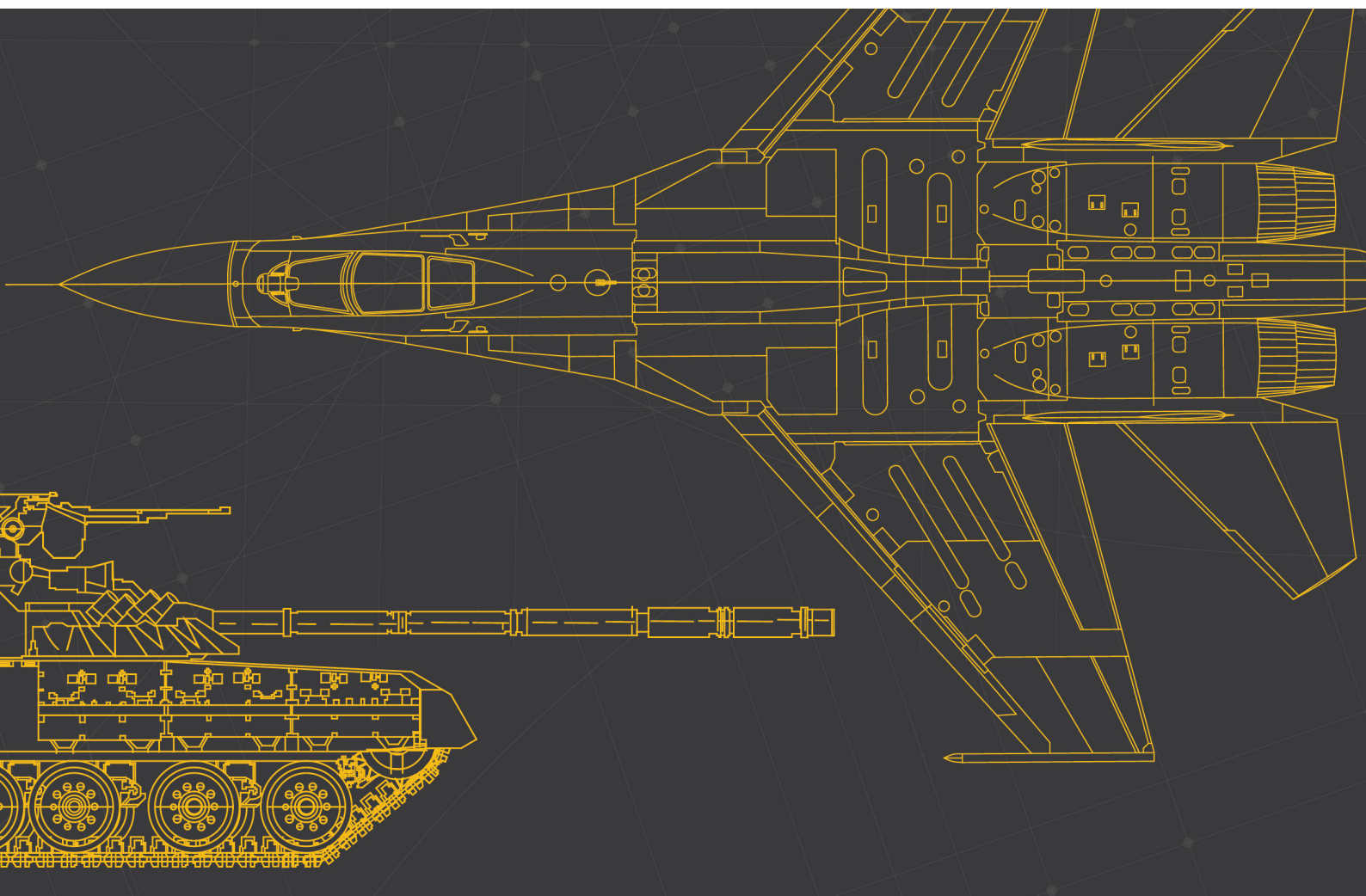




EVENT REPORT

INDIA-EU DEFENCE COOPERATION

Partnering Europe's Security Push

29 July 2025



ABOUT CRF

Chintan Research Foundation is an independent think tank dedicated to shaping policy through rigorous research and thought leadership. With a strong focus on fostering collaboration between policymakers and industry, CRF integrates practical insights into its research and advocacy efforts. It conducts comprehensive research to support informed decision-making and engages with stakeholders through discussions, events, and publications. CRF's research is focused on three core domains – Climate Change & Energy Transition, Economy & Trade, and Geopolitics & Strategic Studies. For more details, refer to the website: www.crfindia.org



INDIA-EU DEFENCE COOPERATION

Partnering Europe's Security Push

29 July 2025 | India International Centre, New Delhi



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01 FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present this report on the recent conversation convened by the Chintan Research Foundation, in partnership with NDTV, on “India-EU Defence Cooperation: Partnering Europe’s Security Push.” The dialogue, held in New Delhi with the participation of senior European diplomats, industry leaders, and strategic experts, was both timely and necessary. Both India and Europe are undergoing profound transformations in their defence postures, and the intersection of these trajectories opens up unprecedented possibilities for cooperation.

Europe’s ReArm 2030 initiative reflects a determination to strengthen its industrial base and reduce reliance on external security guarantees. India, through Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, has moved decisively toward building its own defence ecosystem, supported by the increasing role of the private sector. The complementarities are striking: Europe seeks partners who can provide scale, cost-efficiency, and trust, while India seeks collaborators willing to co-develop and co-innovate. Together, they have the potential to redefine what defence partnership means in the 21st century.

What emerged clearly from the discussions is that the old buyer–seller model is no longer sufficient. A partnership grounded in co-production, technology sharing, maritime security cooperation, and resilient supply chains is the only way forward. Just as important, this collaboration must rest on a foundation of trust in regulations, in industrial standards, and in each other’s long-term strategic intentions.

This report captures the richness of the conversation and the diversity of perspectives shared. I hope it will serve as both a record of the event and a roadmap for future engagement between India and the European Union in the security domain. The timing could not be more apt, nor the stakes higher. By working together, India and Europe can shape not just their own defence futures but also contribute meaningfully to global security and stability.

Warm regards,

Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi

President, Chintan Research Foundation

PANELISTS

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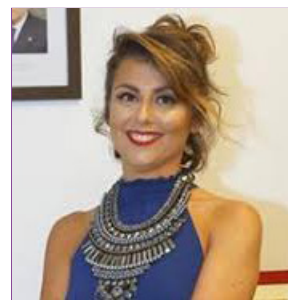
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02 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT



On 29 July 2025, Chintan Research Foundation (CRF) convened a conversation at the India International Centre in New Delhi, bringing together European diplomats, senior Indian industry leaders, and strategic experts to examine the future of India–EU defence cooperation. The discussion was titled “India-EU Defence Cooperation: Partnering Europe’s Security Push”, and was in partnership with NDTV.

Europe is currently undergoing one of its most profound defence transformations since the end of the Cold War. The launch of the European Union’s Readiness 2030 strategy, widely known as ReArm Europe, marks a decisive moment in Europe’s journey toward defence autonomy. The €800 billion initiative seeks to strengthen Europe’s military-industrial base, reduce dependence on U.S. capabilities, and develop robust cooperative structures among member states. Against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict, persistent geopolitical volatility, and shifting NATO dynamics, Europe is recalibrating its defence posture for the coming decades.

India, meanwhile, is in the midst of a defence transformation of its own. Under the twin banners of Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, the country has moved from being one of the world’s largest arms importers to a nation with growing ambitions of becoming a major global supplier. India’s private sector, until recently a peripheral actor in defence production, is stepping into a central role. Firms such as Adani Defence & Aerospace and Tata Advanced Systems are not only manufacturing indigenously but also seeking export markets and global partnerships.

This dual transformation of Europe’s push for autonomy and India’s drive for indigenization creates fertile ground for cooperation. The event sought to interrogate exactly that: how can India and the EU move beyond transactional arms sales toward meaningful co-development, technology transfer, and industrial partnerships that strengthen both regions’ security ecosystems?

The first theme to emerge from the discussion was the transformation underway in Europe's strategic landscape, encapsulated by the ReArm Europe initiative. Ambassador Philipp Ackermann of Germany provided a candid and detailed assessment of Europe's recalibrated security posture.

Ambassador Ackermann noted that the war in Ukraine had been a wake-up call for Europe. For decades, European states had relied heavily on the security umbrella provided by the US, through NATO. As a result, defence spending stagnated, and industrial capacities atrophied, leaving Europe vulnerable to geopolitical shocks. "The U.S. security umbrella over Europe has however, shifted. We must now develop our own capabilities," he emphasized.

This shift is not just about military preparedness but also about political will and strategic culture. For Germany in particular, *Zeitenwende*, meaning the "turning point" in defence policy announced after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has spurred unprecedented investments in military capability and a willingness to reassess long-standing pacifist instincts. Ambassador Ackermann underlined that Germany is now committed to significantly ramping up its defence spending, modernizing its armed forces, and re-engaging with partners in innovative ways.

A critical aspect of ReArm Europe is industrial capacity. Europe recognizes that without a strong, technologically advanced manufacturing base, autonomy will remain elusive. This is where India can play a role. Ambassador suggested that Germany sees India not merely as a buyer of European defence equipment but as a collaborator. In areas like submarine production and advanced manufacturing, German and Indian firms can explore partnerships that go beyond supply contracts to embrace co-production and joint R&D.

He stressed that the EU's evolving security vision must be outward-looking. Europe's defence autonomy, he argued, does not mean isolationism; rather, it means building capabilities that allow Europe to act independently when necessary while deepening partnerships with trusted actors like India. "We see India as a like-minded partner in upholding the global order," he remarked, highlighting convergence on issues such as maritime security, multilateralism, and adherence to international law. Importantly, Ackermann drew attention to the political dimension of this cooperation. Defence partnerships are not only about hardware but also about values and predictability. In a world marked by uncertainty, Europe sees India as a stable partner whose democratic framework and strategic autonomy align well with European priorities.

Europe is resetting its security posture, and in that reset, India has a natural place. But for this potential to be realized, both sides must be willing to think creatively about industrial collaboration, technology transfer, and co-development models.

03 INDIA'S DEFENCE TRANSFORMATION - FROM BUYER TO PARTNER

For decades, India was defined by its dependence on imported military/weapon platforms. From fighter jets to artillery systems, India's security posture leaned heavily on foreign suppliers, making it the world's largest arms importer through much of the post-Cold War era. That equation, however, is undergoing a fundamental shift. India is steadily repositioning itself from being a buyer of foreign technology to becoming a credible partner and increasingly, a supplier in the global defence ecosystem.

This transition is not merely industrial; it reflects a larger strategic reorientation. As several participants underlined during the discussion, India's growing defence autonomy is part of its broader quest to shape a more self-reliant, multipolar global order.

Milestones of Change and the role of private sector

Mr. Ashish Rajvanshi, CEO of Adani Defence & Aerospace, sketched out India's defence transformation through three defining milestones. First, the launch of the Make in India initiative in 2014 created a new policy ecosystem where local production was not only encouraged but prioritized. Second, the operational success of Operation Sindoor highlighted India's ability to integrate indigenous capabilities in real-time missions. Finally, the Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy placed indigenization at the heart of procurement, signaling a permanent departure from the old dependence on imports.

"What we've seen in telecom, we can replicate in defence," Mr. Rajvanshi observed, drawing a telling analogy between India's rapid climb in communications technology and its current trajectory in defence manufacturing. Just as India became a hub for affordable telecom solutions, it now has the potential to supply volume-based, cost-effective platforms to European partners.

"Private firms like Adani Defence are reshaping India's defence sector with global standards, NATO-certified products, and strong in-house talent development."

While public sector Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have long dominated India's military-industrial complex, their orientation was largely toward fulfilling domestic needs in collaboration with tier-one or tier-two suppliers. As Mr. Rajvanshi argued, DPSUs were not fully geared to meet the exacting demands of global markets. The entry of private firms such as Adani Defence has begun to fill this gap, bringing with it a different mindset; one that emphasizes quality, certification, and global competitiveness.

Adani, for instance, has developed NATO-certified ammunition and has invested heavily in scaling up production. Beyond hardware, it has also addressed the critical human capital challenge. Aerospace and defence sectors in India have long suffered from a "brain drain," with talent moving abroad for

opportunities. To counter this, Adani created in-house systems for training and mentoring, pairing seasoned experts with younger engineers. “We knew we wouldn’t always find ready-made talent, but we built systems to train, mentor, and grow it,” Mr. Rajvanshi noted. These investments have not only retained talent but also built a long-term pipeline of expertise capable of working on complex projects like missile systems and aerospace platforms. In doing so, India’s private sector has positioned itself as a key enabler of the country’s defence transformation.

The Strategic Implication: India as a Partner, Not Just a Market

India’s transformation has direct implications for Europe. With the EU’s ReArm 2030 plan aiming to boost defence autonomy, European states are looking for reliable partners who can provide scale, cost-efficiency, and trust. India, with its growing ecosystem of private manufacturers, fits squarely into this equation.

The shift is also psychological. For decades, India’s defence-industrial identity was that of a client which was dependent on Russia, reliant on France, or seeking cutting-edge imports from the US. The new narrative positions India not just as a consumer but as a collaborator capable of co-developing and co-producing alongside European firms.

As Mr. Rajvanshi emphasized, the future lies in building “end-to-end audit trails” and systems of transparency that allow for seamless technology partnerships. With harmonized regulations and trust-based arrangements, India’s private sector can integrate into Europe’s evolving security architecture.

Beyond the technicalities of manufacturing, this transformation reflects India’s broader ambition of becoming a “net security provider.” By indigenizing production, scaling up exports, and investing in manpower, India signals that it is no longer content with being a dependent power. Instead, it seeks to be an equal stakeholder in shaping the defence order of the 21st century.

This is the backdrop against which Europe must view India not as a peripheral supplier but as a partner capable of anchoring joint ventures, technology collaborations, and long-term strategic projects. The convergence is clear: Europe needs partners to meet its defence goals, and India has the scale, political will, and industrial base to step into that role.

04 STRATEGIC AUTONOMY AND TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS

A recurring theme during the dialogue was the notion of strategic autonomy, both in Europe and in India, and how it is shaping defence cooperation. The concept, while rooted in different contexts, carries striking parallels. For Europe, strategic autonomy means reducing dependence on the United States' security umbrella, particularly in the wake of the Ukraine conflict and debates over NATO spending. For India, it reflects a decades-long policy of maintaining freedom of choice in security alignments while building indigenous capacity.

Europe's Urgency to Re-Arm

Ambassador Philipp Ackermann of Germany began by situating Europe's current defence recalibration within the aftermath of the Ukraine war. The conflict, he argued, was a wake-up call that exposed Europe's vulnerabilities and overreliance on the United States. The €800 billion Readiness 2030 (ReArm Europe) plan was born from this urgency to build Europe's own deterrence, industrial capacity, and resilience.

"The US security umbrella over Europe has shifted. We must now develop our own capabilities," Ambassador Ackermann remarked, underlining a new sense of self-reliance among European powers. But he also made it clear that this push is not about isolationism. Rather, it is about equipping Europe to act with greater independence while maintaining partnerships. This mirrors India's own philosophy, where Atmanirbhar Bharat is not about decoupling from the world but about ensuring India has the capacity to act without being overdependent.

Mr. Damien Syed, Deputy Head of Mission at the French Embassy, made a similar point in his intervention. For France, he explained, strategic autonomy is not the pursuit of isolation but the pursuit of trusted, resilient partnerships. France's approach to India illustrates this. French companies are not only supplying critical technologies such as jet engines but are also prepared to co-develop next-generation platforms with India. "Strategic autonomy is not about isolation, it's about trusted partnerships," Mr. Syed noted. France's role in strengthening India's air power (through Rafale aircraft) and its willingness to collaborate on sensitive technologies makes it a natural partner in India's journey. Likewise, India's growing industrial base gives France confidence that co-production will not only serve bilateral ties but also strengthen Europe's defence ecosystem.

India's Perspective: Balancing Ties and Diversification

Former Ambassador Anil Wadhwa placed the conversation in a wider geopolitical context. He acknowledged India's historical reliance on Russia for defence procurement but underlined how the Ukraine conflict and shifting global alignments have accelerated India's diversification. For India, Europe represents a "partner of predictability." Unlike some suppliers, Europe provides not just equipment but also regulatory stability and co-development potential. Mr. Wadhwa pointed to areas like shipbuilding and maritime security where India and Europe can create synergies that are both economically viable

and strategically necessary. At the same time, India must balance this diversification with its existing ties. Strategic autonomy, as Mr. Wadhwa suggested, lies in preserving the freedom to maintain multiple partnerships while reducing overdependence on any single source.

What emerged clearly from the discussion is that India and Europe's versions of strategic autonomy are not in conflict, they are complementary. Europe wants to reduce its dependence on the US; India wants to reduce its dependence on Russia. Both seek to build resilient supply chains, indigenous manufacturing, and credible deterrence.

This creates a fertile ground for collaboration. As participants noted, autonomy is not the opposite of partnership. In fact, it requires partnership - so long as they are based on trust, predictability, and transparency.

Underlying all these discussions was the question of trust. Can Europe trust India with sensitive technologies? Can India trust Europe to provide predictable access to markets and co-production opportunities? The consensus in the room leaned toward optimism. Europe's ambassadors reaffirmed their confidence in India as a trusted partner, noting that concerns about India's ties with Russia were limited. On the Indian side, there was recognition that European states bring both capability and intent to build long-term ties, unlike transactional arrangements seen elsewhere.

In the words of one participant, strategic autonomy for both India and Europe "does not mean turning inward but choosing outward partnerships with greater care." This shared ethos could well become the bedrock of India-EU defence cooperation in the coming decade.

05 MARITIME SECURITY AND THE INDO-MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE

If land wars have dominated recent headlines, maritime security formed one of the most important forward-looking themes of the dialogue. Both Indian and European speakers converged on the point that the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean are fast emerging as the strategic waterways of the 21st century, linking not just trade but also supply chains, energy routes, and naval presence.

Italy's Chargé d'Affaires, Ms. Aurora Russi, brought in a distinctly maritime perspective. She highlighted how Italy and India have steadily expanded naval cooperation, including four major port calls and joint exercises in just the past two years. This naval tempo, she stressed, is not incidental but the result of a deliberate push to deepen maritime interoperability. "Our strategic roadmap is taking shape," Ms. Russi observed, pointing to the April 2025 Defence Cooperation MoU between India and Italy. She emphasized that maritime security is the backbone of the India-Italy defence partnership, given their mutual stakes in the Mediterranean-Indian Ocean continuum.

Her remarks reflected Italy's broader recognition that the Mediterranean is no longer a self-contained theatre; it is connected to the Indo-Pacific both through commerce and geopolitics. India's growing naval profile, from anti-piracy patrols to multilateral exercises, makes it a natural partner for Italy.

Ambassador Anil Wadhwa extended this discussion by situating maritime security in India's strategic calculus. He argued that while India's defence engagement with Europe has often been viewed through the prism of air and land systems, the maritime domain offers equally, if not more, promising opportunities.

“Maritime security is emerging as the backbone of India–EU defence ties, linking the Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean through naval cooperation and shared stakes.”

From shipbuilding to port connectivity, India and Europe have shared stakes. Europe brings decades of expertise in ship design and naval technologies, while India brings scale and cost competitiveness. Wadhwa suggested that co-development in naval systems like frigates, submarines, and maritime surveillance technologies could become a key pillar of future cooperation. This maritime outlook also connects with India's larger Indo-Pacific strategy, where European players such as France, Germany, and Italy are becoming more active. For India, engaging Europe in the maritime domain adds depth to its partnerships while reducing reliance on traditional suppliers.

The discussion also underscored a larger strategic shift: the convergence of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean as a single geostrategic space. Energy flows from the Middle East to Europe, container shipping routes, and emerging logistics corridors like the India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (IMEC) all highlight how maritime security is no longer regional but global.

For Europe, instability in the Red Sea, piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and competition in the Indo-Pacific all feed back into its own security. For India, protecting sea lanes through the Suez and into the Mediterranean is directly tied to trade, energy security, and its diaspora in Europe.

Speakers emphasized that Indo-European cooperation in this wider maritime theatre is not optional, it is essential. Whether through joint naval exercises, technology sharing, or port development, the Indo-Mediterranean link is set to become a defining feature of India–EU defence ties.

In sum, maritime security emerged as more than a sub-theme; it was portrayed as a backbone of the emerging India–EU defence relationship. Italy's proactive naval cooperation, India's shipbuilding ambitions, and Europe's recognition of globalized sea lane vulnerabilities all point to a shared maritime future. “Europe cannot think of its Mediterranean without factoring in the Indian Ocean. India cannot think of its Indo-Pacific without the Mediterranean.” This growing overlap provides the perfect anchor for turning India–EU defence cooperation into a truly strategic partnership.

06 DIPLOMATIC BALANCING AND STRATEGIC AUTONO-

One of the most delicate but unavoidable strands of the conversation was how India and Europe each balance their strategic partnerships while pursuing greater defence cooperation. Here, the interplay of strategic autonomy, legacy ties, and diversification was discussed candidly.

Ambassador Anil Wadhwa addressed the elephant in the room: India's enduring defence ties with Russia. For decades, Russia has been India's principal defence supplier, shaping procurement, training, and doctrine. Yet, as Wadhwa underlined, diversification is no longer a matter of choice but of necessity. Europe, he argued, is increasingly seen in New Delhi as a "partner of predictability." Unlike Russia, where delivery schedules and technology transfers have faced disruptions in recent years, Europe offers reliability and quality. The challenge for India, he noted, is to balance continuity with Moscow while pragmatically expanding partnerships with Europe. This balancing is not just about equipment but about strategic signalling. By engaging Europe more deeply, India demonstrates that its foreign policy remains open and flexible, not beholden to any single bloc.

On the European side, Ambassador Philipp Ackermann of Germany echoed this theme but from a different vantage point. He pointed out that the Ukraine war has fundamentally altered Europe's reliance on the United States. "The US security umbrella over Europe has shifted. We must now develop our own capabilities," he remarked. This is the essence of Europe's Readiness 2030 or ReArm Europe plan. At its heart is a push for greater strategic autonomy, where Europe can shoulder more responsibility for its own security while remaining aligned with NATO. Ambassador Ackermann emphasized that this does not mean disengagement from the transatlantic partnership, but rather building capacity within Europe itself. In this context, partnerships with India, one of the few countries with a growing defence industrial base, become strategically attractive.

Mr. Damien Syed, Deputy Head of Mission at the French Embassy, framed autonomy in a way that resonated strongly with both sides. "Strategic autonomy is not about isolation, it's about trusted partnerships," he said. For France, long a proponent of European independence in security affairs, India is a natural partner. He pointed to how French firms are supplying critical technologies like jet engines, but also increasingly open to co-developing next-generation platforms with India. France's willingness to share cutting-edge technologies stands out compared to some other European partners, and Syed stressed that this reflects the trust at the heart of the Indo-French relationship.

Convergence of Perspectives

Taken together, these interventions revealed a notable convergence. Both India and Europe define autonomy not as detachment, but as diversification and trust-building. For India, autonomy means reducing overdependence on Russia while selectively deepening ties with Europe and others. For Europe, autonomy means reducing overdependence on the United States while engaging capable external partners like India. This mirroring of concerns creates fertile ground for collaboration. Each side is trying to rebalance, and each sees the other as part of the solution.

At the same time, the discussion did not shy away from risks. Diversification can sometimes be read as drift, whether by Russia in India's case or by Washington in Europe's case. The credibility of autonomy depends on careful calibration. Yet the shared understanding that strategic autonomy is anchored in partnerships provides a stabilizing logic. If India and Europe can operationalize this concept in defence manufacturing, co-production, and technology exchanges, they could strengthen not only their bilateral ties but also their wider standing in the global security order.

07 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Beyond the structured themes of industrial capacity, maritime security, and diplomatic balancing, the discussion repeatedly circled back to several cross-cutting issues that underpin the future of India–EU defence cooperation. These are not stand-alone themes, but threads that weave through all dimensions of the partnership.

Mr. Ashish Rajvanshi stressed that any durable cooperation requires a serious approach to intellectual property (IP) protection and talent development. He noted that in earlier decades, India's defence ecosystem was dominated by DPSUs and was not equipped to meet foreign market standards. The private sector has begun to change this equation.

The conversation also touched upon the role of supply chains, especially rare earth materials. Both India and Europe are dependent on external suppliers for these critical inputs, often from geopolitically sensitive regions. Speakers agreed that collaboration in securing and stabilizing these supply chains could become a defining feature of India–EU cooperation. If both regions are serious about building autonomous defence ecosystems, they cannot afford bottlenecks in raw materials. This area, though less visible than fighter jets or submarines, could become a core plank of strategic cooperation.

Another cross-cutting concern raised during the deliberations was the small arms segment. While much attention is given to high-end platforms like submarines, aircraft, or missiles, the small arms industry is equally crucial for operational readiness. Mr. Rajvanshi noted that reforms and investments in this area could enhance India's export profile while simultaneously meeting European demand for reliable suppliers. But this would require regulatory clarity, which is an issue that has surfaced multiple times. Both Indian and European representatives stressed that harmonizing regulatory frameworks is essential to facilitate joint ventures, speed up clearances, and ensure end-to-end accountability in defence production. The question of reputation also loomed large. Defence exports are not merely commercial transactions; they carry symbolic weight in international politics. Concerns were raised about how India's growing defence export profile would interact with Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and human rights discourses, particularly in Europe.

Ambassador Wadhwa suggested that India should lean into quality assurance and predictability as its brand in the global defence marketplace. By emphasizing standards and compliance, Indian firms can

overcome reputational hurdles and present themselves as reliable partners to European governments and industries.

Ultimately, what tied these cross-cutting issues together was the idea of trust. Trust in protecting IP, trust in supply chains, trust in regulatory processes, and trust in reputational standards. As Ambassador Syed put it, autonomy is about trusted partnerships. This emphasis on trust provided a conceptual thread running through all technical, industrial, and regulatory issues. Without it, neither co-development nor joint ventures can be sustained.

08 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A TRUSTED AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

India-EU defence industrial cooperation is entering a decisive phase. Europe's recalibration under ReArm 2030 has created both urgency and opportunity. At the same time, India's defence industry fast maturing into a credible partner, capable not just of meeting its own needs but of contributing to the global supply chain. The overlap between Europe's search for resilience and India's drive for self-reliance is striking, and it is here that the real possibilities of collaboration lie.

What emerged clearly was a recognition that the traditional buyer-seller model is no longer sufficient. The future of India - EU defence ties must rest on co-development, co-production, and co-ownership of technologies. This is not just about building weapons systems but about building ecosystems: harmonising regulatory frameworks, securing supply chains, investing in human capital, and building trust around intellectual property and standards. These are the foundations on which durable partnerships will be built.

Equally important was the understanding that this cooperation has implications far beyond the defence industry. It ties into Europe's aspirations for strategic autonomy, India's ambition to be a net security provider, and the shared priority of safeguarding maritime routes and supply chains in an increasingly contested world. By aligning their strengths, India and Europe can shape a defence relationship that is not transactional but transformational.

As the session concluded, there was a sense of convergence - an awareness that the timing is right, the strategic logics are aligned, and the political will exists on both sides. What is needed now is follow-through: practical frameworks, joint ventures, and sustained engagement at both government and industry levels. If these pieces can be put in place, the India - EU defence partnership has the potential to not only meet immediate security needs but to set a benchmark for equitable, future-ready industrial collaboration.

09 BACKGROUND AND CONCEPT NOTE

Global geopolitical sands are shifting again. With the re-emergence of power rivalries and the weakening of longstanding transatlantic security arrangements, the European Union (EU) finds itself at a critical juncture. A growing realization within EU capitals, that the continent must take greater ownership of its security has led to the launch of the ReArm Europe/Readiness 2030 Plan. This monumental initiative, seeking to raise around €800 billion over the next five years, aims to address critical capability gaps in Europe's defence infrastructure. Commensurately, India has been recalibrating its defence policy under the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaigns. Not only is India reducing its dependence on arms imports, but it is also positioning itself as an exporter of affordable and competitive defence systems. These parallel initiatives present a timely and compelling opportunity for India and the EU to converge strategically in the defence and security domain, further cementing their partnership.

What is ReArm Europe?

The Readiness 2030 strategy, announced in March 2025, is a manifestation of Europe's changing approach to security. From the 2016 Global Strategy to the 2022 Strategic Compass, EU's defence posture has evolved incrementally. Now, with ReArm Europe, the focus is on funding, joint procurement, and coordination. Some of its main features include:

- **SAFE Instrument:** €150 billion in EU-backed loans to support collective defence purchases within Europe.
- **Escape Clause for Defence Spending:** Loosening of fiscal rules to allow member states to exceed deficit limits for defence expenditure.
- **Joint Procurement:** A push to scale economies, reduce redundancy, and enhance interoperability across national forces.

The plan signals a decisive turn towards European defence autonomy. But it also acknowledges the need for external partnerships, with India emerging as a key potential collaborator.

India's Moment to Engage

India's defence sector is undergoing transformation. Alongside reducing imports, exports have jumped significantly, reaching ₹23,622 crore in 2024–25. Systems like the Akash surface-to-air missile, priced far below Western counterparts, offer Europe cost-effective alternatives, especially as budget constraints plague many EU states. Notably, in the recent India-Pakistan conflict, indigenous systems like Akash proved their mettle. The European White Paper on Defence Readiness (March 2025) mentions India explicitly, an encouraging sign of recognition. Several Indian defence firms (HAL, BEL, L&T, Adani Defence and Aerospace, Zen Technologies, Bharat Forge, etc.) are well-placed to enter into joint ventures, technology transfers, and collaborative manufacturing with European defence majors.

Government Policy as an Enabler

European needs are well-defined: air and missile defence systems, drones and counter-drone platforms, artillery, AI, EW systems, and support infrastructure for rapid deployment. Indian firms have capacities in many of these areas. To seize this opportunity, policy facilitation is key. The Indian government should:

- Streamline joint venture and procurement rules via single-window mechanisms.
- Level the playing field between PSUs and private firms.
- Enhance export authorizations, incentivize collaborative R&D, and revisit FDI norms.

There is also a need for greater trust-building between Indian and European stakeholders, starting with joint military exercises, defence exhibitions, and deeper government-to-government dialogue.

Why It Matters Now

This is not just a business opportunity—it's about strategic timing. Europe is undergoing a fundamental security reset, and India is one of the few countries that can match affordability with reliability. Moreover, given the geopolitical environment India faces, collaboration with European firms would bring home needed expertise, technology access, and other benefits. For India, this is a chance to:

- Expand its defence export footprint
- Cement its strategic partnership with Europe
- Advance diversification and reduce dependence on any one supplier ecosystem

For Europe, partnering with India offers diversification, scale, and deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific theatre, an increasingly important region in EU's external outlook.

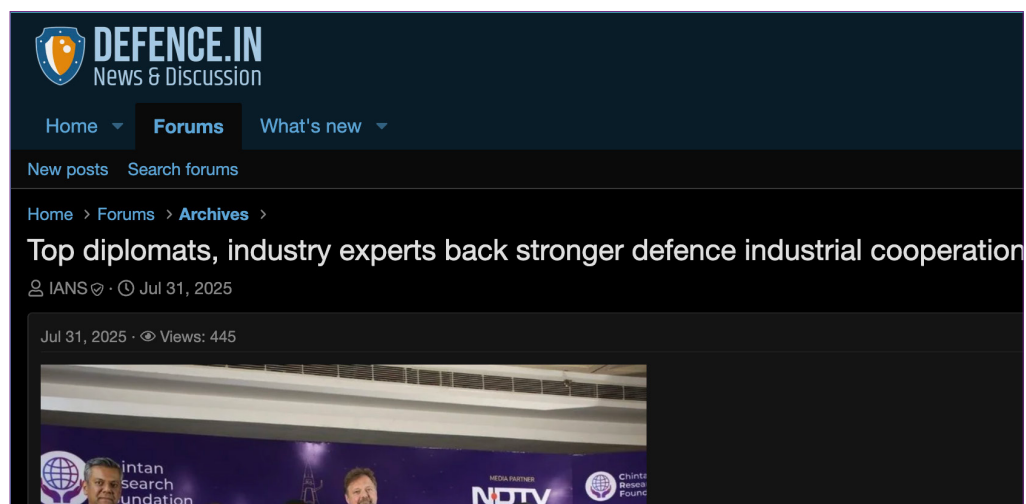
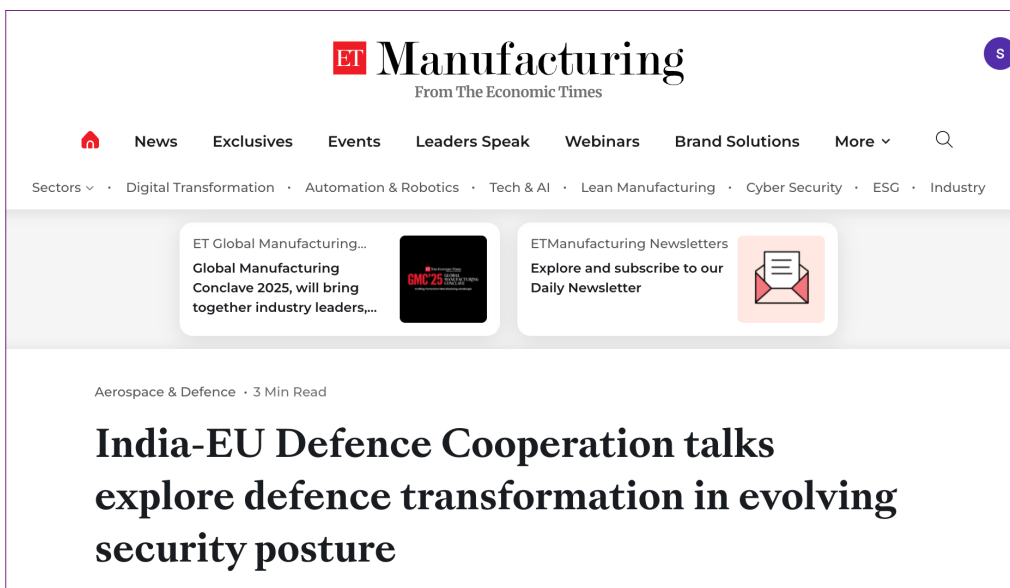
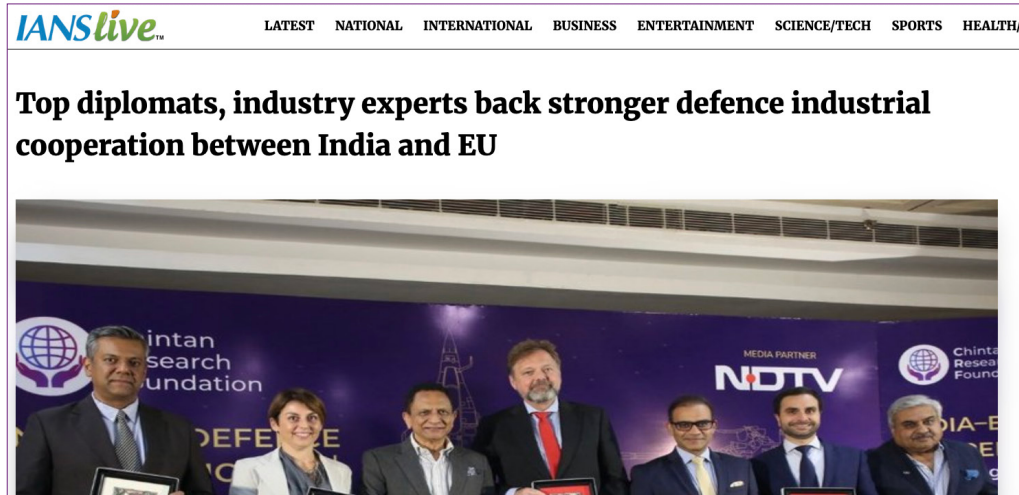
Event Objectives

The event, while addressing the theme, identifies specific objectives that will inform current discussions and the future trajectory of deliberations around the ReArm Europe initiative and India's role. The objectives are:

- To examine the strategic implications of the EU's, ReArm Europe/Readiness 2030 plan and its impact on global security architecture.
- To assess the scope for India-EU defence industrial collaboration in joint manufacturing, technology transfer, and exports.
- To identify regulatory and policy enablers that can enhance private sector participation and facilitate defence cooperation between Indian and European stakeholders.
- To work towards a long-term strategy for upgrading the India-EU strategic partnership as we move into the 2030s.

Europe's push for defence self-reliance mirrors India's own objectives. The convergence is apparent, and the possibilities real. With ReArm Europe initiated, the window for India to act is wide open. The challenge now is to turn this opportunity into tangible strategic collaboration.

10 MEDIA RELEASE





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