

# POLICYBRIEF

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## Nurturing the European Union – India Multi-Sited Artificial Intelligence ‘Bubble of Trust’

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### Highlights

1. The European Union’s relationship with India gains prominence across various sectors of artificial intelligence in this era of open strategic autonomy and friendshoring.
2. The European Union and India convene in numerous bilateral and international consultative and decision-making forums. These forums foster collaborative efforts to enhance a comprehensive position on a range of issues related to the risks and difficulties presented by the development of many strands of artificial intelligence.
3. Despite some enthusiasm concerning the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance diplomatic negotiations and their outcomes, this brief reminds us of the inherent risks associated with various strands of artificial intelligence. The indispensability of traditional diplomatic processes remains evident. The core traits of diplomatic practice retain their importance, even in the face of various technological advancements promised by the proponents of artificial intelligence. A human-centred approach to artificial intelligence requires high-level decision-making based on human consciousness and reasoning.

### Long Horizons

The core argument of this policy brief is that artificial intelligence, as a horizontal policy matter, should not be seen as a short-lived hype. Instead, artificial intelligence is a promising domain wherein the European Union and India have an opportunity to cultivate a long-term dialogue, coordination, and cooperation based on mutually agreed purposes and issue framing.

As signatories to the Bletchley Declaration (2023), the European Union and India affirmed the essential role of internationally coordinated efforts: “Many risks arising from [artificial intelligence] are inherently international in nature, and so are best addressed through international cooperation. We resolve to work together inclusively to ensure human-centric, trustworthy, and responsible [artificial intelligence] that is safe and supports the good of all through existing international fora and other relevant initiatives to promote cooperation to address the broad range of risks posed by [artificial intelligence].” The Bletchley Declaration, needless to say, is a concise political statement. Scholarly accounts, like the one authored by Chatterjee & N.S. (2021), bear witness to the extensive array of challenging aspects and risks preoccupying expert minds regarding the public oversight and technical adoption of various artificial intelligence-based solutions. Taking these nuances into full consideration

and aligning with the overall Bletchley spirit, a sustained partnership between the European Union and India on artificial intelligence matters would be of great benefit and interest not only to both strategic partners. The EU represents the internationally acclaimed regulatory mastery referred to as the ‘Brussels Effect’ (Bradford, 2020) and the vast experience of the world’s largest consumer and industrial market. India is the most populous country and is expected to become the world’s third-largest consumer market around 2030. Combining European regulatory prowess with Indian expertise concerning the evolving Asian socio-economic characteristics, this partnership on artificial intelligence issues can be a source of expertise and regulatory improvement that would benefit populations worldwide. For example, following Xavier’s (2023) observations, if the European Union and India join forces, one of the regions where some of the first positive implications of this partnership might be felt is South Asia. India directs most of its development cooperation there. Moreover, India’s role as an emerging donor is most visibly manifested in South Asia.

## Multiple Sites

What is particularly noteworthy about the European Union and India is that both strategic partners regularly meet in various international and regional consultative and decision-making formats. Thus, they can collectively shape global artificial intelligence governance across a broad spectrum of issue-specific forums. There is no better example of the applicability of this multi-sited reasoning than President von der Leyen’s (2023) G20 speech. She pointed to the United Nations as the relevant venue for addressing rapidly changing technology with the assistance of an innovation advisory body akin to the established practices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Following the roadmap (Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, 2023b) tied to the High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence and Roberts’ (2023) comments, this episode is indicative of the growing interest in expanding governance initiatives and expert advisory formats associated with artificial intelligence. To contextualise this suggestion within existing initiatives and

commitments, the Global Digital Compact (Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology, 2023a) with its aspirations to promote regulation of artificial intelligence is well exemplified in the report “Our Common Agenda” (United Nations, 2023a). This report lays the groundwork for the Summit of the Future (United Nations, 2023b) expected in 2024, aiming to result in the Pact for the Future.

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Hopefully, this contextualisation counters further criticism that the AI Safety Summit could have been replaced by “a ChatGPT-generated email” (Sparkes, 2023). Apart from the announcement by the United States and the United Kingdom to establish their national artificial intelligence safety institutes (reported by Schaake, 2023), the event did not result in a detailed roadmap, a nuanced action plan, or a similar tangible outlook. This brief argues against downplaying the significance of the summit. Instead, it views the summit as an intrinsic part of more overarching efforts to find the right combination of regulatory and governance measures to address the innovative conundrum of artificial intelligence, which has already permeated many domains of everyday life and various sectors of economies worldwide.

Learning from past experiences in some thematic domains, it is worth noting that niche solutions crafted in one forum of the dense multilateral system do not always seamlessly translate to the other issue-based venues of thematic affinity. Sometimes, arguably so, this occurs because mandates are issue-specific and not unified. Issue-specific framing limits applicability beyond the consultative site where the solution was designed, or an agreement reached. Consequently, the author of this study is keenly interested in any future developments related to the advisory group indicated by President von der Leyen.

One of the most informative sources for the specific approaches adopted across various United Nations entities is the 2022 United Nations Activities on Artificial Intelligence (AI) report (International Telecommunication Union, 2023). This report includes the 2021 artificial intelligence ethics standard

“Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence” developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among other examples. Overall, the growing interest in establishing new consultative and expertise initiatives underscores the importance of effective coordination. Recalling the vital role that member states and their coalitions play in translating the goals and aspirations of the United Nations into tangible outcomes, both strategic partners can collaborate to enhance coherence among these many locations by adopting a unified approach.

The joint statement of the first meeting of the European Union and India Trade and Technology Council (2023) outlines the following thematic scope: “The European Union and India will coordinate within the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) and explore bilateral cooperation on trustworthy and responsible Artificial Intelligence, including in research and innovation.” While acknowledging the utility of the European Union and India Trade and Technology Council (European Commission, 2023), it is essential to situate this forum within the context of multiple sites of expert consultations and decision-making linked to various dimensions of artificial intelligence. Each forum has its specific mandate, membership composition, agenda, and modes of facilitating interactions and decision-making among involved parties. Thus, each format has unique dynamics and considerations for the European Union and India to navigate. This is not a call to align the stances of the European Union and India across all these forums, as that is virtually impossible, illogical, and not vitally necessary. Instead, this is an invitation to consider the European Union and India Trade and Technology Council as a meeting point within a broader landscape of sites where the European Union and India can exchange experiences and expertise and propose solutions of common interest. In essence, the European Union – India strategic partnership is multi-sited, and the artificial intelligence dimension of this partnership shares this characteristic. Perhaps the European Union and India Trade and Technology Council can serve as one of the meeting points for devising greater coherence and concerted action to leverage various artificial intelligence expert forums.

The importance of viewing the European Union – India dialogue and collaborative efforts on artificial intelligence as a long-term multi-sited issue is linked to the diverse applications of artificial intelligence, which include the

unique challenges, assessments, and unpredictability related to artificial intelligence when combined with other new or emerging technologies. Notably, as highlighted by Colglazier (2018), among these new and emerging technologies are big data, robotics, supercomputers, gene editing, nanotechnology, and others. According to He & Degtyarev (2023), artificial intelligence plays a role in revolutionising nuclear material production. Both authors advocate for undertaking this evolutionary leap ethically and transparently in alignment with the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals. The reason for focusing on these intersections and combinations of emerging technologies is to draw parallels with the scholarly recognition that, broadly speaking, technological advancement is a socially guided process. Modig & Andersson’s (2022) study on military innovation serves as a helpful reference in this regard. Whether a particular technology is developed for military or civilian use, or if it is envisioned for dual-use purposes from the outset, its evolutionary path depends on several enabling conditions

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occurring simultaneously. These conditions include shared assessments and like-mindedness among the technical expert community, potential funders, and political leadership that is informed by the geopolitical context. The future of artificial intelligence is subject to these considerations. The decisions made by the European Union and India might shape different evolutionary trajectories for the artificial intelligence applications in each of these large economies. These technological developments, adoption, and public regulation experiences are worth discussing among both strategic partners bilaterally and multilaterally in greater detail.

### **Open Strategic Autonomy and Friend-Shoring**

For the EU, this strategic partnership on artificial intelligence can significantly facilitate the crafting and testing of the best modalities for its continuous aspirations to maintain open strategic autonomy (Spanish Presidency, 2023) and implement friendshoring (Attinasi, Boeckelmann, & Meunier, 2023). To succinctly explain the concept of open strategic autonomy, this brief draws upon the comprehensive

description offered by Cagnin & colleagues (European Commission et al., 2021, 1). Open strategic autonomy refers to “notions of a future state of enhanced resilience, managed mutual interdependence, and relative power evolving from existing capacities, vulnerabilities, and dependencies. While it originally focused on matters of security and defence, open strategic autonomy has expanded to encompass a wide range of policies [...]. It extends from geopolitics and economics (i.e. critical raw materials and supply chains) to law (i.e. regulation and standards), technology, environment and climate, social and governance (i.e. manipulation of data and misinformation).” To explain the term along the lines elaborated by Manak & Miller (2023), friendshoring refers to attempts to enhance “relations with partners holding

elsewhere.

Okano-Heijmans & Kranenburg (2023) have already succinctly noted: “Jointly developing [...] human-centred technologies and exchanging views is another route for the [European Union] and India to work on decreasing dependencies while maintaining democratic principles.” Thus, this partnership offers opportunities to preserve the openness of the European Union’s strategic autonomy vis-à-vis trustworthy democracies. Human-centred technologies governed by democratic principles might be the core elements of this ‘bubble of trust’. As Jain-Grégoire & colleagues (2023, 61) explain, “[b]ubbles of trust’ refer to alliances based on a potentially evolving combination of shared values, geopolitical interests, and

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similar values as well as shoring up trade and global supply chains.” Friendshoring entails “identifying low-risk partners and shifting manufacturing to them.” The reason for referring to the meaning of friendshoring published by United States-affiliated thinkers is to note that the European Union is not the only major geoeconomic player preoccupied with exploring more cooperation opportunities with India. So does the United States. Considering Molin’s (2023) thinking, friendshoring sets favourable conditions for increasing and modernising the industrial and manufacturing base in India and increasing India’s footprint in the international supply chains.

In essence, artificial intelligence-based solutions are swiftly evolving technologies that are being adopted, so to speak, ‘as we go’ with many known unknowns and, most probably, just as many (if not more) unknown unknowns. These aspects need constant attention from both regulatory and public-interest standpoints. Referring to Albrecht (2023), the precautionary principle called upon in the so-called ‘peacetech’ applications developed worldwide is an excellent example of raising awareness about certain existing technical flaws. Lessons learned from the strategic partnership between the European Union and India in this domain can offer valuable evidence-informed expertise relevant for the Union’s external actions in artificial intelligence governance. The European Union and India’s exchanges on technological issues might prove especially helpful when it comes to safeguarding democratic principles in different national frameworks in Asia and

complementarities in capabilities to forge a way between complete (and unattainable) technological sovereignty and a full globalisation of supply chains.” Friendshoring focus on India attests to the potential for India to be an essential partner in the ‘bubble of trust’ with the

European Union. The rest of the participatory configuration of this promising ‘bubble of trust’ must not be defined and described here. In this brief, it suffices to point out the solid grounds on which the friendshoring drive works in favour of developing the ‘bubble of trust’ as a space shared by the European Union and India.

### Diplomacy Kept Intact

To clarify, this brief does not address various experimental attempts to introduce artificial intelligence models in diplomacy and diplomatic consultations between the European Union and India, in particular. Considering the many exploratory and far from well-defined and sufficiently examined aspects of artificial intelligence, this brief does not share the enthusiasm of Buch & colleagues (2022) to adopt artificial intelligence technologies in the actual practice of diplomacy to enhance human analytical capacities. Until further notice, ambient intelligence should remain limited to the medical domain and its academic pursuits. Kim & Chung’s (2020) precision medicine paper is a helpful illustration. The growing literature on ambient intelligence proves that this technology domain, which combines sensor data, ubiquitous computing, and artificial intelligence, brings a variety of its unique considerations to the fore. Ambient intelligence is not a ‘plug and play’ technology ready for a more carefree and efficient diplomatic practice.

This brief commends the exploratory attempts, such as those demonstrated by Kramár & colleagues (2022) and the Meta Fundamental Artificial Intelligence Research Diplomacy Team (FAIR) & colleagues (2022), to assess artificial intelligence's negotiating performance in simple diplomatic games, such as the boardgame "Diplomacy." Such studies provide insights into how artificial intelligence addresses some primary diplomatic hurdles faced by human negotiators. Brief findings reported by Hutson (2022) help to draw some conclusions about the potential of artificial intelligence to interact with humans and display signs of strategic thinking and subterfuge, as well as intuitive and persuasive messaging. Nevertheless, this brief aligns with the conservative stance that diplomacy should be left to diplomats. Human nature has its limitations in information processing. It is impossible to completely rule out certain character defects' negative impact on the diplomatic process.

Nevertheless, despite these and other shortcomings, there is no urgent need to outsource real-world decision-making to artificial intelligence. There can be no human-centred evolution of artificial intelligence without humans having complete control over high-level discussions and decision-making over the future of artificial intelligence. People themselves must engage in these deliberations.

Furthermore, in line with the European Union's inclination to adhere to the precautionary principle, many artificial intelligence solutions tested across various domains and functional use are still too immature and susceptible to significant misunderstandings of context, such as cultural and emotionally coloured information. This is a considerable reliability issue. Therefore, these technologies cannot be considered solid and reliable tools ready for operational deployment in real-world settings tied to decisive diplomatic encounters. Some of the findings (for example, Arkoudas, 2023, 53; Emsley, 2023; Santurkar et al., 2023) concerning the deficiencies of artificial intelligence language models, artificial intelligence hallucinations, confabulations, fabrications, and falsifications prove the indispensable role of a human being in keeping the core operating model of diplomacy intact and unscathed.

The most recent evaluation of American public diplomacy lends support to this line of precautionary reasoning. The 2023 Ameri Prize was awarded to an American diplomat who applied artificial intelligence solutions to supplement human ingenuity (USC Center on Public Diplomacy). This complementary role

of artificial intelligence did not replace the diplomat as a core performer of routine duties. In the acclaimed case, ChatGPT was used for a limited set of public diplomacy responsibilities at the American embassy, for example, to summarise new stories for media briefings and measure public sentiment. Consequently, ChatGPT-tailored services freed up time for fieldwork. The 2023 Ameri Prize example confirms some recent findings published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023, 25, 37). Currently, artificial narrow intelligence is the most instrumental. Artificial narrow intelligence refers to artificial intelligence solutions developed for specific tasks.

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Artificial narrow intelligence is not flawless. Almost every day, reporting worldwide attests to its risks and challenges. However, the functionality of artificial narrow intelligence is much more convenient than artificial general intelligence. Artificial general intelligence aims to develop autonomous machines with a capacity to generalise and perform abstract learning to reach or exceed human agent levels of intelligence. Current experimental development capacities of artificial general intelligence have notable imperfections that require considerable human assistance and oversight over their operation. Therefore, this brief takes a somewhat sceptical view as to whether artificial intelligence offers a credible and much more reliable engagement mode in contemporary diplomatic routines than traditional human agents are capable of performing.

These cautious steps in the artificial intelligence adoption of a limited set of responsibilities tied to public diplomacy are restricted experiments. To provide a broader context, Guha et al. (2023) draw attention to the lack of technical talent in the United States government. The European Union and India might be in a similar position. The Brussels Effect is not perfect. But it is among the most influential ones. Thus, some hopes and expectations are associated with the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act. Understanding the full range of potential and actual implications of artificial intelligence is a significant challenge for public authorities in their regulatory attempts. Public safeguard measures are often put in place in reaction to bad precedents, not proactively designed to avoid certain risks before they materialise in specific accidents. Considering

Mitchell's (2023) assessment of the current state of machine-learning progress, when it comes to crucial decision-making, public authorities and public officials should not extensively rely on evidence-informed analysis generated by technologies that they do not have sufficient mastery and apprehension of.

Recalling other scientific discoveries, such as the advent of telephones, computers, or instant chat platforms, as significant catalysts for faster interactions between diplomats. These major technological breakthroughs brought some changes to the interaction patterns. Nevertheless, the century-old tradition of in-person diplomatic encounters and the most conservative elements associated with these meetings are standard practices across the globe. The diplomatic protocol evolves. However, some of the core principles of the protocol are here to stay. Indeed, the technological leap brought by artificial intelligence will not be the one to tear down the centuries-old fundament of diplomatic in-person encounters. No matter how contested the analytical capacity or intellectual reasoning of one or another public official during these meetings might be, individuals and their in-person interactions remain indispensable in maintaining core principles of democratic (not technology-driven) accountability. The encounters between the European Union and India are no exception to this general scepticism concerning the necessity or value of artificial intelligence as a human enhancement tool for core diplomatic errands. People, not artificial intelligence with its analytical and creative zest, will formulate and decide upon the high-level guidance enshrined in the successive political statements of the Bletchley Declaration. The intriguing scholarly turning point might be the intelligence explosion McLean & colleagues (2023, 650) anticipate sometime between 2040 and 2070. Nevertheless, it seems far from challenging to predict that, until 2040, the future Bletchleys will be endorsed and founded on human conscience and reasoning skills.

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