

SPAIN INDIA 2020

A joint reflection on the past,
present and future of our
bilateral relations

WORKING PAPER 1

Bilateral and multilateral government relations



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1.1

Framework of the bilateral and multilateral government relations

Spain and India established diplomatic relations in 1956. Although the first thirty years were noteworthy for timid bilateral progress, with official visits as the main driving force of exchanges between both countries, the 21st century brought in its wake Spain's firm commitment for India with a continued rise in Spanish presence, both at a government and private level. However, during the last two decades, these relations have lost their previous balance based on a similar geopolitical weight, noting that India has become the leading partner of the bilateral relation given its extraordinary rise as an emerging power. It is therefore up to Spain to make a strategic and continued effort to maintain the bilateral boost.

Although Spain and India do not share geopolitical or multilateral interests, they do not have basic bilateral irritants either. As illustrated in the recent declaration of Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation (APCI) of 2017, the political leaders show a fine tuning, diplomatic relations are friendly, there is a solid cooperation in the fields of security and defence, and the joint programmes of science and technology have been developed very successfully. However, bilateral relations still depend greatly on scarce bilateral visits at a political level.

It has been repeated for years that the relations between Spain and India represent a great opportunity, but their potential has not yet been fulfilled. Unlike other countries in which civil society maintains the bilateral boost, in this case a robust bilateral fabric in the private sphere still needs to be built. The complexity of India makes the creation of these platforms of civil society essential. In an increasingly favourable geopolitical context with strong synergies in the area of growth, government

and institutional action are essential to realise this opportunity by means of clear political mandates, official visits and continued political dialogues, the creation of stable multisectoral cooperation frameworks that allow joint cooperation, and bilateral programmes intended to create and strengthen the bilateral civil society. The moment has come to enhance our bilateral alliance and turn it into a strategic partnership.

1.2

APCI, official visits and political understanding as the cornerstones of our government relations

In 2017, the Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation (APCI) was established through a joint official statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Mariano Rajoy, an important milestone in our bilateral relations that for the first time in history had its own name, defined pillars of cooperation and proposals for action (see In Detail 1). However, this bilateral alliance between India and Spain is not a strategic partnership that can be compared to the ones signed by India with almost 35 countries and international organisations, including the European Union, Germany and France (Ministry of External Affairs, 2020; Observer Research Foundation, 2020).

The limited shared interests in the geopolitical and multilateral field of two countries that rarely agree in their areas of geographic interest make it difficult to build a high-priority bilateral relationship. However, there is some basis to take the current APCI to a higher level. Bilateral relations between Spain and India have no bilateral irritants, there is harmony amongst its leaders and there are the necessary synergies for mutual growth. In addition, Spain has proven through facts that India is its main partner in South Asia.

ILLUSTRATION 1 / Appointment of the first resident ambassadors and visits by Heads of State and of Government of Spain and India

Spain	Year	India
Appointment of the first ambassador of Spain resident in India	1958	
	1965	Appointment of the first ambassador of India resident in Spain
State Visit of the King and Queen of Spain	1982	
	1988	Visit of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi
	1992	Visit of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao
Visit of the President of the Government Felipe González Márquez	1993	
Visit of the President of the Government José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero	2006	
	2009	State Visit of President Pratibha Patil
State Visit of King Juan Carlos I	2012	
	2017	Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India; Royal Household of Spain

ILLUSTRATION 2 / Agreements, treaties and memoranda of understanding between the Governments of Spain and India

Agreements and Treaties	Year	Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)
1) Agreement on trade and economic cooperation	1972	
2) Agreement on cultural cooperation	1982	
3) Civil Aviation Agreement	1987	
4) Double taxation avoidance agreement	1993	
5) Bilateral investment protection and promotion agreement (ended in 2017)	1997	
6) Extradition treaty	2002	
7) Mutual legal assistance treaty on criminal matters	2006	1) For the establishment of a mechanism of political dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and the Ministry of External Affairs of India 2) Of cooperation on information technology between the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of Information Technology of India
	2007	3) On cooperation in the field of science and technology between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of Science and Technology of India
	2008	4) On initiatives for climate change and projects of the clean development mechanism between the Ministry of Environment of Spain and the Ministry of Environment and Forests of India

	2009	<p>5) In terms of agriculture and related sectors between the Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs of Spain and the Ministry of Agriculture of India</p> <p>6) In the field of the renewable energies between the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India</p> <p>7) On cooperation in terms of tourism between the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of Tourism of India</p>
8) Agreement in the field of audio-visual coproduction	2012	<p>8) On cooperation in the field of Defence between the Ministry of Defence of Spain and the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India</p> <p>9) On technical cooperation in the railway field between the Railroads of India (Indian Railways), Ministry of Railroads of India and Renfe Operadora and ADIF, Ministry of Public Works of Spain</p> <p>10) On road transport and the road transport sector between the Ministry of Public Works of Spain and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India</p>
9) Agreement on the protection of classified information in the field of defence	2016	11) On cooperation in terms of harbours between the Ministry of Public Works of Spain and the Ministry of Maritime Transport of India (ended in 2020)
10) Agreement of visa waiver for holders of diplomatic passport	2017	12) For cooperation in the field of organ donation and transplant services between the National Organisation of Transplants of Spain, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain and the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India
11) Agreement on remunerated employment for dependents of members of a diplomatic mission or consular post		13) In the sector of renewable energies between the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda of Spain and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India
12) Agreement on the transfer of convicted persons		14) On cooperation in terms of cybersecurity between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and the Ministry of External Affairs of India
		15) Between the Diplomatic School of Spain , Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and the Foreign Service Institute of India , Ministry of External Affairs of India
		16) In the field of civil aviation between the Ministry of Public Works of Spain and the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India
		17) To share information on civil maritime traffic between the Ministry of Defence of Spain and the Navy of the Republic of India

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India



President Pratibha Patil was received with honors during her visit to Spain in April 2009. © Archive FCEI

Beyond the road map marked by the APCI, bilateral visits have been an essential component in the boost of our relations (see Illustration 1). On the one hand, these visits are essential for the signing of bilateral agreements. 13 of the total 15 agreements and MoUs of government nature reached in the last decade were signed within the framework of King Juan Carlos I's State visit to India in 2012 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Spain in 2017 (see Illustration 2). On the other hand, official visits give continuity and dynamism to the multisectorial bilateral dialogue. As these bilateral visits require a prior field work and the fulfilment of objectives while they are being developed, they become the optimal setting to make progress in the main areas of mutual interest.

A noteworthy factor to be analysed is the correlation between the level of interaction of Spain in Asia and the interest that Spain arouses in India. The more active Spain is in Asia, the more interest it arouses in India. As an example, the first State visit of the King and Queen of Spain to India in 1982 as guests of honour for the Republic Day celebrations was extended as a result of their visit to China in 1978. Conversely, the visit by President Pratibha Patil to Spain in 2009 was developed two years after the visit of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in 2007. Likewise, the dynamic relation between India and France –with eight bilateral visits between Heads of Government and of State in the last 10 years– and India and Germany –with twelve bilateral visits at the same level, six from

each side, in the same period– proves that the more official visits are made to India, the more reciprocity there is from the Indian Government and bilateral relations receive a stronger boost (*Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères; Auswärtiges Amt; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*).

Despite the scarce official visits, the last Indian and Spanish Governments have maintained a continuous political and diplomatic harmony. The good relationship between Prime Minister Modi and President Sánchez, which began with the only face-to-face meeting held between them on the sidelines of the 2018 G20 summit in Argentina, has been strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic when, after a phone conversation between both Heads of Government, the export to Spain of up to 2,500 kilos of hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 hospitalised patients was unblocked when it was still considered an effective treatment. Although Narendra Modi and Mariano Rajoy only met personally in two occasions –on the sidelines of the 2015 G20 summit in Turkey and in Narendra Modi's brief visit to Spain in 2017–, the Indian Prime Minister was the only political leader outside the scope of Europe and Latin American who participated in the video tribute to Mariano Rajoy screened during the Popular Party's 2018 National Congress. This affinity between the political leaders goes beyond the ideology of the different administrations and has been consolidated despite the reduced number of bilateral meetings.

However, bilateral relations in the last decade have lacked the necessary continuity and boost to establish robust relations with a strategic and complex country like India. The bilateral action of Spain in India has been fundamentally framed in the common strategy of the European Union, the scarce official visits and the few consolidated bilateral platforms, lacking a proactive bilateral strategy. This is best illustrated by the fact that during these last years, bilateral visits at ministerial level have been scarce in comparison to those made by other European countries, undergoing a slowdown in the second part of the decade, despite India being the first Asian country that Minister Josep Borrell visited, a pattern that was also repeated as High Representative of the

Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Ministerial visits have been more frequent from India than from Spain, favoured both by the larger number of ministerial portfolios in the Indian Government and by the organisation of internationally relevant congresses in Spain, including the Mobile World Congress or FITUR (see Illustration 3).

The major bilateral milestone of the decade, the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and India in 2016, which was expected to become a possible bilateral turning point, did not achieve significant bilateral progress despite the impetus of activities promoted by the Indian

ILLUSTRATION 3 / Official visits at ministerial level or higher between Spain and India, 2009–2019

Official visits from Spain to India	Year	Official visits from India to Spain
María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, Vice-President The Prince and Princess of Asturias, Felipe de Borbón and Letizia Ortiz	2009	Pratibha Patil, President
	2010	Anand Sharma, Minister of Trade and Industry Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy
	2011	C.P. Joshi, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs
King Juan Carlos I with José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Pedro Morenés y Álvarez, Minister of Defence; Ana Pastor Julián, Minister of Public Works; and José Manuel Soria López, Minister of Industry, Energy and Tourism	2012	S.M. Krishna, Minister of External Affairs
	2013	K. Chiranjeevi, Minister of Tourism
	2014	Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare
Pedro Morenés y Álvarez, Minister of Defence José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	2015	
	2016	Ananth Kumar, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
	2017	Narendra Modi, Prime Minister
Josep Borrell Fontelles, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation	2018	H.K. Badal, Minister of Food Processing Industries K.J. Alphons, Minister of Tourism Manoj Sinha, Minister of Telecommunications
	2019	Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

The association for peace, growth and innovation of 2017, a milestone in our bilateral relations

The Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation (APCI), established in 2017 through a joint official statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the Government Mariano Rajoy, represented an important milestone in the bilateral cooperation between Spain and India. This APCI, which follows the model of the joint declaration between the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of the Government of Spain of 2013, established a framework of multisectoral cooperation for our bilateral relations for the first time.

It is structured into four fundamental pillars – political and

security cooperation, economic cooperation, cooperation in multilateral affairs, and cooperation in innovation, science and technology. These pillars, which are established in fields with an area of interest and mutual benefit, revolve around a cross-cutting central point of bilateral boost based on greater exchanges among the civil societies, including the cultural industries, business fabric and think tanks. The APCI acknowledged the complementary role that the Spain-India Council Foundation plays for the governments to strengthen the ties between Indian and Spanish civil societies.

It was a major milestone in our relations because, for the first time, our bilateral association was given a name, a roadmap was established with a holistic and multisectoral vision, the structural pillars of our alliance

were identified and actions were announced which, even if vaguely defined in some cases, established ambitious commitments in others, such as the opening of a Consulate General in Barcelona on the Indian side or the celebration of the year of Spain in India on the Spanish side.

However, as a joint declaration, the APCI has a temporary component linked to the term of office of the signatories. Unlike the strategic agreements that establish a long-term vision with defined lines of action, the commitments established within the framework of a declaration could lack this bilateral permanence. Although the APCI is a good starting point, it is necessary to enhance our bilateral relations and turn them into a strategic partnership to establish a bilateral vision in the medium and long term.

Embassy in Madrid, including a competition for the selection of a commemorative logo. One of the major shortcomings in our bilateral relations is the lack of a robust bilateral civil society that generates exchange proposals and maintains a momentum from the private sphere. The work of the Spain-India Council Foundation has been and is essential in achieving this goal (see Case 1).

1.3

The backbone of our bilateral relations: main agreements and dialogues

The first agreement that was signed at bilateral level was the one on trade and economic cooperation of 1972, within the framework of the first official visit from Spain to India, by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Gregorio López Bravo. Since then, Spain and India have signed 12 agreements with the force of a bilateral treaty, of which all are in

CASE 1

The contribution of the Spain-India Council Foundation to the creation of a bilateral civil society fabric

The Spain-India Council Foundation is a non-profit private institution created in 2009 by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain within the network of Council Foundations**. As an instrument of bilateral public diplomacy, its objectives include fostering relations between the civil societies of Spain and India and a better mutual understanding that may allow opening new opportunities of bilateral cooperation. During its first years it was presided over by Antonio Escámez, former Chairman of the Santander Foundation, and since 2018 by **Juan Ignacio Entrecanales, Vice-Chairman of Acciona**.

The patrons include representatives of the public administration, such as the **Secretary of State for Commerce, ICEX Spain Exports and Investments, the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI) and the Directorate General for Policies and Industries for Culture and Books; of the City Councils of Madrid and Barcelona; of the Spanish companies established in India, including Acciona, Indra or Abertis; of the main organisations that support internationalisation, commerce and bilateral investment including the Chambers of Commerce of Spain, CaixaBank or Cuatrecasas; of**

the Spanish educational and linguistic institutions involved in India, including the **Instituto de Empresa, the University of Valladolid or the Cervantes Institute**; and of the main institutions and organisations with bilateral action in the field of mutual understanding, including **Casa de la India, Casa Asia or the Ramon Areces Foundation**.

The Spain-India Council Foundation, as stated during the 2017 APCI, plays a complementary role for the governments in the strengthening of ties between the Indian and Spanish civil societies. Its work has been essential to put institutions, organizations and leaders of both countries in contact, bringing together the efforts being made from different sectors to promote the interests and relations with India. In this mission it has collaborated with institutions of great bilateral impact, including the **Indo-Spanish Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of Indian Industry or the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry**.

The main activities and initiatives developed to promote this bilateral understanding and exchange include:

-Spain-India Forum as a platform for sectorial meetings for bilateral knowledge, exchange and twinning. Two editions have been held to date: the 1st Spain-India Forum on Sustainable Cities and Transport Networks of 2014 and the 2nd Spain-India Forum on Renewable Energies of 2017.

-Indian Leaders Programme as a programme of visitors in which Indian professionals of different fields visit Spanish institutions, companies and centres and hold meetings and interactions with experts of their sector. Seven editions have been held: in 2012, with multidisciplinary leaders; in 2013, with opinion formers; in 2014, with academic experts; in 2015, with MPs; in 2016, with leaders of sustainable urban development; in 2018, with experts in water management and in 2019, with entrepreneurs in the field of innovation.

-Spain-India Dialogues as a space for exchange between bilateral experts, of which different editions have been held, including: Zaragoza, on Business Opportunities in India for SMEs in 2013; Barcelona, on the Legal and Financial Framework for Investments in India in 2013; Madrid, on Global, Geo-economic and Security Risks for Think Tanks in 2015; Bilbao, on Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Social Impact of Women in 2015 and Madrid, on Cybersecurity in 2018.

-Spain-India Meetings with Indian representatives in high-priority sectors, including the CEO of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor in 2013; the CEO of the High Speed Railways Corporation in 2014; a delegation of the Think Tank Urban Vision and the State Minister for Finance of West Bengal in 2015; the Secretary West of the Ministry of External Relations of India in 2017 or a delegation of the Indian Institute of Public Administration in 2019.



Meeting with the CEO of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Amitabh Kant, in an event organized by the Spain-India Council Foundation in 2013.
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force except for the agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments, which has been finalised. Moreover, since 2006, 17 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed at a ministerial or higher level (see Illustration 2), with a different level of monitoring and implementation –from the successful MoU on Science and Technology of 2007 to those which faded to oblivion, including the MoUs on Cooperation in the field of Tourism of 2009 or on initiatives referred to climate change and projects of the clean development mechanism of 2008.

Many of these MoUs are signed within the framework of official visits without their full implementation being achieved by both countries. A paradigmatic example is the field of renewable energies, in which two MoUs have been signed to date: one in 2009 between the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India, and another one in 2017 between the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda of Spain and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India. Although it is doubtlessly a field of maximum bilateral interest, these agreements do not have the optimal development that might be expected. There is a problem in identifying who the counterparts are –or in re-identifying them when the ministries change–, in defining the joint measures and actions, and in appointing technical

organisations in charge of their monitoring and development, also within the embassies.

Within the framework of these agreements, within the APCI or as a result of official visits, six bilateral dialogues have been created (see Illustration 4). In 2006 the political dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and the Ministry of External Affairs of India was established. In 2020 its sixth round of bilateral consultations was held in virtual format at the level of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean on the Spanish side, and of Secretary (West) on the Indian side. Within the framework of the 2012 MoU between the Ministries of Defence of Spain and India, a joint work group has been created in which two meetings have been held, while within the framework of the 2007 MoU on cooperation in the field of science and technology, three meetings have been held on the sidelines of official visits. The 2017 APCI established a panel of experts on tourism that has met twice to date. In 2015, after the mutual interest shown by both countries, a dialogue on security policy was established, which has met twice to date with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation. Finally, in 2019 a dialogue is established on organ donation as a follow-up to the 2017 donation and transplant agreement between the National Transplant Organization

ILLUSTRATION 4 / Dialogues at Government level between Spain and India

Type of dialogue	Framework	Number of meetings
Joint Economic Commission	Agreement of Economic and Trade Cooperation (1972)	11
Bilateral Policy Consultations	Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a mechanism of political dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and the Ministry of External Affairs of India (2006)	6
Joint Commission on science, technology and innovation	Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of science and technology between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade of Spain and the Ministry of Science and Technology of India (2007)	3
Joint Commission on defence	Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Defence between the Ministry of Defence of Spain and the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India (2012)	2
Dialogue on Security Policy	Between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain (2015)	2
Dialogue on Tourism	Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation between Spain and India -APCI (2017)	2
Dialogue on organ donation	Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of organ donation and transplant services between the National Transplant Organization, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain and the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India (2017)	1

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain

of Spain and the Directorate General of Health Services of India.

The most long-lasting dialogue is the joint economic and trade commission established under the 1972 agreement, which has met eleven times. It is represented on the Spanish side by the Secretariat of State for Commerce as the body in charge of defining, developing and executing the trade policy and the internationalization strategy of the Government of Spain in India. This mixed commission is reinforced by a series of cooperation platforms created by the Secretariat of State for

Commerce, such as the Spain-India Investment and Business Cooperation Forum or the Spain-India Forum of CEOs, in a firm commitment to intensify the economic and business dialogue between both countries. In line with this strategy to boost relations with the South Asian country, India is among the priority countries of the Secretariat of State for Commerce, being selected as a Country with Strategic Sectoral Performance (PASE, by its Spanish acronym).

In this relational framework it would be convenient to move forward with the signing of

agreements of cross-cutting relevance, including in the field of customs or social security, and of sectorial relevance, including cooperation in the fields of education, urban development, railroads, water resources or nuclear energy for pacific uses, among others. For these agreements to be effective, in addition to correctly identifying the counterparts, it is essential to identify joint actions, include digital and innovative components, encourage the participation of the civil society, especially in the business sector, and establish a monitoring commission. These monitoring commissions are the basis upon which sectorial bilateral dialogues can be generated, both at a political and technical level, and an essential tool to maintain the bilateral boost. There are still areas of maximum interest, such as agriculture, renewable energy or culture, for which bilateral dialogues have not been constituted. The COVID-19 crisis has proven that these dialogues can have a hybrid format that combines virtual and face-to-face meetings.

Beyond the government sphere, there is no smooth cooperation either between other organisations, including the parliamentary arena, in which only one visit was made in 2016 by 18 Indian MPs to Spain, headed by the recently-deceased Ananth Kumar, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; the political arena, without relations between political parties of both countries; and the regional arena, in which the only visit in recent years was the one made by the President of the Balearic Government, Francina Armengol, in 2020, to get to know the projects that were being financed by the regional government in collaboration with the Vicente Ferrer Foundation, without any political interaction with Indian regional leaders.

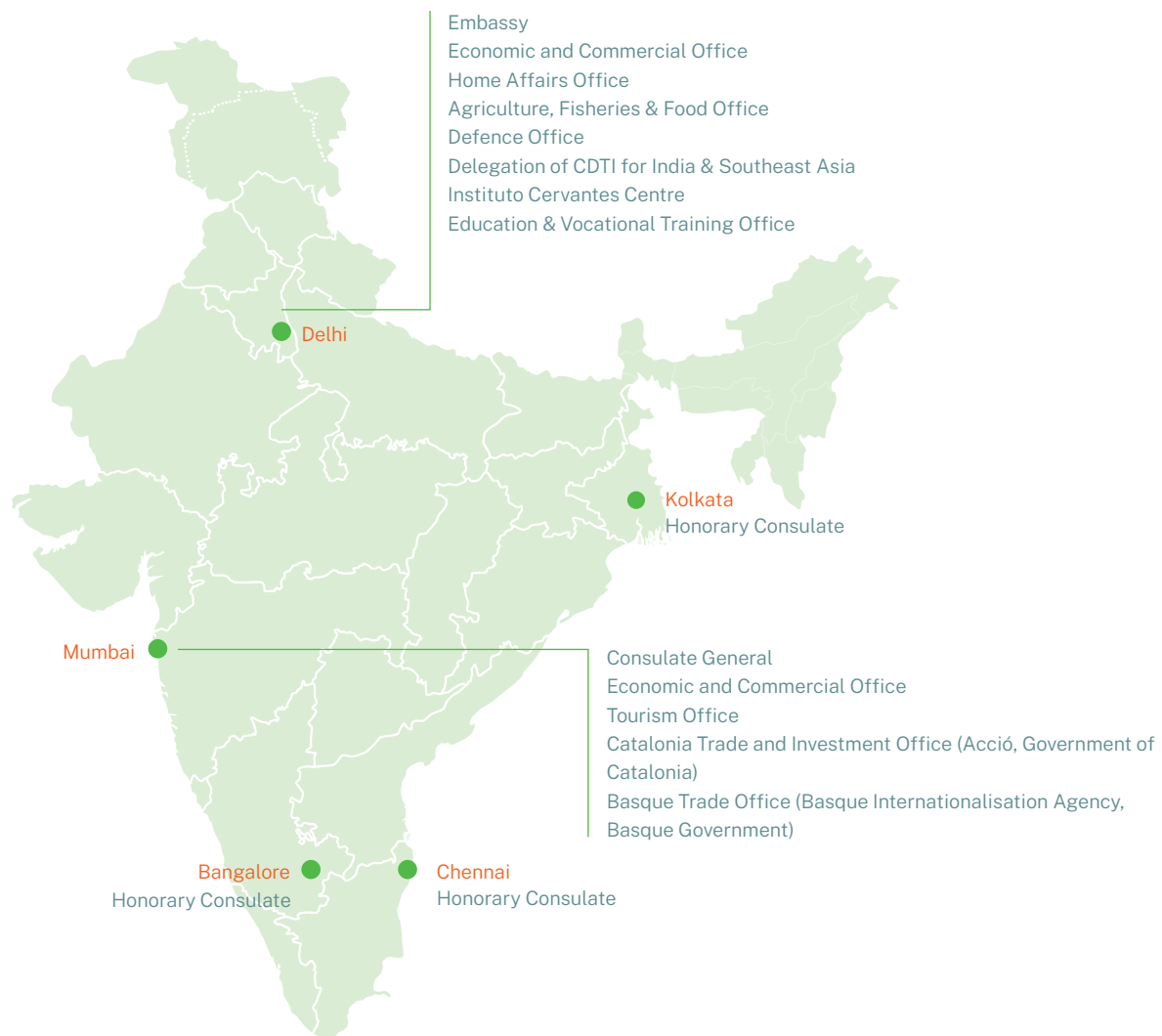
1.4

Network of embassies, consulates and bilateral offices

The network of consulates and embassies of Spain in India increased significantly within the framework of the three Asia-Pacific plans (2000-2004, 2005-2008 and 2009-2012). The presence of Missions, which until then had been focused on New Delhi and Mumbai, was extended. The economic and financial capital of India hosted the Consulate General of Spain and the Economic and Trade Office in 2006, as well as the Tourism Office in 2007. At the same time, New Delhi hosted the office of the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology in 2006 and the Cervantes Institute in 2009, inaugurated by the Prince and Princess of Asturias. The number of diplomats has been strengthened since then, with six in the Embassy, including the Ambassador, and three Counsellors in the Economic and Trade Offices between New Delhi and Mumbai. Sectorial Offices for Home Affairs and Agriculture have also been created, in addition to a Defence Office, formed by a Defence and Naval Attaché and an Air Attaché, and a Technical Advisory Office for Education, currently vacant. Mumbai is also the host of the trade delegations of the Government of Catalonia –Acció– and of the Basque Country –Basque Trade. In addition to this network, there is also a series of honorary consulates in the leading cities of Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore (see Illustration 5). The work of the consular network in New Delhi and Mumbai has proven to be essential in emergency situations, including the earthquake of Nepal in 2015 or the COVID-19 pandemic (see Case 2).

The increasing weight and international relevance of the great Asian countries, including India, encourages the continuation of the strengthening of the ministerial departments focused on these countries, as has also happened with the network of embassies and consulates of the Ministry of

ILLUSTRATION 5 / State and regional representation of Spain in India



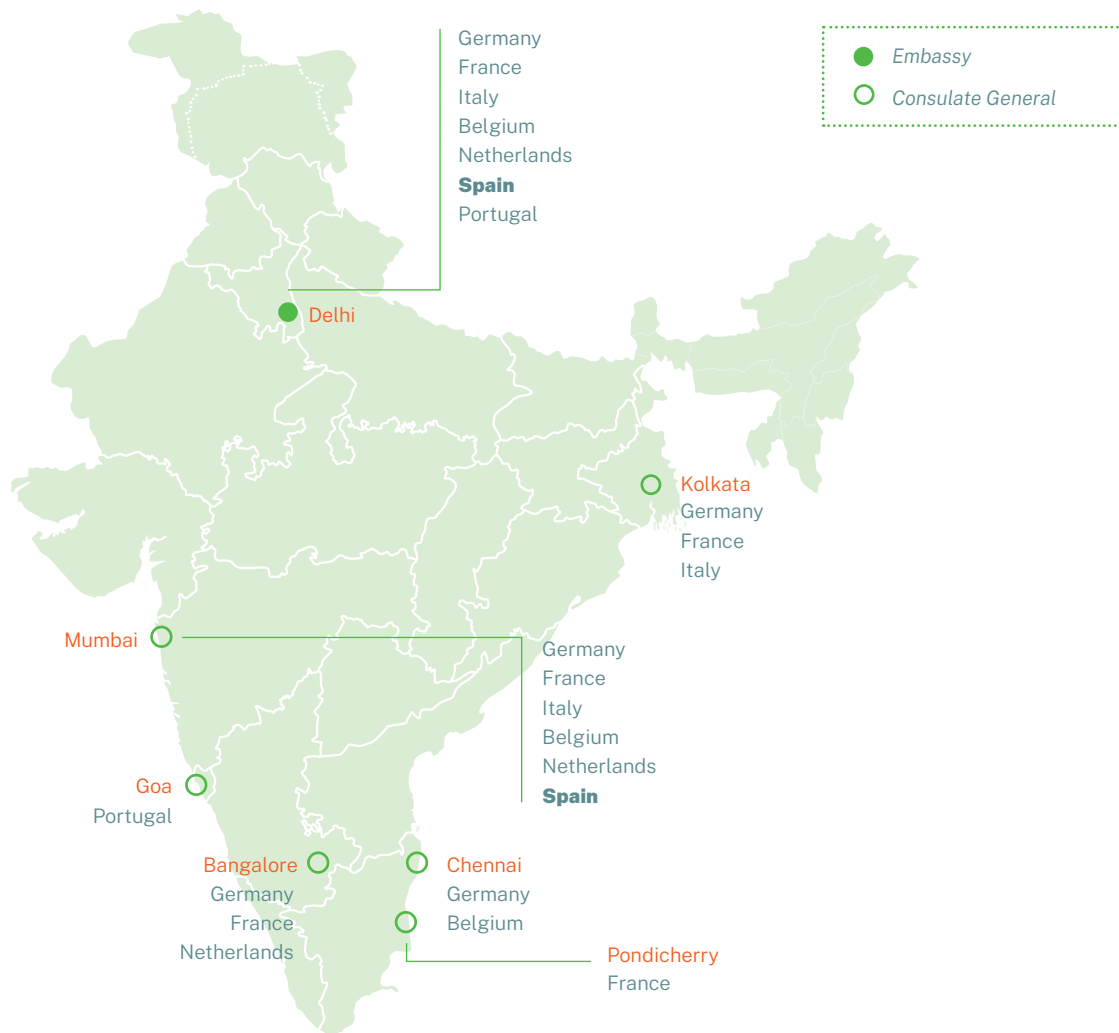
Source : Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain

Foreign Affairs of Spain in Asia. The Sub-directorate General for South and East Asia is part of the Directorate General for North America, Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific. This Sub-directorate engages with countries such as China, Japan, South Korea or India, among others, which together account for almost half of the world's population. In order to strengthen ties with these countries that have great bilateral and international relevance, the

Sub-directorate has relied on the post of deputy director and between two and three diplomats in recent years, in addition to the support of the 27 diplomats assigned to the seven embassies of East and South Asia, not counting consulates general.

The entire Indian diplomatic corps accredited in Spain is brought together in the Embassy of India in Madrid, including a numerous group of

ILLUSTRATION 6 / Diplomatic missions and consular offices of the main trading partners of the UE in India, including Spain and Portugal



Source: Auswärtiges Amt (Germany); Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères (France); Ministeri degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (Italy); FPS Foreign Affairs (Belgium); Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Netherlands); Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (Spain); Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros (Portugal)

Language Training diplomats who strengthen the work of the Embassy while they learn Spanish in Spanish university programmes. Prominent among the members of the Embassy are the roles of the representatives in charge of Commercial Affairs and Press, Information and Culture. The honorary consulates of India in Spain are in Barcelona and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where the majority of the

Indian community in Spain resides. The 2017 APCI reflected the Indian Government's intent to open a Consulate General in Barcelona in the upcoming years. Spain is geographically framed within the Europe West Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, together with the European Union and countries like Germany, France, Italy or the United Kingdom.

CASE 2

The work of the bilateral consular networks in the repatriation of travellers stranded by the COVID-19 pandemic

Given the suspension of commercial flights from March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous travellers and professionals of both countries were stranded without being able to return to their homes. **The consular networks of India in Spain and Spain in India worked intensively to help them**, both at an informative level, on the measures imposed and the flights available, and at an organisational level, coordinating the gathering and evacuation of travellers through the repatriation flights.

Within the *Vande Bharat Mission*, the repatriation mission of the Government of India that has allowed more than 1.37 million Indian citizens to return to their homes, a **special Air India flight was organised from Madrid to Delhi and Mumbai** on the 31st May. Thanks to this repatriation flight, coordinated by the Embassy of India in Madrid, 244 Indian passengers could return to their homes, including Indian tourists and students who were stranded in Spain.

Around **450 Spanish travellers were stranded in India** after the airspace was closed for commercial flights. Most of these tourists were relocated in other European evacuation flights by the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi and the Spanish General Consulate in Mumbai. For those Spanish travellers who were stranded in other parts of India, the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi and the Spanish General Consulate in Mumbai organised an operation to gather and evacuate the travellers from New Delhi and Goa.

The Spanish Embassy in New Delhi processed more than **250 individual transport permits from more than 35 cities from all over the country to New Delhi**, including the organisation of buses to take the dozens of Spanish citizens from Rishikesh, Pushkar, Jaipur or Varanasi to New Delhi. In view of the accommodation problems, the embassy facilitated a list of hotels in New Delhi that allowed access to foreign tourists. The Spanish travellers in the capital **were also accommodated in the Instituto Cervantes of New Delhi**, which was enabled as an emergency shelter for these tourists.

For the Spanish travellers stranded in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil

Nadu, **including some thirty engineers and professionals who were working in the wind farm of Mulanur**, Goa was chosen as an evacuation point. Joint means of transport were coordinated to facilitate the gathering of travellers. The Consulate General of Mumbai was in continuous contact with the Spanish citizens so they could pass the multiple police controls while there were being transported by road to Goa.

The evacuation from Delhi and Goa to Madrid of almost 200 Spanish tourists stranded in India was organised through **an evacuation commercial flight chartered on the 4th April by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain within the framework of the European Civil Protection Mechanism**. Both the personnel of the Spanish Embassy, from the airport of Delhi, and the personnel of the Spanish Consulate General in Mumbai, from the airport of Goa, coordinated the evacuation on the field. German, Belgian, British, Slovenian, Dutch, Irish, Italian, Portuguese or Rumanian citizens were also able to return to their countries of residence in this European repatriation flight organised by Spain.

Spain has made a great effort to increase its institutional presence in India in recent decades. The Spanish Embassy in New Delhi has increased its assigned staff, as a consequence of the multisectoral consolidation of its bilateral relations with India and the increase in visa applications in its consular section, which have quadrupled in the last decade (Statistics 2010-19, European Commission). Following in the wake of India's large European partners, which have consular representation beyond New Delhi and Mumbai, Spain could reinforce its consular deployment in Southern India where there is a significant presence of its business fabric in cities such as Bangalore or Chennai (see Illustration 6).

In establishing strong relationships with the Indian administration, as is also the case in the private sector, two factors should be considered. On the one hand, in India the equivalence in seniority is essential in establishing the appropriate foundations for a fluent dialogue. On the other hand, remaining in their tenure for a prolonged period of time favors establishing solid relationships with the Indian counterparts, fostering the generation of both direct channels of communication and reinforced bonds of trust.

1.5

Alliances in security and defence in view of the new geopolitical context

The recent border disputes with China and the maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, through which a great part of the world trade passes, with the addition of Australia to the Malabar exercises that India is already carrying out with the United States and Japan, are evidence that India's geopolitical impact has grown significantly in the last decades. Although Spain cannot currently offer India this naval support in the Indian Ocean that it does receive from members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (United States,

Japan and Australia) and from other strategic allies such as France, Spain and India are interdependent and connected countries in terms of security. Both countries have participated in international operations, including the Operation Ocean Shield against piracy in the Indian Ocean or missions in Lebanon or Afghanistan. In 2018, the ships of the Spanish Navy Juan Carlos I and Blas de Lezo made a visit to the port of Mumbai during which joint exercises with destroyer INS Chennai and frigate INS Tarkash were carried out.

Spain supported India's entry in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), reiterated in the 2017 APCI, as well as in the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group, and has shown its support to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This alliance and commitment with India at a multilateral level is crucial in the construction of a permanent understanding in the field of security and defence. One of the main pillars of bilateral cooperation in the security relations between both countries is the mutual commitment against international terrorism. This is jointly reflected in the 2017 APCI, when the importance of Resolution 1373 of the UN Security Council against the financing of terrorist acts was reaffirmed. The security cooperation dialogue established in 2015 is strengthened by the agreements signed in 2016, on the exchange and mutual protection of classified information, crucial in the joint fight against international terrorism, and in 2017, on cybersecurity to guarantee an open and safe cyberspace.

This cooperation also extends to the criminal field through a series of agreements, including the 2002 Extradition Treaty, the 2006 Legal Assistance Agreement on Criminal Matters and the 2017 Agreement on the Transfer of Convicted Persons. As was reiterated in the 2017 APCI, the bilateral agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the bilateral agreement of cooperation in the fight

IN DETAIL 2

Synergies in the Defence industries

Between Spain and India there are interesting synergies in the field of cooperation in defence industries, including agreements of co-development, co-production and technological cooperation. Numerous Spanish companies have shown interest in participating in the initiative Make in India in the defence sector. In May, 2020 the government of India announced that it had raised the limit ceiling for foreign direct investments in defence industries through the automatic route—without the need of prior permission from the Government—from 49% to 74%—, allowing the control of joint ventures to be

exercised by foreign companies to promote the indigenisation of production and technology (Financial Express, 2020).

In the naval field, **Sener Marine** announced the signing of a contract in 2020 with Goa Shipyard Limited, under the Indian Ministry of Defence, for the implementation of the CAD/CAM FORAN system developed by Sener for the design and production of its new frigates. The Indian Navy uses technological solutions of **Indra** for its satellite communication system. The Spanish public company **Navantia** works in association with numerous Indian companies to provide technology for the construction of ships and submarines, with special interest

in the submarines programme P75 (i) of the Indian Navy, for which it has been preselected with the design of its S-80 Plus submarine as reference.

In the aeronautical field, by the end of 2019 progress was made for the purchase of 56 **Airbus C-295** airplanes by the Indian Government, of which the first 16 airplanes are to be made in Seville and the remaining 40 in India, in alliance with Tata group. **Indra** has concluded a contract in 2020 for the supply of navigational aid systems for 37 air bases of India. This agreement is framed within the project of the Indian Ministry of Defence to modernise the infrastructure of the air bases in the country.



Airbus C-295 aircraft. © Airbus

ILLUSTRATION 7 / International expenditure in defence and major arms

Countries with the highest military expenditure in 2019, in billion USD		Change in military expenditure between 2018 and 2019 of the five countries with the highest military expenditure in 2019		Change in military expenditure between 2010 and 2019 of the five countries with the highest military expenditure in 2019		Largest arms importers in 2019, in million USD		Largest arms exporters in 2019, in million USD	
United States	732	India	6.8%	China	85%	Saudi Arabia	3,673	United States	10,752
China	261	United States	5.3%	India	37%	India	2,964	Russia	4,718
India	71.1	China	5.1%	Russia	30%	Qatar	2,258	France	3,368
Russia	65.1	Russia	4.5%	Saudi Arabia	14%	South Korea	1,510	China	1,423
Saudi Arabia	61.9	Saudi Arabia	-16%	United States	-15%	Australia	1,399	Germany	1,185
								Spain	1,061

Source: SIPRI

against international terrorism, transnational organised crime, the illegal trafficking of drugs, narcotics, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors are still pending.

Bilateral cooperation on defence has significantly increased since the establishment of the bilateral dialogue within the framework of the 2012 MoU on cooperation in the field of defence. It was complemented in 2017 with a new agreement to share information on civil maritime traffic. India is the third country with the largest military expenditure, with a total USD 71.1 billion in 2019, 6.8 % more than the previous year, and is the second importer of the world of defence material, with 9.2% of the total imports (See Illustration 7). Although Russia is its main supplier, with more than 50% of its total supply in absolute numbers, India is diversifying its supply sources with the aim to modernise its Armed Forces, its new reference suppliers being Israel and France (SIPRI, 2020). Synergies between the Indian and Spanish defence industries encourage an increase in the exchange between both countries during the upcoming years (see In Detail 2).

1.6

Common values and shared vision within the framework of the United Nations system, 2030 Agenda and the G-20 summits

As reflected in the 2017 APCI, Spain and India share both common values based on democracy, freedom, rule of law, the respect of human rights and territorial integrity, and a shared global vision on respect to international peace and security, the promotion of free trade, the building of an open and inclusive international order, the commitment with environmental sustainability and the promotion of a constructive globalisation that guarantees prosperity and world welfare. Beyond these joint good intentions, the truth is that these common democratic values and this shared global vision favour a constructive multilateral dialogue by both countries and a common commitment with the principles, objectives and centrality of the United Nations.

However, although both countries recognise the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, they do not share the same points of view on how to extend the number of members of the



The President of the Government of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, greets the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, at the 2018 G-20 Summit. © Moncloa

Security Council to make it more representative in agreement with the contemporary geopolitical realities. Despite these differences, this dialogue in the multilateral arena can be strengthened during the periods in which both countries are non-permanent members of the Security Council (during the 2015-2016 period for Spain and the 2021-22 period for India).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development signed in 2015 by India and Spain to address the social, economic and environmental challenges of globalisation has become a priority for both countries. There is also a joint commitment to act against climate change with the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention

on Climate Change, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Within this multilateral component of compliance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the fight against climate change, there is a bilateral dimension that allows obtaining enormous synergies for the cooperation between both countries. On the one hand, with the collaboration in effective technologies to increase our resilience against the negative impact of climate change in Spain and India. On the other hand, with the experience in the sustainable management of water, both for its efficient use in urban, rural and industrial areas and for the treatment of wastewater, that will guarantee access to drinking water and an optimal sanitation.

ILLUSTRATION 8 / Other high-level meetings between Spain and India on the sidelines of multilateral summits

Date	Meeting	Event
Nov 2015	Mariano Rajoy, President of the Government of Spain, with Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India	G-20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey
Sep 2018	Josep Borrell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, with Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India	UN Ministerial week in New York, U.S.
Oct 2018	Pedro Sánchez, President of the Government of Spain, with Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India	12th ASEM Summit in Brussels, Belgium
Dec 2018	Pedro Sánchez, President of the Government of Spain, with Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India	G-20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain

The G-20 summits, which will be chaired by India in 2022, have represented a great opportunity for a first high-level dialogue between Spain and India, and a great impulse for the agenda of bilateral visits. It should be noted that the first meetings of Presidents Rajoy and Sanchez with Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been carried out on the sidelines of these summits. Mariano Rajoy and Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit held in 2015 in Antalya, Turkey, which laid the foundations for the subsequent visit of Prime Minister Modi to Spain in 2017 and the signing of the APCI. President Pedro Sánchez did the same during the 2018 summit in Buenos Aires, where his next visit to India was announced, although it has not been possible for it to be carried out yet due to the current situation (see Illustration 8).

1.7

Bilateral dimension of the relations between the European Union and India

In 2020, which marks the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the summit process between India and the European Union, the fifteenth summit has been held virtually for the first time due to health situation. Within the framework of this summit, both a common roadmap that will guide the actions of the EU and India during the next five years and a joint declaration on resource efficiency and circular economy have been adopted. The bilateral follow up, as established in the 2004 agreement of strategic alliance between the EU and India, is carried out through annual consultations at the level of Secretaries of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service. In this new common roadmap between the European Union and India, the EU-

India partnership in support of the sustainable modernisation and the renewal of the successful EU-India agreement in science and technology takes special precedence.

However, India has always favoured fostering bilateral relations with the European countries to promote a comprehensive dialogue with the European Union. This bilateral separation that India wants to maintain in Europe allows it not to mix up the economic and political agendas, in addition to maximising the support of important partners like France. Likewise, the European Union has sought that same strategic autonomy in Asia that allows it to hold a non-conditioned dialogue with the Asian countries.

This system of watertight compartments was reflected in the invitation to Chinese President Xi Jinping to an EU-China summit in September, 2020 by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her six-month presidency, which could be followed by an invitation to Prime Minister Modi by the Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa to an EU-India summit in 2021, during the semester of the Portuguese presidency. However, the virtual summit between EU and China in September, 2020 –with the presence of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel; the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen; the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel and the Chinese President Xi Jinping– confirmed the existing ideological gap between Europe and China, as well as the multiple subjects that still generate friction in their relationship, and which in turn obstruct any substantial progress in the economic and commercial agenda. The meeting of Prime Minister Modi with the European leaders in 2021 will be an extraordinary opportunity to make progress in the political and economic-commercial relation of the EU with India. This field is where the efforts to achieve a Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) between India and the EU have proven to be the most unsuccessful.

ILLUSTRATION 9 / Participation of Spanish organisations in EU projects with India**EU-India Cooperation in standardisation, policies and legislation on Information Technologies**

- The IoT Week 2018 (Internet of Things) held in Bilbao included the participation of an Indian start-up.
- The annual conference of the International Association of Trusted Blockchain Applications, held in Malaga in 2019 with the participation of representatives of the Indian Government thanks to the support of the EU.

European Union Policies and Strategic Alliance with India

- Participation of the Cervantes Institute of New Delhi and the Catholic University of Murcia in the European Higher Education Virtual Fair in India 2018
- Participation of the Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (SEPIE) in the European Higher Education Virtual Fair in India 2019

Clean Energy Cooperation with India (CECI) - technical assistance for the implementation and management of identified solar parks

- The Catalan company NIXUS dealt with the everyday management of the project with regular missions of technical support.
- The Basque engineering company IDOM dealt with the technical advice, providing a series of experts in charge of developing and monitoring the project.

EU-South Asia Partnership in Aviation

- The instructors of the Aviation Safety and Security Agency (AESA) taught a series of courses as part of the 2017-2018 training programmes.

International Urban Cooperation (IUC)

- A delegation from the city of Solapur visited Murcia in 2018 to exchange experiences in the field of sustainable urban development and to jointly create an action plan for urban affairs within the IUC framework.

Horizon 2020 in Science and Innovation

- Spanish companies and organisations have participated in EU-India Flagship Calls on Water in 2018, on Vaccines against Influenza in 2019 and Energy Islands in 2020. Spain ranked first EU State member in number of participating organisations in projects selected in the call for water technologies with India, with a total of 10 organisations in 4 of the 7 projects approved for funding.
- Regarding the mobility of researchers through the Excellent Science pillar in Horizon 2020, MSCA Programme, Spain ranked second, after the UK, among the countries selected by Indian researchers to carry out their post-doctoral study visits in the 2019 programme.

Erasmus +

- In 2019, Spanish universities received euros 210.000 for the development of mobility exchanges with India within the framework of the Erasmus + KA107 programme.

Source: European Commission; Delegation of the European Union in India; CDTI; SEPIE.

Given Spain's need to keep up to date in India, the relations of the European Union with Asia in general and India in particular have a special bilateral impact. The meetings and cooperation in the EU arena favour the establishment of bilateral meetings, such as the meeting held in 2018 on the sidelines of the 12th ASEM summit in Brussels between President Pedro Sánchez and the Vice-President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu. They also have an impact within the legal framework with the signing of bilateral agreements that transpose framework agreements with the European Union,

like the case of the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2016 in the field of civil aviation for the implementation of the 2008 Horizontal Agreement EU-India in Nassau. An opportunity is also generated for Spain's participation in the projects of the European Union in India that serve as a platform for mutual knowledge and the collaboration between the Spanish and Indian civil societies. There is also an opportunity for the internationalisation of Spanish companies in India (see Illustration 9).

Ideas and proposals to boost our bilateral and multilateral government relations

The bilateral and multilateral government relations are not based on a high-intensity bond as can be the case of other European partners. However, there are no bilateral disputes between Spain and India. When the Indian and Spanish governments sit down at the same table, there are no historical, political or diplomatic irritants. The administrations of both countries have not inherited recurrent bilateral conflicts or a rigid mutual relationship. On the contrary, they receive a bilateral agenda that is yet to be formed but based on a relationship of friendship and mutual respect. These are, without a doubt, favourable foundations to establish a strategic bilateral relationship to be equipped with continuity in the government exchanges, and with greater intensity in the sectorial alliances. There is still much to be done, but whatever remains to be built is an opportunity for both governments. The only existing limit, which the government of India has been reiterating, is that the relationship has to be of mutual benefit. India cannot just be considered as a market in which to sell, but a country in whose growth Spain can participate. As was established by the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean, Cristina Gallach, in the patronage of the Spain-India Council Foundation in June, 2020, there is a need for bilateral catching-up from Spain, given its late arrival in a country with an enormous potential that requires it to be “persistent, audacious and visionary”.

The measures compiled in this process of joint reflection that can help to make the most of an increasingly favourable geopolitical context for bilateral collaboration and of great synergies for mutual growth include:

1. Raising the level of the bilateral relationship of the current APCI to a **strategic partnership**, reflecting the bond that Spain has with India as its main partner in South Asia, could be taken into account. This would serve to make the most of the opportunities that the new geopolitical situation and the growth synergies generate. This agreement for a strategic partnership would allow both the creation of a roadmap that generates a proactive vision in our bilateral relations and the launching of the necessary political mandate to increase our bilateral collaboration in a holistic and multisectoral way.
2. It would be convenient to advance in bilateral cooperation with the signing of **new sectoral bilateral agreements** in education, railroads, sustainable urbanism, water, sports or nuclear energy for pacific use, as well as cross-cutting agreements in customs affairs, counter-terrorism or social security. Moreover, it would be appropriate for these MoUs to always have three cross-cutting factors to ensure that they are implemented to their full potential: 1) a bilateral monitoring commission, both at a level of high ministerial posts and at a technical level, that generates an ongoing bilateral dialogue with the aim to sustain the bilateral boost in the long term; 2) a component of technological and digital agenda that allows the joint collaboration through innovative bilateral programmes; and 3) generating civil society and business platforms within the agreement that allow the bilateral fabrics to get to know each other and study paths of collaboration and exchange. Only then may we obtain a beneficial capillarity of these frameworks of government relationship, ensuring that these initiatives also underpin the basis relationships between the civil societies.

3. As other European countries have proven, **continuity and persistence in the official visits** is essential to maintain the bilateral boost whenever the context allows it. In order to give continuity to these visits, it would be positive to create **regular political and technical dialogues** that could have a hybrid format, made up by face-to-face meetings as well as virtual ones. These dialogues could be established both in the new MoUs and in those strategic fields where there is a previous relationship framework without an established regular bilateral dialogue.
4. Although Spain and India do not share geopolitical interests or a same vision on how to increase the number of members of the Security Council, there are shared democratic values and a common commitment with the principles, objectives and centrality of the United Nations system that allow a multilateral constructive dialogue. An **active and continuous multilateral dialogue** could be facilitated, including regular meetings on the sidelines of the G20, that consolidate the multilateral alliance and generate new paths of collaboration and cooperation, also within the 2030 Agenda.
5. The alliance between Spain and India in security and defense has been strengthened with the support that Spain gave to the entry of India to different international fora and agreements within the field of defence. This commitment in the multilateral arena lays the foundations for Spain and India to continue increasing their **dialogue and permanent cooperation in security and defence**. The defence industries of both countries would benefit from this framework of cooperation
6. Parallel to the building of a strategic bilateral partnership, Spain can also play a more **active role in the relationship between the European Union and India**, similar to what other European partners do. The bilateral relation between Spain and India could benefit from both a greater involvement of Spain in the negotiation of the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) between India and the EU and from a greater participation of Spanish institutions and organisations in projects of the European Union in India, following the same active policy of dissemination, promotion and accompaniment developed in the field of science and technology that is harvesting an excellent result in the Horizon 2020.
7. Both the European countries in India and the Asian countries in Spain have been extending their consular network, enabling them to underpin the diplomatic presence of these countries throughout the territory. In the case of Spain in India, the Spanish consular presence could be equalled to the one other European countries with similar interests have in India, with two consulate generals, like Italy, Netherlands or Belgium, committing to extend their presence by creating a **Consulate General of Spain in Bangalore**, the technological capital of the country, as was already proposed by measure no. 31 of the document "A strategic vision for Spain in Asia for 2018-2022", carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. The creation of this consulate would allow to extend the Spanish influence to the south of India and to increase the exchanges in the scientific and technological field. The 2017 APCI reflected the clear intent to open a **Consulate General of India in Barcelona**, which would favour an increase of the relationships in the economic and commercial field.
8. It would be positive to **continue strengthening the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi and its consular section** –as has happened in recent years, in which its staff has doubled–, as well

as expanding its facilities, to maintain the momentum of political relations with India and face the continuous increase in the number of visas, which has quadrupled in the last 10 years.

9. Within the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation** in Madrid, it would be convenient to **continue strengthening the weight of Asia** in general –and India in particular– in its departments, in proportion to the growth of Asia's relevance on the international agenda.

10. The 2017 APCI reflected the intent of the Government of Spain to hold a **year of Spain in India**. Although Spain has held similar initiatives with China, Japan and Russia, it has never done so with India. The importance of holding a bilateral event of this nature is much more relevant than a mere framework of institutional celebration. It could become the pending bilateral milestone in the Spain-India relations. On the one hand, the year of Spain in India would establish the clear political mandate to all the Spanish institutions and ministries that they are committed to India. That political mandate of multisectorial nature has never occurred to this date. On the other hand, a dual year could entail a turning point in the relations between both countries, creating platforms and permanent fora of exchange in different sectors. Finally, an investment of this kind would allow weaving an interconnected bilateral civil society that maintained the bilateral boost in the private sphere, beyond the institutional initiatives. But in order to carry out a bilateral milestone of this nature, it is necessary to have a predefined strategy that identifies the main goals and sectors of interest, a plan that allows to organise a get-together between stakeholders of both countries before the event takes place that may lead to joint initiatives, a political

involvement that encourages exchanges and visits during that year, and, finally, a budget that makes it possible. A successful year of Spain in India would be the best tactic for the Government of India to hold the year of India in Spain.

* The proposals and ideas collected in this working document do not necessarily reflect the position of the Spain-India Council Foundation, nor that of its trustees, nor that of the Indo-Spanish Chamber of Commerce, nor that of any of the entities or individuals who have contributed to this exercise.

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