



Agreement on Scientific Cooperation Between India and EU

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Why in News

Recently, India and the European Union (EU) agreed to **renew the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation** for the **next five years (2020-2025)** during the virtual **15th India-EU Summit**.

European Union

- **European Union (EU)**, is an international organization comprising **27 European countries** and governing common economic, social, and security policies.
- The EU was created by the **Maastricht Treaty**, which entered into force on November 1, **1993**.
- The treaty was designed to enhance European political and economic integration by **creating a single currency (the euro)**, a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights and by advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs.



Key Points

- **Renewal of Agreement on Scientific Cooperation:**
 - India and the EU have agreed to further collaborate in research and innovation based on the **principles of mutual benefit and reciprocity**, as established in the **India-EU Agreement on Science and Technology (2001)** which **expired** on 17th May 2020.
 - Both parties are also committed to launch the **renewal procedure** for the above agreement and **acknowledge 20 years of cooperation on research and innovation.**

- **Significance:**
 - It is expected to enhance research and innovation cooperation in different fields like Water, Energy, Healthcare, Agritech & Bioeconomy, Integrated Cyber-Physical Systems, Information and Communication Technologies, Nanotechnology, and clean technologies, etc.
 - It will also **strengthen the institutional linkages** in research, exchange of researchers, students, startups and attract co-investment of resources for co-generation of knowledge.
- **India-EU Science and Technology Cooperation:**
 - **Science and Technology:** India-EU Science & Technology Steering Committee meets **annually** to review scientific cooperation.
 - The **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and the **European Commission (EC)** have established a Co-Funding Mechanism (CFM) to support joint research projects selected under European Research & Innovation Framework Program ‘**Horizon 2020**’ related to **climate change and polar research**.
 - **Space Technology:** **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has had a long standing cooperation with the European Union, **since the 1970s**.
 - ISRO and the European Space Agency are working towards enhancing cooperation in earth observation. It also involves the **Copernicus programme** signed in 2018.
 - Copernicus is the **European Union's Earth observation programme**.

India-EU Relations

- **Evolution of Diplomatic Relations:**
 - India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in **1962**.
 - The **first India-EU Summit** was held in **Lisbon (Portugal)** in **2000**. Since then, fifteen annual bilateral Summits have been held between India and the EU.
 - The relationship was **upgraded to a ‘Strategic Partnership’** during the **5th India-EU Summit** held at the **Hague (Netherlands)** in **2004**.
 - The bilateral Strategic Partnership encompasses dialogue mechanisms covering a wide range of issues including trade, energy security, science & research, non-proliferation and disarmament, counter terrorism, cyber security, counter-piracy, migration and mobility, etc.
- **Trade and Investment:**
 - The **EU as a whole** was **India’s largest trading partner** while **India** was EU’s **9th** largest trading partner in **2018**.
 - India is also the **fourth largest service exporter** to the EU and the **sixth** largest destination for **service exports** from the EU.
 - EU is the **largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** into India.
 - Over the period April 2000 to June 2018, FDI equity flows from the EU countries into \$ 90.7 billion, which is about **24% of the total FDI inflows to India**.
 - Among countries, **Singapore** is the **largest source of FDI** in India during 2019 with \$ 14.67 billion investment followed by **Mauritius** (\$ 8.24 billion).
 - India and the EU are in the process of negotiating a bilateral **Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)** since **2007**.

Way Forward

- India and the EU are ideal partners to make a difference in an international environment that is increasingly shaped by strategic rivalry between the USA and China.
- They have a common interest in avoiding a bipolarised world and developing the rules-based international order.
- The effort has to be to make the India-EU partnership rise to its potential and provide a new model for international relations today.

Source:PIB