Agreement on Scientific Cooperation Between India and EU

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 11th 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,
- 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.

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**India-EU Relations**

• **Evolution of Diplomatic Relations:**
  - India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in
  - The **first India-EU Summit** was held in Lisbon (Portugal) in Since then, fifteen annual bilateral Summits have been held between India and the EU.
  - The relationship was **upgraded to a ‘Strategic Partnership’** during the **th India-EU Summit** held at the Hague (Netherlands) in
    - 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 **th largest trading partner** in
  - 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

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**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