

# India, EU look for more military-to-military engagements

A group of officials from the Defence Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) are in Europe on a three-day study visit

Updated - September 07, 2024 07:35 am IST - NEW DELHI

THE HINDU BUREAU



Ambassador of the EU to India Hervé Delphin. | Photo Credit: X/@EUAmbIndia

As part of efforts to expand existing defence cooperation, India and the European Union aim to establish more permanent staff-to-staff interactions, including with military personnel, which will boost the joint operational effectiveness in tackling challenges faced at sea, on land and in cyberspace, Ambassador of the EU to India Hervé Delphin said.

A group of officials from the Defence Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) are in Europe on a three-day study visit, facilitated by the EU delegation in India, to learn about the EU's security and defence mechanisms while exploring potential cooperation in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and in the Indo-Pacific, the EU

Delegation to India and Bhutan said in a statement issued on Thursday (September 5, 2024).

“This visit highlights the shared commitment of India and the EU to strengthening security and defence ties. Maritime security is a common concern and prime focus for cooperation as exemplified by the EU Naval Force (NAVFOR) Atalanta and Indian Navy respective operations in the Indian Ocean. Through such visits we can build a deeper mutual understanding, which is essential for advancing cooperation,” Mr. Delphin said.

On the EU NAVFOR operations, Mr. Delphin said the Indo-Pacific region is a vital hub of strategic importance to both India and the EU due to the growing interdependence of global economies and the importance of maritime supply chains. “We’re committed to forge a stronger cooperation with India to ensure free, open, inclusive and rules-based maritime order, address common security challenges and promote peace and stability in the region,” he added.

The Indian delegation was led by Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary, Disarmament & International Security Affairs Division, MEA, and accompanied by Captain (Navy) Fabrizio Falzi, Defence Attaché of the EU Delegation to India.

Stating that the EUNAVFOR Atalanta is a key component of the EU’s CSDP and naval diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, the statement said that India remains one of the most relevant actors and partners in the security and defence cooperation, including maritime security in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The Indian officials’ mission began with detailed briefings and discussions at the European External Action Service, particularly the directorate for security and defence policy, the European security and defence college and the European Union military staff. Representatives from the European Maritime Security Agency and FRONTEX also engaged with the Indian delegation to further define possible areas of mutual interest and cooperation between the EU and the Indian Coast Guard.

The visit to the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) ATALANTA Operation’s headquarters in Rota, Spain highlighted the EU’s maritime CSDP activities in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean, rounding off the Indian delegation’s visit with an opportunity to see first-hand the EU’s maritime security operations centre.

**In August 2023, the EUNAVFOR Atalanta flagship, ITS Durand De La Penne conducted a joint activity at sea with the destroyer INS Visakhapatnam in the framework of the EU's strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.**

Published - September 07, 2024 12:38 am IST