

# **INDIA TRILATERAL FORUM**

**(April 27-28, 2017, New Delhi)**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
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***‘THE EUROPEAN UNION – INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A CYPRUS PERSPECTIVE’***

**27 April 2017, New Delhi**

**Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

**At the outset allow me to express my immense pleasure and gratitude to be paying a state visit to India. India is a truly remarkable country, one with ancient roots successfully bearing modern fruits, a major international force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**I want to thank Observer Research Foundation for providing me with the opportunity to address such a distinguished and well-informed audience. It is an honor to participate at an event organized by a vibrant think-tank, such as the ORF, which over the past 25 years has effectively narrated - and is indeed part of authoring the script - in India’s new story.**

**Cyprus and India are both Commonwealth countries that share a deep, strong friendship, founded on a common adherence to democratic values, norms, and principles.**

**India served as an inspiration for Cyprus's independence struggle from colonial British rule in the 1950s. My visit today to the Mahatma Smriti, was both an honour and a deeply moving experience; Gandhi is an inspiration to the world, and to Cyprus in particular, with whom he maintained a strong personal relationship.**

**Cyprus's struggle continues today in a different form, and India continues to stand firmly and unequivocally by the Government of Cyprus in its efforts to safeguard the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus following the 1974 illegal invasion and subsequent occupation by Turkey.**

**India has been a long-standing, reliable ally in our efforts to reunify Cyprus and its people through a comprehensive settlement, in a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, with a single sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship, in line with UN Security Council Resolutions and EU law. The Cyprus problem is European problem, and the EU is, inevitably, a major stakeholder, since the settlement's provisions must be fully in line with EU law, values and principles.**

**India, a federal state itself, fully understands the importance of safeguarding the viability and functionality of the state, both in terms of its internal structure and decision making process, but also in terms of ensuring that no third country has any right of interference or intervention.**

**While we remain firmly committed to the ongoing negotiating effort, we look to friends and allies such as India to convey the message to Turkey that the status quo is unacceptable, and that it needs to engage constructively, and actively in the efforts underway. Peace in Cyprus will send a strong message to our fragile region and beyond, and will be to the benefit not only of Cyprus and its people, but also to Turkey, the EU, and the region. At the same time, it will establish Cyprus as an international paradigm of peaceful co-existence, and prosperous collaboration between all of its citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, cultural and religious characteristics.**

**Dear friends,**

**The unique, long-standing relationship between Cyprus and India is a reciprocal, mutually beneficial one. Cyprus is proud to be a special envoy of India within the EU, a bridge – if you like – between India and the EU.**

**My presentation is entitled “*The EU – India Strategic Partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A Cyprus Perspective*”. Cyprus’s perspective – that deeper partnership and integration serves to benefit the EU and India - is shaped not only by our special relationship with India, but by our firm belief that ‘united we stand.’ This approach extends not only to how we do our foreign policy in our own region – the Eastern Mediterranean – and in our common home, the EU, but also in how we perceive the foreign policy of the EU with its friends and allies, one of the most important of whom is India.**

**As the EU High Representative, Ms. Federica Mogherini, said last week, India and the EU are “natural partners”. This follows what Prime Minister Modi has stated, that with Europe India has “a shared vision of a strong partnership in India’s development”.**

**Our mutual investment is already evident - the EU is India’s largest trading partner, accounting for 13,5% of India’s overall trade. Moreover, India is the EU’s 9<sup>th</sup> largest partner, with the value of EU exports to India amounting to 37,8 billion euro in 2016. These numbers alone constitute solid and convincing proof that the relationship between the EU and India is well beyond its infancy. It is now our task to see this relationship into full maturity.**

**And the channels of action are clear and open. Cyprus is an EU member state that makes the case for a stronger, deeper partnership between the EU and India, as promoters and supporters of rules-based international approaches, the maintenance of an open economic system, the promotion of human rights, maritime security, and promotion of cooperative regional orders, just to name a few areas.**

**Our theme today is timely: developments in Europe, the United States, Asia and elsewhere in the world call for strategic partnerships that are well calibrated and designed, so as to effectively address major challenges, including terrorism, cyber security, development issues, climate change, energy diversification, economic growth, and social policies.**

**While I cannot address all of these major issues in-depth today, I do want to highlight the key areas where our strategic partnership needs investment and cultivation to blossom in the coming years.**

**Dear friends,**

**By pulling our resources together, by sharing knowledge and expertise in a host of social, economic, and security issues, we can achieve a great deal in our Strategic Partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This necessitates a clear vision and a more focused approach.**

**Let us take security, where undoubtedly the major challenges that Europe faces are very much the same that India must address. Attacks in Brussels, Istanbul, Saint Petersburg, Dhaka, Egypt, Stockholm, London and elsewhere are a tragic proof that we are facing a sophisticated global terrorist threat, from which no country is immune. On the day I arrived in Mumbai I paid my humble respects to the victims of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks – a stark reminder that the challenge is common.**

**Within the EU Cyprus is stepping up its efforts, calling for a strengthened international legal framework. Cyprus, and indeed the EU, stand with India as staunch supporters of a comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Like India, we are fully aware of the fact that terrorist networks are global and require a unified response; it is in this context that we participate in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and have provided means and facilities to counter terrorist organisations, for example by providing military assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and actively exchanging information and intelligence with partners.**

**India's engagement with its neighbours and its valuable contribution to regional peace and stability signifies its crucial role in the region, and by extension the world. In places like Afghanistan, India and the EU can forge closer cooperation for the benefit of the people of Afghanistan and**

**for the cause of peace and stability in the region. Where possible, India and the EU must join forces to tackle the root causes of terrorism.**

**In fact, Cyprus is a strong proponent of forging synergies with international and regional actors such as India in order to address common challenges. We have done so in the Eastern Mediterranean, through trilateral cooperation mechanisms with Greece, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. The common denominator of these cooperation mechanisms is shared values, such as respect for good neighbourly relations and international law.**

**Terrorism and political instability go hand in hand, and lie at the heart of challenges that both the EU and India face. Cyprus has been consistently making the case for tackling the root causes of terrorism, and this requires joining forces.**

**In our region, in Syria, Iraq and Libya political instability has allowed radical organisations such as ISIL to fill in the vacuum in an absence of political leadership. The result has been chaos and an unprecedented flow of migration. Likewise, India faces significant migration flows from Afghanistan, and has suffered from terrorism.**

**It is clear that we have no choice but to work harder and closer together to counter this menace, and the EU-India Joint Declaration on the fight against terrorism is an important step in that direction.**

**In the areas of trade and investment the potential is also immense. Cyprus's position is that it is high time to work towards advancing the EU-India negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement, which will open new avenues of cooperation in the economic sector. I believe that there is now a new momentum in this regard and we must ensure that the process moves forward.**

**A Free Trade Agreement, besides the obvious trade and economic benefits that would accrue, will provide the space for EU Member States to maximize their bilateral engagement with India, in all possible sectors of economic activity.**

**The multipliers of an FTA, in the context of an ambitious EU – India Strategic Partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are enormous.**

**The EU and its Member States possess tremendous expertise and know-how, in the very areas where India wishes to take huge modernization leaps, and where Prime Minister Modi has set an ambitious agenda: Make in India,**



**Clean India, Digital India, Smart Cities, and other significant initiatives, like the International Solar Alliance. All these initiatives are significantly reinforced when India and EU Member States work closely together.**

**The Republic of Cyprus has strongly supported the signing of the FTA, and will seize the opportunity to engage actively with India in sectors like renewable energy, most notably in solar energy and natural gas, in shipping and financial services, new applications of thermal energy in medical sciences and pharmaceuticals, in advanced university research and people-to-people contacts.**

**In fact, one of the main pillars of my visit has been to strengthen cooperation in the economic field, and my delegation included over 60 businessmen, who participated in Cyprus-India business forums in Mumbai and in New Delhi.**

**I am also particularly pleased that agreements in the field of merchant shipping, agriculture, aviation, education and culture will be signed tomorrow, thus widening and strengthening our institutional framework of cooperation.**

**Cyprus is eager to be part of this new and dynamic EU-India partnership and to contribute actively in focus of mutual**

**interest, particularly in areas where Cyprus has expertise, including energy, renewable energy, hydrocarbons, shipping, education and tourism.**

**Indeed, the significant discoveries of gas reserves in the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus open new horizons, not only for Cyprus but also for the region, and particularly for the EU that is striving for energy diversification and new routes. The presence of energy giants such as ExxonMObil, ENI-KOGAS, Total, Noble, Qatar Petroleum speaks volumes on the huge potential in the field of energy, for Cyprus but also for the wider region.**

**Cyprus's discoveries of natural gas reserves provide opportunities for cooperation with third countries, in the region. It is in this spirit that Cyprus has pursued effective collaboration with a number of neighbouring countries, including Egypt and Israel, with which it has signed Exclusive Economic Zone Agreements.**

**State or private companies from India are welcome to explore opportunities for partnerships with the Republic of Cyprus or in collaboration with partner countries in the region.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**We have glimpsed today only the tip of the iceberg that is the potential for cooperation and synergies between the EU and India, and how Cyprus can add further value and depth to that relationship.**

**As I said at the outset of my presentation, India is blessed with ancient roots that continue to blossom in the contemporary era. The European Union-India Strategic Partnership is young but strong, and we are beginning to see the first fruits of our mutual labor. By continuing to nurture and cultivate our relationship, our descendants will look back on our efforts and reap what we have sown – a new culture, born in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, destined to grow for centuries to come.**

**Dear friends,**

**Cyprus very much looks forward to the next EU – India Summit, which will take place in New Delhi in October. It will set the stage for the formal decisions to be made at the highest level, with a view to elevating the ambition and scope of the Strategic Partnership in order to achieve the shared desired results. Cyprus will do its utmost to ensure that it is a successful Summit.**

**The ultimate objective is to ensure that we emerge as strong partners, building on our shared beliefs and interests. To this**

**end, Cyprus will take every effort, within the EU and in the context of its bilateral relations with India, to make this a reality.**

**Thank you very much.**

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