



EUROPEAN UNION

H.E. Hervé Delphin, Ambassador of the European Union to India || Keynote Speech

- Launch of CSIR-EU Co-Funding Partnership for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Staff Exchanges-

- It is an honour to be here today as we launch the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Staff Exchanges Co-Funding initiative by CSIR India jointly with DG Education and Culture of the European Commission. This initiative marks a significant milestone in strengthening the ties between India and the European Union through research and innovation.
- Before turning to this significance of this initiative, I'd like to say a few words first on EU-India relations and on their partnership in the domain of Research & Innovation.

EU-India Relations

- EU-India relationship has expanded significantly over the last 5 years to the point of becoming one of the most consequential strategic partnerships for the EU. India matters to the EU as much we EU matters to India.
- EU has become the first trading partner in goods for India – before the US and China. EU is the 3rd largest foreign investor in India. 4.500 European Companies are present in India generating over 1.7 million jobs directly and 5 million jobs indirectly. This very expanding footprint is reflected in the recent setting up of FEBC the European Chamber of Commerce in India. In 2022 the relaunching of FTA negotiations and the setting up of a joint Trade and Technology Council were the clearest signs of EU's commitment to invest in this relationship.
- Our partnership today covers a wide array of policy areas with about 50 EU-India bilateral thematic institutional dialogues: in Energy, in Green Tech, in Security and Defence, etc.
- Our relationship is not just B2B or Gov2Gov. It is also very much P2P. The pool of talent and knowledge from European and Indian skilled workers stand to benefit from greater mobility, as evidenced with the new favourable Schengen visa rules for Indian travellers and with Indian students and researchers topping the list of EU Erasmus Mundus and Marie Curie exchanges programmes.
- With the EU-India Summit planned to take place in 2025, we look forward to bring out partnership to a new level with EU and India seeing each other as a natural and preferred partner, sharing common values like democracy, and commitment to a rules-based global order.

Significance of the EU-India Partnership in Science, Tech & Innovation

- **Cooperation in Science, Tech & Innovation:** India is a key partner for the EU in the areas of science, technology, and innovation. The EU-India roadmap for cooperation agreed for the period 2020-2025 includes a chapter on health research, research and innovation in digital

and green technologies, and the mobility of scientists. It cuts across many areas of cooperation: from energy (Green Hydrogen), green tech (EV batteries) to circular economy or semi-conductors, High performance computing, AI etc.

- **Mobility and Innovation:** The EU-India Connectivity Partnership, launched in 2021, promotes people-to-people mobility for students and researchers, enhancing cooperation in research and innovation. This includes agreements supporting short-term mobility of European Research Council fellows with Indian institutions.
- **Economic and Technological Cooperation:** Cooperation in science and technology is critical for unlocking the full potential of EU-India relations. This is closely tied to our TTC and focus on innovation and new technologies, notably for decarbonizing our economies.
- **Focus on Global Challenges:** The EU's Global Approach to Research and Innovation emphasizes increased collaboration with India, particularly in areas of global challenges like climate change, energy, health, and space.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Exchange Programme

- **A Pillar of Scientific Excellence:** For 28 years, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSC) programme has been a cornerstone of the EU's commitment to fostering scientific excellence. With a budget of **EUR 6.6 billion** under Horizon Europe (2021-2027), the MSC Programme supports excellent research, boosting jobs, growth, and investment. It benefits institutions by supporting doctoral and postdoctoral programme and collaborative research projects, enhancing global attractiveness and visibility.
- Between 1996 and 2027, over **200,000** researchers will have participated in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Programme. The programme has involved over **8,700 organizations** from more than **130 countries** and supported **1,180 international doctoral programme**.
- Notably, **18 Nobel laureates** have been supported by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Programme. The Nobel Prize in Physics 2023 was awarded to Anne L'Huillier and Ferenc Krausz, both of whom have been funded and supported by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme.
- **Guiding principles of openness and scientific integrity:** The MSC programme promotes Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), engaging society at large, integrating gender and ethical dimensions, and ensuring open access to research outcomes.

Fostering Global Cooperation: India's Participation in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Programme

- The MSC Programme is highly popular in the Indian scientific community, with **over 2,500 Indian beneficiaries**. This includes **1,800 PhD students and 700 postdoctoral researchers who have received EU funding**. India ranks first among non-European countries in individual fellowships, highlighting the country's scientific excellence and innovation.
- However, the movement of researchers has been mostly uneven, with Indian researchers going to Europe mostly due to the absence of an established funding mechanism for Indian institutions, limiting the potential for "**brain gain and brain circulation**" through international, interdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral projects.

- The CSIR's new co-funding initiative will precisely address this. It will encourage and support collaboration from both sides, ensuring that researchers can move in both directions.

CSIR India co-funding to Marie Curie-Slodowska-Staff Exchanges

- I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to Dr. Kalaiselvi and CSIR for their decision to partner with the EU in co-funding this important initiative, **which will foster both way mobility/exchange**.
- Five countries - Canada, Japan, Brazil, South Korea, and Mexico, have already implemented such co-funding mechanism for Staff Exchanges scheme. **India will be the sixth country, joining the inner circle of EU key partners!**
- Thanks to this joint initiative, we are expanding the reach of this programme, creating new opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- We are glad that CSIR India, renowned for its scientific excellence and ground-breaking innovations, has a rich history of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with European Member States and the EU. The CSIR scientists have actively participated in the EU research programme from the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) through to the current Horizon Europe (*participation in more than 100 R&D projects under the EU Framework Programme (FP6 until Horizon Europe).*)

Closing Remarks

- **Building on a Strong Foundation:** Today's event is more than just the launch of a new initiative. It is an opportunity to build a legacy of fruitful cooperation in science and technology, pushing the boundaries of knowledge and innovation for the benefit of all.
- It will bring #TeamEurope, EU and its Member States, in close touch with their counterparts in research and innovation.
- During the networking lunch, you'll have the chance to discuss collaboration opportunities and discover why Europe, with its many leading research institutes, is an excellent partner for your research activities. My role today is to encourage you to look actively for research and Europe in general to achieve your individual and our common goals.
- Thank you to CSIR India, DG Education and Culture, and all partners involved for their dedication to this initiative.
- I wish you all the best in your endeavours and am excited to see the results of this collaborative effort.

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