



### **Speech by President von der Leyen at the Raisina Dialogue**

New Delhi, 25 April 2022

Prime Minister Modi,

Excellencies,

Ambassadors,

Distinguished Guests,

Every five years, when Indians are casting their vote in Parliamentary elections, the world watches with admiration as the world's largest democracy charts its future path. Because the outcome of decisions made by 1.3 billion people resonates around the globe. This is especially true for Europe. As vibrant democracies, India and the European Union share fundamental values and common interests. Together, we believe in each country's right to determine its own destiny. Together, we believe in the rule of law and fundamental rights. And together, we believe that it is democracy that best delivers for citizens. So despite our geographic distance and despite the different languages we speak – when we look at each other, we do not meet as strangers but as close friends. Democracy was born more than 2,000 years ago in Europe. But today, its largest home is India.

For the European Union, strengthening and energising its partnership with India is a priority in this upcoming decade. Both our economies thrive in a world of common rules and fair competition. We share the same interests in safe trading routes, in seamless supply chains, and in a free and open Indo-Pacific. Both our regions are driving forces in the digital revolution. This makes us natural partners in setting global standards, to make sure that the rules of the analogue world also count in the digital domain. And of course, both India and the European Union are key in the transition to a more sustainable and green future for our planet. So we must pool our strength in the fight against climate change. It is so urgent. This is our common responsibility not only towards the global community but mostly towards the next generation.

However, our values are not shared by everyone. We all see the rising challenges to our open and free societies. This is true for the technological and the economic domain – but it is also true for security. The reality is that the core principles that underpin peace and security across the world are at stake. In Asia as well as in Europe. The images coming from Russia's attack on Ukraine have shocked and are shocking the whole world. Two weeks ago, I visited Bucha, the suburb of Kyiv, which was devastated by Russian troops as they withdrew from the north of Ukraine. I saw with my own eyes the bodies lined up on the ground. I saw the mass graves. I listened to survivors of atrocious crimes that the Kremlin's soldiers committed. I saw the scars of bombed schools, resident houses and hospitals. These are severe violations of international law. Targeting and killing innocent civilians. Redrawing borders by force. Subjugating the will of a free people. This goes against core principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

In Europe, we see Russia's aggression as a direct threat to our security. We will make sure that the unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine will be a strategic failure. This is why we are doing all we can to help Ukraine fight for its freedom. This is why we immediately imposed massive, sharp and effective sanctions. Sanctions are never a standalone solution. They are embedded in a broader strategy that has diplomatic and security elements. And this is why we have designed the sanctions in a way to sustain them over a longer period of time. Because this gives us leverage to achieve a diplomatic solution that will bring lasting peace. And we urge all members of the international community to support our efforts for lasting peace. And if we consider what it means, for Europe and Asia, that Russia and China have forged a seemingly unrestrained pact. They have declared that the friendship between them has 'no limits'; that there are 'no forbidden areas of cooperation'; this was in February this year. And then, the invasion of Ukraine followed. What can we expect from the 'new international relations' that both have called for?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a defining moment. Our decisions in these days will shape decades to come. Our response to

Russia's aggression today will decide the future of both the international system and the global economy. Will heinous devastation win or humanity prevail? Will the right of might dominate or the rule of law? Will there be constant conflict and struggle or a future of common prosperity and lasting peace? What happens in Ukraine will have an impact on the Indo-Pacific region. It already has. Countries battered by two years of COVID-19 pandemic must deal now with rising prices for grain, energy and fertilisers as a direct result of Putin's war of choice. Thus, the outcome of the war will not only determine the future of Europe but also deeply affect the Indo-Pacific region and the rest of the world. For the Indo-Pacific region, it is as important as for Europe that borders are respected and that spheres of influence are rejected. We want a positive vision for a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. The region is home to half of the world's population and 60% of the global GDP. Our vision is that the Indo-Pacific region remains free and open, and becomes more interconnected, prosperous, secure and resilient – with an open and rules-based security architecture that serves all interests. To this end, we will deepen our engagement with our partners in the region, including ASEAN.

On China, we will continue to encourage Beijing to play its part in a peaceful and thriving Indo-Pacific region. The relationship between the European Union and China is simultaneously strategically important and challenging. All at once, China is a negotiating partner, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. We will continue our multifaceted engagement, we will continue to cooperate on tackling common challenges, and we will protect our essential interests and promote our values.

On this foundation of engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, we seek to build a new common agenda for the 21st century. One major item on this agenda is the need around the world for massive investment to overcome the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and to modernise the economies. And as a consequence, some countries have been forced to take unsustainable offers. They face a situation where they do not fully control their own infrastructure, be it seaports or airports, be it bridges or railways. But investments in our future should never come at the expense of a country's independence. Throughout the 2020s, developing Asian countries will need to invest more than 5% of their gross domestic product to meet the infrastructure needs of their own fast-growing economies. This means globally over USD 1.7 trillion per year. The needs are massive, but so are the opportunities. This is why we have introduced Global Gateway. Global Gateway is Europe's vision for investment in clean and sustainable global infrastructure. Global Gateway will enable up to EUR 300 billion to support major infrastructure priorities around the world. From clean energy to digitalisation, you name it, our offer will be transparent and values-driven. With Europe, what you see is what you get.

Let me focus specifically on two points: First, on climate action. And here, let me take energy. Energy demand in India, for example, has doubled since 2000. And this is good news, because it means better living conditions for millions of people. Over the next 20 years, India will need an additional energy capacity that is equal to the entire European energy consumption, additional. So the question is: Will this energy be clean? Or will it poison our air that we breathe? Will the energy be renewable and home-grown? Or will it increase our dependency and allow for blackmail in the future? I was very glad, Prime Minister, to hear that you declared that India will be energy-independent before it celebrates the 100th birthday of the country's independence, in 2047. The choices made today are crucial – not just for this great nation, but for the whole world. Global Gateway could bring, for example, to India and Bangladesh more hydropower produced in Nepal and Bhutan. It could build clean hydrogen infrastructure to power up your heavy industries. Just yesterday, I visited the headquarters of the International Solar Alliance. This is a great partnership launched by Prime Minister Modi, and now bringing together 86 countries. So it is innovation at the service of people. Because the International Solar Alliance will benefit most the least developed countries and the small island developing states. Given the geopolitical and climate challenges we face, the business case today for solar is stronger than ever. So we should massively scale it up – also through Global Gateway – for the benefit of our common prosperity and the planet we all share. We also can help the climate when saving energy. I know, this sounds obvious. But in a country the size of India, the sum of many small individual decisions can have a tremendous overall impact in the end. Just think of this example: As prices dropped dramatically in recent years, millions of Indians switched from using traditional old light bulbs to modern LED lighting technology. This resulted in annual energy savings of 30 terawatt-hours. This is roughly enough to power 28 million average Indian households for a year, just by saving, or for the whole of Denmark, just through saving energy. There is really big time potential in energy sufficiency and energy savings.

We also need to strengthen our cooperation in the digital field. This is my second point. Because cutting-edge technology is at the heart of our future cooperation. And Asia is a powerhouse when it comes to new technologies, from artificial intelligence to quantum computing. Our cooperation is about more than investment and infrastructure, it is about talent and technology based on fundamental values. On standards, for example. Today, India and the European Union both recognise that we are better off when we develop global standards for new technologies such as 5G, instead of

seeking separate national solutions. And we share many of the same values when it comes to the digital world. We share the idea that privacy should be guaranteed online as well as offline, and that technology should enhance individual freedom, not the state's ability to control us. Think about data protection. European companies outsource many of their IT processes to Indian companies. Europe generates almost one-third of the revenues for the Indian Business Process Outsourcing sector. With equivalent rules, we could unlock even greater data flows between our regions, with immense benefits for the companies in our respective regions.

As I said earlier, for the European Union, the partnership with this region is one of our most important relationships for the coming decade, and strengthening this partnership is a priority for the European Union. Our strategic cooperation should take place at the nexus of trade, trusted technology, and security, notably in respect of challenges posed by rival governance models. And therefore, I am very pleased that today, Prime Minister Modi and I have agreed to establish an EU-India Trade and Technology Council to tackle key trade, economic and technological challenges. As like-minded partners, the European Union and India will be working on several tracks. We have launched negotiations on a free trade agreement, as well as on investment protection and geographical indications. For Europe, this is a strategic investment in our partnership with India. The European Union is India's third most important trade partner. But we can do so much more. Our trade is far below our potential, both for Indian and European goods and services. So this deal will bring new technologies, new investment and unprecedented integration into shared value chains. We are the two largest democracies in the world, and together we have a lot to give for the benefit of the people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are living, indeed, in a Terra Nova, as the title of this year's Raisina Dialogue suggests. We all have to choose whether we want a Terra Nova to be a wild, dangerous and an unliveable place or a better home for all humankind. I am convinced that democracies will have a crucial role to play in defining the world of tomorrow. I want Europe to be a partner for Asia in shaping this new world. A world of independent yet interconnected countries. Working together for a more prosperous and peaceful world. Working together for the benefit of humankind.

Thank you very much for your attention.

SPEECH/22/2647

Related media



[European Commission President Ursula von der LEYEN in India](#)