since the then Soviet Union supported India in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Even if India had supported the West and sided with the West, it would not have altered Russia's decision to invade Ukraine. In addition, India's foreign policy is again shaped by its historical contexts, thus, making Russia a significant partner. The following paragraphs discuss the impacts and challenges India has faced as a result of the conflict.

- **India's Increased Oil Imports from Russia Face Criticism from the West:** Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India's import of oil has increased from Russia with the latter being the largest supplier of crude oil. Discounts on Russian oil bought by India have almost doubled to \$8–10 per barrel. This is mostly due to the pressure put by the state refiners on suppliers who temporarily stopped importing from Russia. The amount of Russian oil that India imports overall has increased from 33 percent in August 2023 to 38% in September 2023 as a result of growing discounts. It has been estimated that half the total crude oil purchased by Bharat Petroleum Corporation and a third of crude oil imported by Indian Oil Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation come from Russia.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, India receives huge criticism from the Western countries for its oil imports from Russia. During an interview with the Press Trust of India, Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov stated:

"The criticism of India by the Western countries on its imports of Russian crude oil while exempting themselves from their 'own illegitimate sanctions' is a reflection of their unprincipled position and double standards."<sup>104</sup>



He also added “Europe has ‘completely lost’ its independent voice while ‘appeasing’ the USA’s ambitions for power, and is now trying to sustain its economic well-being while triggering an escalation of energy prices for the rest of the globe”.<sup>105</sup>

The ambassador further stated that there was no effect of Western sanctions against Moscow on trade between India and Russia. Rather, it was noted that just in the first half of 2022, both Russia and India saw a turnover of \$11.1 billion in trade.<sup>106</sup>

In the light of this, Europe seems to face a complicated situation while importing fuel. First, on one hand, although Europe stopped its import of oil from Russia, on the other hand, the demand for oil from alternative sources increased in Europe. These countries would definitely turn to Russian oil for a cheaper price which would ultimately boost its demand considering the fact that the global oil market is interconnected. Second, the oil price might increase for Europe due to the shipping price if it purchases from other sources. According to a report released by Kepler, India has become the largest supplier of refined oil for Europe. After Russia’s invasion in Ukraine, Europe’s import of refined fuel from India increased by 360,000 barrels per day which is more than the fuel imported from Saudi Arabia.<sup>107</sup>

The Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), affirmed that there were two most significant ports in Gujarat which exported oil to Europe. They are the Sikka port and the Vadinar port. The Reliance owned refinery in Jamnagar supplies oil through the Sikka port and the Nayara Energies which is partly owned by the Russian oil company Rosneft sent oil through the Vadinar port.<sup>108</sup>

The report also highlighted: “The port is of great value to the Russian oil industry, especially Rosneft. This situation where a Russian company owns an oil refinery in a third country highlights a possible way of circumventing sanctions. Rosneft or other oil companies from Russia are free to transport crude oil to Vadinar, where it is refined and can be exported to the price cap coalition countries as oil products from India.”<sup>109</sup>

In a response to this, the Indian businessman Anand Mahindra tweeted that it only revealed the level of 'hypocrisy' Western countries have. He further added: "Hypocrisy carries a high price tag...India was transparent about its compulsions from the start. In the tweet he also referred to the words of the External Affairs Minister of India, S Jaishankar, who has frequently lambasted European nations for assuming that India will stop importing oil from Russia following the war".<sup>110</sup>

- **India's Responses to the Global Criticism.** India has an independent foreign policy which is greatly characterised by its strategic autonomy. India doesn't believe in forming alliances especially when it comes to framing its foreign policy. Under the leadership of S Jaishankar, India has adopted a balanced diplomacy which would not be influenced or impacted by any pressure from the major powers. It is due to its independent foreign policy followed by its strategic autonomy, that India never criticised Russia openly.

However, India has sent humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. In August 2023, India has delivered its 14th shipment of humanitarian goods, including necessary medications, sleeping bags, blankets etc. to Ukraine. But India is firm on making its decisions independently irrespective of any kind of global pressure. New Delhi has made it clear that efforts should be made to resolve the war through dialogues and diplomatic solutions.<sup>111</sup>

- **India has Frozen Several Arm Deals with Russia.** Russia and India have long maintained a collaboration in security cooperation, with India's armed services primarily dependent on Russian technology and munitions. The extent of India and Russia's security cooperation is evidenced not only by the Russian-made weapon systems in India's arsenal but also by the numerous joint ventures to manufacture these systems domestically. The Su-30MKI multirole fighter, the BrahMos cruise missile, several ships for the Indian Navy, and other initiatives like the AK-203 assault rifle are examples of these endeavours. In addition, in October

2018, India bought five Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile systems, with initial delivery scheduled in late 2021.<sup>112</sup> Russia has only sold the S-400s to a small number of other states, thus demonstrating a strong relationship between the two countries.

Regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, New Delhi has taken a neutral stance and urged all parties to put an end to the conflict and find a diplomatic solution. Although New Delhi abstained from voting against Moscow in the UN General Assembly, the former has frozen some of its agreements with Moscow.<sup>113</sup>

This is not related to Russia's invasion in Ukraine and the international pressure on New Delhi faces, but also delivery delays, reliability issues and the urge to diversify its suppliers. The 'Make in India' initiative remains a major focus for India which seeks to strengthen its indigenous defence production and reduce dependency on foreign suppliers.

In April 2022, the Indian Air Force cancelled its plans to buy 48 Mi-17 V5 helicopters from Russia, becoming the first agreement to be dropped. This was immediately followed by the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement that India's defence sector needs to become more self-sufficient as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.<sup>114</sup> Other higher authorities also brought to light that the Indian Army and Navy's supply of weapons, gear, and replacement parts have been delayed due to the war. Due to Russia's continued sanctions, India finds it challenging to obtain weapons from Russia. New Delhi suspended the deal for 10 Russian Ka-31 airborne early warning and control helicopters for its Navy. However, India has made it apparent for a number of years that it wants to grow its own defence sector and import fewer weaponry. India's path of self-reliance has been advanced due to the conflict in Ukraine. Some light utility helicopters built indigenously by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) have been introduced into operational units but to complement that, India wanted to add 200 Russian Ka-226T helicopters.<sup>115</sup> However, because of logistical difficulties arising from the conflict in Ukraine, officials had to cancel the negotiations.

- **India-China Relations amid Russia-Ukraine War.** As the war progressed, it became significant to observe India-China relationship too. Both the countries refrained from openly criticising Russia. This in a way reduced the impact of Western sanctions on Russia. In this context, two questions arise. First, if it would alter India's relationship with China since both of them stand on the same platform in not sanctioning Russia. To answer the first question, Maj Gen (Dr) Bardalai opined: "The war in Europe would not warm up the relationship between India and China. Both the countries have diverged interests with unresolved border dispute and economic clashes. In the 1962 war, India was economically and militarily weaker. However, in the present, India has bolstered itself to challenge China. India was able to defend itself during the Galwan crisis, which China found unacceptable".<sup>116</sup>

Although India and China initiated similar approach towards Russia but that does not mean they will become close partners. Both the countries have their strategic interests and policies, which are very different from each other.

The second question concerns Russia's preference between the two nations. If a situation arises when Moscow had to choose between Beijing and New Delhi, then that would definitely alter the power dynamics between the two Asian giants. This could be followed by an escalation of tension in the Indo-Pacific. Although India increased its trade with Russia from purchasing steel, fertilizer to crude oil (biggest importer of Russian oil in 2022), China went a step ahead. Apart from purchasing Russian oil and gas and increasing their bilateral trade in Chinese currency, the yuan, China provided dual-use technology such as semiconductors which could be easily incorporated in the military hardware. Reports have shown that Chinese state-owned companies have shipped navigation systems and parts of fighter jets to Moscow. In addition, it is estimated that \$12 million worth of drones and drone parts were supplied to Russia. Although the US did not leave any stones unturned in sanctioning Russia and blocking

the latter from access to American made technology but Moscow has been able to purchase them from a third party i.e., small and medium-sized firms based in China.<sup>117</sup>

In the above backdrop, it is more likely that Russia may favour China over India. When compared with Beijing, New Delhi has not been able to bring the top benefits to the table for Moscow. Moreover, the US remains a common adversary for both Russia and China, while being a close partner to India.

Moscow's support to Beijing could be a serious security concern for New Delhi. First, at times of crisis, Russia might come under pressure from China to not help India especially in terms of supply of ammunition. In such a situation India might have to deal with Chinese military might all by itself. Second, even if Russia refrains itself from supplying arms to both the countries, still India would be more affected than China. India's reliance on Russia for military equipment supply is way more than China's. Third, India's relationship with the other South Asian countries could be impacted. Russia's support could boost China's confidence especially in enhancing its influence amongst the South Asian countries which would definitely have an adverse impact on India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy' and might destabilise the power balance in the region. Fourth, considering the growing closeness between Beijing and Moscow, New Delhi might have to make additional efforts to strengthen its relationship with its western and eastern partners such as the US, Japan and Australia.<sup>118</sup>

From the preceding paragraphs it may appear that Moscow may favour Beijing but one cannot overlook the long-term relationship both India and Russia have shared. Analysts opine that there are areas of potential future conflict between Moscow and Beijing. Areas such as Central Asia and the Arctic are rich in natural resources. Central Asia is geo-strategically significant due to which both China and Russia aspire to enhance their influence. Russia does not have such areas of future contestation with India as of now. Considering such factors, there are probabilities that China and Russia might contest between each other in the future.

- **Russian Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).** Amidst the war, the Russian Federation modified their naval doctrine in July 2022. The document elaborates Moscow's strategic plans in the maritime domain. A significant number of modifications have been observed from the 2015 edition. The doctrine mentioned the Indian Ocean Region and the significance of the Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs). Russia emphasised the salience of the region especially in terms of hydrocarbon exploration, underwater pipelines etc. This definitely requires cooperation with the IOR countries with India being the most influential one. Therefore, the doctrine focuses on cooperation between the navies of the region, particularly the Indian Navy.

The doctrine has outlined few aspects especially keeping the Western sanctions in mind. Cooperation with the West Asian countries Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran would benefit Russia especially in the energy sector. In light of this, Indian Ocean remains very significant considering these countries are a part of the IOR.

Maintaining a military-naval presence in the Persian Gulf is another objective, “based on techno-logistical outposts in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, and the use of the infrastructure of the countries of the region for the purpose of conducting Russian naval military activity”.<sup>119</sup>

Besides the Western Indian Ocean, Russia's interests lie in the Eastern and Northeastern part of the Indian Ocean which includes the Bay of Bengal. In November 2023, Russian ships were docked in the Chittagong port of Bangladesh. Furthermore, Russian Navy conducted a joint naval exercise with Myanmar in the northern waters of the Andaman Sea.

Nonetheless, New Delhi showed no indication that Moscow's presence in the Indian Ocean was a cause for concern. Russia has been a long-term friend of India and commences its presence in the neighbourhood. India continues to support Russian influence in the region despite its strong alliances with the US, Japan, and Australia. This is mostly because New Delhi considers Moscow's

presence in the Indian Ocean as a counterbalance to China's expansionist behaviour in the waterbody.<sup>120</sup>

In November 2023, both Russian Navy and Indian Navy concluded a joint naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal. The Defence Ministry of Russia stated: "The purpose of the exercise is to comprehensively develop and strengthen naval cooperation between Russia and India. The drills will help the two navies jointly counter global threats and ensure the safety of civilian shipping in the Asia-Pacific region".<sup>121</sup>

The Admiral Tributs, a big anti-submarine vessel, and the Pacific Fleet's Pechenga, a medium sea tanker, represented Russia. The Indian Navy was represented by the corvette Kiltan and the destroyer Ranvijay.<sup>122</sup>

- **Challenging trade relations with Russia.** Russia's Ambassador Denis Alipov stated that the demand for hydrocarbons in India commenced the bilateral trade between Russia and India with an increase of about \$50 billion between January and September 2023.<sup>123</sup> Despite the increase, there are still issues because of the sanctions, which prevent the banking channels from completely facilitating a trading relationship. Apart from challenges posed by sanctions, there exists an additional concern that causes India to be somewhat hesitant when it comes to business with Russia. Even though Russia and India have a healthy trading relationship, Russia now demands that India pay for the oil in Chinese yuan. This definitely leaves India in a situation where it has to make a tough choice.<sup>124</sup>

### 13. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EUROPE

- **Diverse Economic and Strategic Interests.** Europe has diverse economic and strategic interests. They don't align with each other. However, to deal with the current geo-political turmoil the region needs to have a 'Comprehensive Security Order' which would mean there would be some basic principles and commitments from all the nations. However, it is not possible for the EU to achieve this very quickly especially when the war is continuing. But once the situation stabilises, the EU needs to focus on this aspect to prepare itself for any kind of upcoming shocks.
- **Negotiations and Peace Talks.** Threats and deterrence might not always help to prevent or cease a war. Negotiations and peace talks could be a part of the system. These talks might involve rebuilding trust and then creating safety rules. It could also incorporate various agreements on arms control. Such talks are not possible right now in the midst of the war, but this is something which Europe might look into when the situation stabilises.
- **Operationalising Commitments.** While discussing on the EU's role in the Indo-Pacific it was found that ASEAN remains a cornerstone in enhancing its influence in the region. However, various challenges were observed in strengthening the cooperation between the two blocs. In this regard, the EU might focus on the following opportunities:
  - The EU has already promised to mobilise €10 billion (\$11 billion) to address green transitions and sustainable connections in Southeast Asia during the Summit in December 2022.<sup>125</sup> However, the main emphasis should be on operationalising such commitments and policies in ASEAN. This would mean collaboration on specific projects rather than leaving them as conceptual projects. The EU could sponsor more such projects and help in enhancing the financial capacities of these countries.



- The EU could enhance maritime domain coordination and cooperation. The 'Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training programme' is one of the capability building programmes and the ASEAN countries look forward to having more such joint programmes. These programmes could be expanded in the Indian Ocean, providing a starting point for further EU-ASEAN coordination and collaboration within the maritime domain.
- The EU and ASEAN can initiate in-depth talks in terms of economic security. They might collaborate to advance supply-chain resilience and economic diversification. In order to promote economic development and wean itself from an undue reliance on China, the EU should support commercial endeavours and collaborate with ASEAN. In addition, the EU could help mobilise investments from multilateral financial institutions into the infrastructural needs of the less developed ASEAN members.
- **Assist in Developing Quality Infrastructure for Green Energy.** Europe wants to bring a change in its energy policies by shifting to renewable or green energy sources from fossil fuels. To do so Europe must be dependent on several partners for whom the region has used the proverb 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. However, some of its friends including, Kazakhstan, Algeria, Azerbaijan and Nigeria too do not have quality infrastructure for green energy. To see this green transition, it could already start investing in these countries in developing their green infrastructure.
- **Spend at Least 2 Percent of its GDP.** As recommended by NATO, every member must spend at least 2 percent of its GDP in military spending. However, not everyone so far has met the recommended target. This indicates that not every member in the region stands on the same platform in terms of military spending and does not have the same interest when it comes to security.

- **Peace and Stability in Europe have a Direct Co-relation with Russia.** Last but not the least, Russia should be encouraged to abide by the international rules and norms once the situation normalises. It is important to understand Russia's leadership post Russia-Ukraine war and where will it be placed in the larger security scenario. Moreover, one cannot overlook the fact that peace and stability in Europe has a direct co-relation with Russia.

#### 14. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIA

- **India has not Completed its Path of Self-Sufficiency.** Every country including India, has the right to be self-sufficient. However, achieving this self-sufficiency especially in the military sector is a time taking process. Although New Delhi has been able to supply missiles to other countries but that does not mean India has completed its path of self-reliance. India's dependence on Russia has been historical and this dependency is not just limited to a few aircrafts or tanks but thousands of small and big weapons. When the war started, India froze a few defence agreements with Russia stating that it wanted to make more progress with its 'Make in India Initiative'. Meanwhile Russia's defence capabilities are enhancing and there are probabilities that India might have to face challenges in meeting these developments. India might be producing its tank engines but to reach the efficiency of those produced by Russia or the sophistication of a Rafale fighter jet, India will take years.

India's other suppliers include countries like France and the US but most of the weapons they sell are quite expensive. Today Russia is in the midst of a conflict and it might impact its flow of arms supply, but cutting ties with Russia and relying only on the US, France and Make in India wouldn't be a good idea at the moment.<sup>126</sup> The focus on the indigenisation and 'Atmanirbharta' is the key to success as import dependence from any country could turn out to be challenging for India later.

- **President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Black Sea Grain Deal Diplomacy Grabbed the Lime Light.** Despite its supply of Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine, Turkey managed to maintain its relationship with Russia. Rather President Erdoğan played the significant role of a mediator especially in brokering the Black Sea Grain Deal between Russia and Ukraine in July 2022 in Istanbul. The agreement created a secure route for the export of grain from Odesa, Yuzhny, and Chornomorsk, the three Ukrainian ports, to the rest of the world. By increasing the supply of wheat,

sunflower oil, fertiliser etc., the deal prevented starvation at a global level. This undoubtedly helped Erdoğan in seizing the spotlight internationally.



**Map1:** Black Sea with the three most important Ukrainian ports: Odesa, Yuzhny and Chornomorsk. **Source:** Aljazeera News, [Online: web], URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/17/russia-ukraine-black-sea-grain-deal-all-you-need-to-know>

However, India's stand could have been stronger and more impactful as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine backed by the US. In a talk with the Russian President Putin on sidelines of the SCO summit in September 2022, PM Modi clearly made a statement: "This is not an era of war."<sup>127</sup> This statement gave a lot of hope to the world considering India's friendship with both Russia and the US. However, besides making that statement, no visible and significant effort had been made by New Delhi to influence Moscow. Although India had the potential to contribute much more but its contribution remains understated compared to countries like Turkey. Since it wants to become a global power, New Delhi could use this as an opportunity to grab the lime light at a global level.

- **A Strong Civil Military Fusion (CMF).** It has been estimated that over 10,000 drones are destroyed in Ukraine each week, which is a clear indication of the type of warfare being practiced nowadays especially in expanse. The use of ballistic missiles and rockets in modern conflicts, along with underwater drones, have fundamentally altered the nature of warfare. India needs to be prepared for production of mass drones indigenously. To achieve that a robust CMF is the need of the hour. However, the drone sector in India has been facing challenges and the role of civil stakeholder is crucial in the development of military unmanned aircraft vehicle system (UAVS). A closer integration between industry, academia and the armed forces could enhance the development programmes in the drone sector. In addition, India should also focus on foreign investment which is vital for the growth of the drone industry in India.
- **Geospatial Intelligence Agency.** India can never discount its strategic moves concerning the intelligence front while keeping the war in mind. New Delhi may find it very important to establish a more comprehensive geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) agency that is integrated with all types of its intelligence systems. This will help India to navigate all the future challenges well.
- **Enmeshment of Traditional and Modern Warfare Capabilities.** Although cyber and other forms of modern warfare may not replace the conventional warfare in totality, one can never overlook the kind of destructive potential it has. Conventional warfare is mostly involved in the industrial warfare, which relied on man-power, steel-power and explosives. However, when compared with today's modern warfare, it involves new capabilities such as the space technology, cyber, including the platforms, developed by modern companies, such as Google, Microsoft, etc. The modern wars still cannot become technology driven completely and will require boots on the ground especially in the Indian context. Therefore, an enmeshment of both the mass forces and technology should drive the basic elements of war fighting today. The 21<sup>st</sup> century demands an integration between the traditional military power and advanced warfare capabilities.

## **15. AREAS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIA AND THE EU**

India and the EU can collaborate on various key areas in the midst of the complex geo-political landscape. This would mostly ensure regional stability and strengthen the resilience of the global supply chain. Some of those areas have been discussed in the following paragraphs:

### **15.1 Cooperation in Climate and Energy**

India aims to improve its capability for generating electricity from renewable sources. Meanwhile, the EU has also set aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewable energy capacity. The EU aims to reduce emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 from 1990 levels and generate 40 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030. In May 2020, India and the EU reached an agreement on the “EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025”.<sup>128</sup> The roadmap includes a focus on climate change, clean energy, and environmental sustainability. However, some assessments suggest that both parties’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) are insufficient and incompatible with fair routes for meeting the 1.5°C target. For years, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe has advocated for the EU to reduce emissions by at least 65% by 2030.<sup>129</sup> The EU-India relationship has the potential to significantly reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainability. India can leverage the EU’s expertise in implementing climate policies and technologies since the latter invests heavily in renewable energy technology, including solar and wind power, which India may leverage to attain its objective of 450 GW by 2030.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, India can be an attractive partner for the EU to collaborate in this area because New Delhi aims to achieve 40 percent of its installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

The ‘EU-India Summit 2021’ aimed to improve collaboration under the Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. They are looking forward to the ‘EU-India Energy Panel’s’ endorsement of a new work programme for the Partnership. Four Joint Working Groups are created in this energy panel.<sup>131</sup> They are: energy security, renewable energy, energy efficiency, smart grids and electricity markets, and clean coal.

Significant initiatives have been made from both the sides to collaborate in climate and energy sector. Some of the significant ones are:

- EU-India Clean Energy and Climate Partnership (CECP),<sup>132</sup>
- Cooperation in solar energy:
  - Technical assistance for implementation and management of solar parks
  - PV Rooftop Solar
  - Cooperation with ISA<sup>133</sup>
- Cooperation in Wind energy:
  - Facilitating Offshore Wind in India (FOWIND)<sup>134</sup>
  - First Offshore Wind Project of India (FOWPI)
- Cooperation in Energy Efficiency
  - ACE: E2 – Adoption, Compliance, Enforcement for Energy Efficiency in Buildings<sup>135</sup>
- EU-India Cooperation on Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency in Eco-Cities
- EU India Connectivity Partnership

From the preceding paragraphs, it can be seen that India and EU hold immense potential in these sectors. This partnership can be considered as promising and positive to reduce global greenhouse, gas emissions, and promote sustainability. The initiatives taken by both the sides can drive meaningful progress towards a cleaner, more resilient future.

## **15.2 Cooperation in the Space Sector**

Given its strategic objectives, the EU has developed technologies that will allow it to play a substantial role in the space sector. Copernicus refers to the Earth Observation component of the EU's satellite mission. It fosters worldwide cooperation with its free, full, and open data policy, as well as its ability to handle global challenges. Copernicus services, designed specifically to meet

user needs, deliver near-real-time data at the local, regional, and global levels. It has already provided disaster response assistance to countries such as Australia, Belize, and Pakistan.<sup>136</sup>

However, in terms of data usage and exchange, India continues to be an important partner for the EU. India has already begun its Earth Observation Programme, with backing from the Department of Space (DOS) of India and ISRO. This eventually prompted the European Commission and India's DOS to sign a Cooperation Agreement in March 2018, which would enable mutual access to data from Indian Earth Observation Satellites and the EU's Sentinel family of satellites.<sup>137</sup> Apart from the several missions, Chandrayaan-1 has been one of them where both India and European Space Agency have collaborated.<sup>138</sup>

The EU member France was seen as critical in its help for India's Rohini Rocket Program. In 1998, both countries strengthened their connection by establishing the 'Indo-French Strategic Partnership', ushering in a new era of space collaboration.<sup>139</sup>

In January 2024, both countries signed the historic 'Defence Space Agreement'.<sup>140</sup> Such an agreement marks the beginning of the launch of military satellites with both defensive and offensive capabilities. President Macron and Prime Minister Modi underlined their commitment to expanding their space exploration and research initiatives. This would primarily include technological innovation, payload launch, and an increased emphasis on design and production.<sup>141</sup>

### **15.3 Cooperation in Advanced Technologies**

At the 13th India-EU Joint ICT Working Group meeting, the Commission and India reaffirmed their shared values and principles and decided to strengthen their digital relationship in several important areas.<sup>142</sup> At the meeting both the sides decided to proceed with the plans to organise a high-level Digital Investment Forum, develop a collaborative Artificial Intelligence Task Force, and increase cooperation on High Performance Computing.<sup>143</sup> The program also included topics including networks, cybersecurity, data governance,



artificial intelligence, and digital platforms. Both parties committed to working together more closely on all fronts, especially in light of the Joint Task Force on AI. They also agreed to hold a joint workshop on platform regulation and look into the possibility of forming an expert group that would regularly communicate on issues like taxing large digital platforms, protecting personal data, and antitrust laws.

Collaboration in the semiconductor sector is also strengthening between the EU and India. They are mostly focused on enhancing supply chain resilience which also remains a part of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC).<sup>144</sup>

In November 2023, India and the European Commission inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU). The agreement came into being under the auspices of India-EU TTC.<sup>145</sup> In 2022, New Delhi initiated a significant collaboration with Belgium by signing an agreement with one of the most prominent Belgian semiconductor hubs, Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre (IMEC). IMEC would supply the technology needed to produce chips larger than 28 nanometres, in exchange for a royalty that the user must pay.<sup>146</sup> This partnership also paves the way for further corporation in emerging fields, such as artificial intelligence, nano, electronics, 5G, communications, and research and development. They also look forward to enhancing knowledge transfer and skill development.

## **15.4 Challenges**

Despite the initiatives, there are several challenges in enhancing collaboration between EU and India.

- In terms of technology, New Delhi still has a lack of awareness and access to it although EU has some level of technology expertise in clean energy. Therefore, mobilising investment in green finance would be a challenge both in private and public sector.
- Both India and EU have different timelines for phasing out phasing out fossil fuels. This is also same with achieving the net-zero goals. EU is moving quite fast in this aspect while India's

target is 2070. This might definitely complicate the joint venture both the sides are initiating.

- Trade agreements and climate policies may sometimes conflict. There should be a proper integration of such policies with trade agreements along with coordination.<sup>147</sup>
- In the space sector, India and EU have differences in their space policies and regulatory framework. This could impact in developing a strong collaboration between the two parties. There also exists gaps in terms of protocols and operational practices, negotiations etc.
- Often restrictions have been observed in transfer of space exploration technologies, particularly those pertaining to advanced satellites. In addition, legal and political restrictions may also make it difficult for the two parties to work together smoothly.
- In terms of managing personal data, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of EU and Digital Protection Act (DPDPA) of India take differing approaches.<sup>148</sup> GDPR imposes restrictions in terms of international data transfers and this creates a certain level of unpredictability for the Indian firms.

### **15.5 Future Course of Action India and EU can Initiate to Collaborate in these Sectors**

- The EU and India can boost renewable energy progress by fostering joint R&D, sharing best practices, and building capacity for technology deployment. A dedicated platform for collaboration would also enable knowledge exchange, potentially benefiting from regional grid, interconnections, and mutual learning on renewable expansion strategies.
- India's significant energy access challenges and the EU's efforts to reduce energy poverty offer scope for collaboration on decentralised, renewable solutions, like mini grids, and enhancing energy efficiency in homes and businesses. Joint efforts in these areas can ensure affordable, sustainable energy access for all.

- Both the EU and India aim to drive climate goals by advancing green finance, fostering, green bonds, carbon pricing, and market-based mechanisms. Collaboration on investments, standards and climate finance can accelerate their shift to a low carbon economy.
- Collaboration on satellite navigation could be enhanced between EU's Galileo satellite navigation system and India's NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation). This could include joint efforts in terms of satellite-based communication networks mostly broadband services, remote connectivity and telecommunication.
- Cooperation in the private sector between both the sides is significant to boost their relationship. This could offer market opportunities and spur innovation.
- New Delhi could partner with EU on space situational awareness (SSA) to mitigate threats like space debris. They could initiate joint efforts in developing coordinated debris tracking mechanisms and safeguard critical satellite networks and other space-based infrastructure.
- Capacity building could be an area where both the parties could focus on. This could be done through cooperative satellite missions, infrastructure and expertise sharing, developing a workforce pool of qualified individuals capable of spearheading domestic space projects, etc.<sup>149</sup>
- Transfer of Technology (ToT) might fill some of the gaps in India's space program, particularly in terms of advanced satellite technology, telescopes, communication units, deep space exploration capabilities, and human spaceflight expertise.
- Since GDPR and DPDPA have diverse approaches, it is required that both the parties address it through a mutually recognised framework.
- The Netherlands too has some of the global semiconductor pioneers like ASML, NXP Semiconductors and STMicroelectronics.

Meanwhile, India with a strong political will to enhance its semiconductor eco-system can be a key player in this global value chain. Thus, there exists various potential areas of collaboration between New Delhi and Amsterdam. Indian companies could engage with ASML for advanced lithography machines, could develop innovative chip designs, promote cooperation between start-ups from both the countries and initiate joint research on photonics and quantum technology.

## **16. CONCLUSION**

The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen at her speech at the European Parliament Plenary on February 2024 stated that a great deal of European illusions have been dashed in recent years especially the belief that peace is permanent.<sup>150</sup> However, Europe has demonstrated its willingness to stand by Ukraine no matter how long it takes. She added that Europe's reliance on itself and strengthening their relationship with each other will enable to take care of its defence needs.<sup>151</sup>

However, the war has not only impacted Europe but has posed threats and opportunities for New Delhi as well. New Delhi faced criticism for its neutral stance but it should not be forgotten that New Delhi supporting the West in sanctioning Russia would not have ceased Moscow from invading Kyiv. At the same time, the situation also highlights New Delhi's role in playing a strong diplomatic and strategic relationship. This in a way, would enable India to play the role of a mediator and shape its global standing.

Furthermore, there are numerous areas where India and the EU could collaborate, especially in light of the EU's rising interest in the Indo-Pacific. This extends beyond the domain of security to include fields like advanced technology, space exploration, energy, and climate. Thus, considering India's prominence as a regional power in the Indo-Pacific, it should be able to play a bigger role in a world that is shifting constantly.

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