



KALINGA INSTITUTE OF
INDO-PACIFIC STUDIES

*invites all to a panel discussion
on*

India under the lens of EU and ASEAN

Speaker



Aleksandra (Ola) Jaskólska

Faculty
Department of Regional and Global
Studies
Faculty of Political Science and
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University of Warsaw

TOPIC

"EU's Perception of India: Unified or
Diverse"

Speaker



Vũ Thế Cường

Deputy Director in charge of
Foreign Affairs and
Professional Operations
The Centre for Indian Studies –
Ho Chi Minh National
Academy of Politics

TOPIC

"ASEAN's Perception of India"

Chair



Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra

Founder and Hon. Chairperson,
KIIPS

KIIPS Panel Discussion on
India under the Lens of the EU & ASEAN

February 4th, 2023

Chair: Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra,
Founder and Honorary Chairperson, KIIPS

Speaker: Aleksandra (Ola) Jaskólska, PhD
Department of Regional and Global Studies
Faculty of Political Science and International Studies
University of Warsaw

Topic: "EU's Perception of India: Unified or Diverse"

Speaker: Vu Cuong, Deputy Director in charge of Foreign Affairs and Professional
Operations, Centre for Indian Studies
Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics

Topic: "ASEAN's Perception on India"

India under the Lens of the EU & ASEAN

- **Report by Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra**

Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies held a Panel Discussion on the topic 'India under the Lens of the EU & ASEAN' on February 4, 2023. While the relation of India with EU are more modern and informed by its colonial past, its relation with ASEAN states are ancient and more cultural-traditional in nature rather than commercial or strategic.

With the renewed efforts of the Modi regime to invigorate India-EU and India-ASEAN ties, the virtual panel discussion brought together expert voices from Poland and Vietnam to highlight the ongoing areas of cooperation and the possible roadblocks that are hindering the strengthening of ties of these two blocs of states with India.

Dr. Aleksandra (Ola) Jaskólska , a faculty of Department of Regional and Global Studies of Faculty of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Warsaw from Poland spoke on the topic "**EU's Perceptions of India: Unified or Diverse**" and described the history and origins of the diverse view that exist within EU about India and the future potential of trade and strategic ties.

Dr. Vū Thê Cường, the Deputy Director in-charge of Foreign Affairs and Professional Operations at The Centre for India Studies at Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics from Vietnam extrapolated the nuisances of the historical-cultural ties between India and ASEAN states, that inform the outlook of ASEAN towards India and how these can be harnessed to further strengthen the trade and strategic ties.

EU's Perceptions of India: Unified or Diverse

1. India was perceived as a very close Soviet ally by the West European countries during the Cold War. In other words, India was with their adversary and thus the overall relationship was very lackluster.
2. Things began to change after the Soviet collapse and Indian economic reforms in the 1990s. Yet India did not excite the Europeans much as they were struggling to cope with the post-Cold War situations.

3. However, things began to change soon by the year 2000, there were four India -EU summit meetings. In a short period of four years, India and the EU established a strategic partnership in 2004.
4. Over the next three years, India and the EU began to conceptualise a free trade agreement leading to the first negotiations on Indo-EU BTIA Treaty in 2007. But lack of knowledge, considerable misperceptions and several other geopolitical developments slowed down the momentum towards an FTA and talks stalled in 2013.
5. New hope for Indo-EU cooperation arose when the Modi Government came to power in 2014, yet during the summit of 2016 and 2017, there was no discussion on FTA.
6. The pendulum began to swing in a positive direction since 2020 and 2021 and an agreement between India and EU spoke about a new roadmap for 2025. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a summit meeting with EU leaders and all heads of states participated and FTA was back on the negotiating table.
7. The EU now looks at India as a partner for development and has brought out a strategy report on the Indo-Pacific that identifies India as an important country. India was mentioned 18 times in that report and the only country that was mentioned more was Japan which was mentioned 23 times.
8. There are 4 categories of countries in the EU today:
 - a. Countries which exhibit increased interest in India—Germany, France and the Netherlands. These countries did not heed the EU and continued developing special ties with India.
 - b. Nordic countries have also begun to pay attention and PM Modi's summit with them was useful. But these countries have a limited interest in India.
 - c. There are countries, such as Poland and a few other Central European countries that want to build ties with India, but India's engagement with these countries is limited.
 - d. Some other European countries recognize India as an important country, but have shown little interest in building robust ties with India.
9. The EU strategy report is not aimed against China. The EU will continue to have a relationship with China at least on the economic side.
10. The EU has mellowed excitement about India's presidency of G20.

ASEAN's Perception of India:

1. ASEAN gives top priority to India. It was reflected in ASEAN heads of states visiting Delhi to be guests at the Republic day celebration last year and more recently ASEAN foreign ministers visited India to be part of Delhi Dialogue and celebration of 30 years of India-ASEAN relationship.
2. India has disappointed ASEAN by walking away from RCEP after nine years of negotiations.
3. India and ASEAN have some differing positions on Myanmar and the BRI of China.
4. Relation with the country in the ASEAN region such as Vietnam is of utmost significance and has a great potential for further strengthening ties.
5. While there is direct people-to-people contact between India and a few ASEAN countries, such as Vietnam, more can be established on this front.
6. India's defence cooperation with some ASEAN member countries is of recent origin and is likely to grow.
7. India-ASEAN relationships are centuries old and have deep religious and social connections.
8. What is desirable between India and ASEAN is good connectivity through the land, sea, air and even cyberspace for stronger ties. While there are direct flight between India and a few ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, there remains a lot of potential to be realised.

Note: The views expressed above belong to the speaker(s). The speaker(s) are solely responsible for the content and facts presented in the report. The author has only summarized the reports.