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## **The EU-India People's Roadmap**

A People's Common Agenda to guide political action and strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership towards a common future

**June 2021**

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## The EU-India People's Roadmap

This “EU-India People's Roadmap” (**hereinafter the ‘People's Roadmap’**) is a ‘People's Common Agenda’ to guide political action and strengthen the EU-India Strategic Partnership towards a common future. The People's Roadmap is endorsed by the Indian diaspora resident in the European Union (EU); academic experts from leading international universities; political actors within the EU and India; policymakers at various decision-making bodies of government; human rights practitioners; and civil society actors from both the regions (**hereinafter collectively referred to as ‘the diaspora’**).

The People's Roadmap is developed from the deliberations made during the first EU-India People's Summit (herein after **‘the Summit’**) from 1-8 May 2021. The Summit was organised by Foundation London Story, a diaspora-led think-tank with its seat of registration in the Netherlands, and several other diaspora collectives and international partners including India Solidarity Network Finland, The Liberal Indians- France, IAMC, InSAF, South Asia Solidarity, Peace Vigil, Hindus for Human Rights, Indian Civil Watch International, Scottish Indians for Peace and Justice, amongst others.

The diaspora *recognises* that the EU and the Republic of India are both “unions of diversity”, sharing values of democracy, rule of law and human rights, and are willing partners to preserve the rules-based international order and effective multilateralism. The EU and India have a common interest in each other's security, prosperity and development.

The diaspora *recognises* that India has played a crucial role in the establishment of the United Nations and in shaping the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has positively contributed to the formulation and establishment of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. The diaspora further recognises that this active involvement of India over the last seven decades in the creation of the human rights regime allows India to be an equal partner in securing human rights and human dignity for all within and outside of its national boundaries.

The diaspora *recognises* that India and European Union are going through an unprecedented disaster caused by COVID-19 and are faced with death and lack of access to effective healthcare. The diaspora recognises the policy and economic challenge of irregular lockdowns, closure of national borders, and failure of coordinated regional actions. The diaspora strongly recognises that the two regions are faced with an enormous challenge of building back better.

The diaspora *recognises* the multi-lateral commitment made by leaders of India and EU towards “jointly contributing to a safer, greener, cleaner, more digital, resilient and stable world, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement” in the [EU-India Leaders' Meeting](#) of 8 May 2021.

The diaspora further *recognises* the [2020 EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025](#) which aims at strengthening EU-India dialogue mechanisms and addresses a breadth of interrelated topics, including human and cyber security; human rights and fundamental freedoms; trade and market access; climate change and individual and collective responsibilities under the [Paris Climate Agreement](#).

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The diaspora *recognises* the formal commitment made by India and EU towards the protection and safety of dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status, and at all times; combat xenophobia, racism and discrimination towards all migrants through the [formal endorsement of the Global Compact of Migration by the UN General Assembly on 19 December](#) 2018 and the adoption of the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) in on 19 September 2016. The diaspora simultaneously recognises an increase in hate crimes, hate speech and dehumanising narratives against minorities and migrants in India and in the EU, including in online spaces, and affirms the need to positively affirm and commit to Agenda 24 of the Global Compact on Migration.

The diaspora *recognises* that there has been a growth of populism within India and parts of the EU in recent years, leading to a backsliding of constitutional democratic values through transgressions of civil and political liberties, reduction of religious freedoms, cultural expression, the freedom of right to expression, the freedom of movement, and active political persecution through prosecution and other means.

The diaspora *recognises* the legislative initiatives by several EU member states, such as Germany, in improving the oversight of its largest companies' supply chains in regard to human rights and environmental concerns, and welcomes the implementation of an EU-wide mandatory corporate due diligence regime. Conversely, the diaspora expresses great concern at the European Parliament's approval of a trade deal with Morocco that includes the occupied Western Sahara, and in the light of the recent decision to resume trade negotiations between India and the EU reiterates the Parliament's commitment to human rights in trade deals affirmed in [European Parliament resolution \(2016/2219\(INI\)\)](#).

The Diaspora *commends* the efforts of the European Parliament to further EU-Asia and EU-India ties, particularly through [European Parliament Recommendation \(2021/2023\(INI\)\)](#) of 29 April 2021 headed by MEP Alviina Alametsä, which calls for EU-India collaboration on global challenges, and also draws Europe's attention towards the crumbling rule of law and human rights situation in India by highlighting Amnesty International's forced closure, the Jammu and Kashmir communications shutdown, the detention of human rights defenders and the overt use of laws to stifle dissent.

The diaspora *denounces* the criminal indictment of individuals asserting their right to self-determination across Europe, such as in Catalonia and the Basque country, and the arrest of human rights defenders in India. Diaspora strongly condemns the continued incarceration of Father Stan Swamy, Hany Babu, Anand Teltumbde, Gautam Navlakha, Varavara Rao, Sudha Bharadwaj, Sudhir Dhawale, Arun Ferreira, Surendra Gadling, Vernon Gonsalves, Mahesh Raut, Shoma Sen, Rona Wilson, Ishrat Jahan, Umar Khalid, Meeran Haider, Shifa-Ur-Rahman, Sharjeel Imam, Jyoti Jagtap, Sagar Gorkhe, Ramesh Gaichor, Mohammed Mohsin, Laishram Herojeet Singh, Hidme Markam, Annapurna, Piyush Manush, and others.

The diaspora *strongly condemns* unlawful pushbacks of asylum seekers from EU borders including Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Poland, and Spain, excessive detention of asylum seekers, including minors, and recent changes to asylum policies for instance in

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Denmark that undermine the rights of those seeking safety, and stand in direct violation of international law and in contravention of the principles of "responsibility sharing" under the UNHCR's Global Compact on Refugees. In this regard, the diaspora also *reprimands* the failure of the European Parliament to pass a resolution to improve search and rescue of refugees in the Mediterranean.

The diaspora *strongly condemns* the recent developments in India leading to infringements upon civil and political liberties in Kashmir, the creation of detention centres for and political exclusion of Muslims in Assam, infringements based on religion upon the right to citizenship, and persecutory deportation by the Indian state of Rohingyas.

The diaspora *expresses great worry* at Hungary and Poland's continued dismantling of democratic institutions and the rule of law, and *recognises* the European Commission's and the Court of Justice of the European Union's actions taken against both. The diaspora *expresses its deep concern* towards the enactment of legislative and executive tools that undermine the tenets of democracy including the revocation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act that erodes India's secular fabric, and the institution of the Information Technology Rules 2021 that permit expansive state surveillance.

The diaspora *strongly condemns* infringements of the right to peaceful assembly in India and across the EU, through police violence against protestors by Indian and several European police forces, including the French and the Dutch, and legislation compromising on the right to peaceful assembly such as that passed in France.

The diaspora *recognises* that the responsibility to secure universal human rights also comes with the responsibility to actively promote inclusive, and plural development irrespective of race, religion, caste, nationality, origin, or gender.

The diaspora *strongly recognises* the need for international solidarity with victims of violations of mutual treaty obligations, such as the persecution of civil society actors in violation of the mutually agreed upon International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other core human rights treaties, recalling that such statements have provided leverage to movements in their domestic struggles, and have led to the delay in the implementation of detrimental legislation.

The diaspora *strongly recognises* the commitments made by the UN General Assembly through the [Resolution Number A/RES/75/1](#) adopted on 21 September 2020, especially those commitments made in clause 7 to 18, towards building back better from COVID-19 through equitable and affordable global access to health care; protecting our planet by taking adaptive and transformative measures; ensuring justice and preventing conflicts by upholding agreements on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament; encouraging participation of youth, civil society and local stakeholders and placing women and girls at the centre; protecting democratic values; improving digital cooperation and addressing digital trust and security; and the strong condemnation of xenophobia, racism, intolerance, hate speech and disinformation.

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### The diaspora proposes the following points of action:

1. Decentralise EU-India engagement and dedicate resources to strengthening local actors in people-to-people exchanges. Build on the existing city-to-city partnerships recommended in [Point 55 of the India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025](#) and aim for a people-to-people collaboration. Strengthen the involvement of regions and cities in policy-making and implementation within the EU as well as in international collaboration in the spirit of the [Draft Resolution VII/004 of the European Committee of the Regions](#).
2. Strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) and allow transparent dialogues with CSOs including the ones critical of government actions in the spirit of [EU Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society 2018-2020](#).
3. Build common ground for open civic and political audits by taking inspiration from the [United Nation's Auditing for Social Change Strategy](#) ST/ESA/PAD/SSER.E/75 of 2005 and insist that the Indian government adopts an instrument similar to the [Integrity Pacts – Civil Control Mechanism for Safeguarding EU Funds](#) to allow transparent functioning and audit of institutional funds such as the *PM Cares Fund*.
4. Establish a fully transparent and inclusive EU-India Civil Society 'Open Platform' and an EU-India 'People's Summit' as a parallel event at future EU-India summits as envisaged in Point h) of the [European Parliament Resolution A9-0124/2021](#) of 16 April 2021.
5. Strengthen diaspora-led organisations in the [EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative](#) to circumvent the absence of critical NGOs in democratic countries which are silencing human rights defenders.
6. Facilitate an international dialogue between trade unions, as recommended in Point h) of the [European Parliament Resolution A9-0124/2021 of 16 April 2021](#), and ensure that the necessary means for virtual and digital dialogues are provided and no actors are left behind for insufficiency of access.
7. Mainstream co-learning between people, public authorities, and CSOs drawing on for instance the best practices of the [Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality \(KNOW\) initiative](#).

Keeping at heart these action points, the diaspora specifically proposes the following concrete actions in the area of digital democracy, human rights, and climate change diplomacy.

### Digital Democracy

8. Enact the EU's Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Single Market for Digital Services ([Digital Services Act](#)) and amending Directive 2000/31/EC.
9. Enforce data protection and surveillance laws across agencies, including in intelligence agencies. Encourage India to align its [Information Technology \(Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code\), Rules, 2021](#) with the EU-India Roadmap 2025 and its [international legal obligations](#). Further, ensure that the Information

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Technology Rules, 2021 meet the touchstone of proportionality as laid down in [Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India](#).

10. Take a systemic rather than a content-oriented social media platform regulatory approach that hold platform algorithms, rather than individual users, accountable for discriminatory practices, hate-speech and disinformation.
11. Mandate platforms to utilize multifaceted approach that includes detection of manipulation, the establishment and authentication of a source of media, or authenticating media provenance.
12. Introduce punitive taxation for social media companies to be used for efforts to counter disinformation, such as comprehensive media literacy classes in schools and journalism training institutions.
13. Strengthen [science communication](#), in regard to crucial transnational policies concerning public health, climate crisis, elections, pandemic, etc.
14. Strengthen the role of the public sector in research and thereby realise the right to universal access to life-saving technology through public ownership.
15. Ensure that e-governance mechanisms enhance, rather than replace, non-digital governance, and draw on the lessons learned from the problems with COVID-vaccine booking procedures regarding access by illiterate, undocumented and otherwise marginalised parts of society.
16. Build joint measures to curtail election disinformation and synthetic political narratives to maintain election and democratic sanctity.

### Human Rights

17. European and Indian companies that continue to directly or indirectly support entities such as the Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL) must also be sanctioned in the spirit of the [Council decision and implementing regulation implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 401/2013](#) and the [UN resolution against Myanmar](#), that India has abstained from voting on.
18. Provide transparency in trade negotiations and trade deals between the EU or EU member states and India in sensitive sectors such as weapons trade including the sale of Rafale jets by France to India.
19. Operationalise and enforce the [European Parliament Resolution A9-0124/2021](#) of 16 April 2021 to ensure that India - EU relations are centred on human rights and human security.
20. Implement the recommendation paragraph *am* of the [European Parliament Resolution A9-0124/2021](#) and of the [EU-India Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025](#) to establish a regular EU-India Human Rights Dialogue including a dialogue with critical NGOs and civil society actors.
21. Ensure governments in Europe and India must participate regularly in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) process. This includes channelling alternative ways of entering the European Union and India for migrants from precarious situations in order to decrease the need for asking for asylum, in line with [Objectives 5 and 7 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration A/RES/73/195](#).

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22. Decriminalise migration as well as humanitarian assistance to refugees as emphasised in the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) A/73/12 (Part II, para. 32 and 35).
23. The European Commission must insist that India fully ratifies core international human rights conventions, such as the UN Convention on Torture and the Optional Protocol thereto, and the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance without reservations.
24. Enforce the right of UN Special Rapporteurs, including the Rapporteurs who have already requested country access such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy, to enter countries to independently investigate their mandate.
25. Human rights protection clauses must be included in every multilateral and bilateral agreement and interaction between India and EU as agreed in [Point 88 of the European Parliament resolution \(2016/2219\(INI\)\)](#) Including:
  - a. European Union and India must adopt comprehensive due diligence legislation that enables holding Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) accountable in line with the [European Parliamentary Research Service PE 659.299 Briefing of October 2020](#).
  - b. Involve trade unions of various sizes as stakeholders in EU-India trade deal discussions and due diligence negotiations.
  - c. The independent implementation of due diligence procedures for protection and respect towards codified human rights in strict accordance with the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#);
  - d. Include *ex ante* and *ex post* human rights monitoring mechanisms, which should allow civil society to play a greater role in the monitoring of the agreement;
  - e. Operationalise and enforce the right to remedy for victims of human rights abuses and ecological damage by companies through both state measures and non-state measures, as emphasised in [A/HRC/44/32](#) and [European Parliament resolution \(2016/2219\(INI\)\)](#), the effectiveness of which is firmly rooted in the eight “effectiveness criteria” in [Guiding Principle 31 on Business and Human Rights](#);
  - f. Demand and facilitate state-based punitive actions against corporate infringements of human rights.
  - g. Prevent authoritarianism through exclusive economic policies, crony capitalism and creation of market monopolies;
26. The EU must draw inspiration from India's mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility framework as prescribed under section 135 [Companies Act 2013](#).

### Climate Change

27. Take the commitments in the Paris Climate Agreement with utmost seriousness and urgency and take collaborative decisive action towards:
  - a. incorporating farmer's knowledge for creating carbon sinks as recommended in Art. 5 of Paris Agreement;

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- b. incorporating farmer's knowledge on adaptive actions including actions towards water-non-intensive agriculture practices as recommended in Article 7 of the [Paris Climate Agreement](#);
  - c. respecting and strengthening local legislation, such as the Indian Plant Variety Act and the minimum support price to enable farmer-led seed-innovation in farming sector;
  - d. strengthening local small-scale agricultural operations, as opposed to creating US-American-styled monopolies, and monopsonies in agriculture which impair the right to food and the right to health, as affirmed internationally under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and [Action Area 4 of the United Nation's Decade of Action on Nutrition \(2016-2025\)](#);
  - e. encouraging local and regional processing that support the vitality of communities and thereby increase the capacity of communities to achieve local food system resilience in line with [FAO's Sustainable Food System Framework](#) and also allow local food-culture and food-diversity to thrive.
  - f. investing in traditional knowledge exchange to develop localised solutions for food-processing and food nutrition in the European Union.
  - g. encouraging a binding an adequate food waste framework within the EU and India that is based on the [FAO Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\) 2014 Policy Recommendations](#) on Food Losses and Waste through radical reduction of avoidable food waste in the supply chain; allowing for food surplus redistribution (FSR) and promoting usage of inedible food waste in a circular economy.
  - h. promoting knowledge exchange in low-tech mobility solutions such as Indian railway network and commit to establish over-night long distance trains in Europe.
28. Respect gender and intersectionality in land rights and agricultural reform to achieve [Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals](#) and [CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 34](#) on the Rights of Rural Women (2016) UN Doc CEDAW/C/GC/34 paras. 11 and 14, and Articles 7(5), 7(9)(c), and 13 of the [Paris Climate Agreement](#).
29. Reconceptualise and integrate “smart cities” as spaces of solidarity and diversity rather than just a product of sustainable urbanisation or industrial engineering.
30. Commit to creating comprehensive and implementable local climate adaptation plans at provincial, district and village level in addition to the National Adaptation Plan of Action under the Durban Platform and the Nationally Determined Contribution under the [Paris Climate Agreement](#).