

**Remarks by the Ambassador at the interaction with
the House of European Affairs and Diplomacy (HEAD),
Corvinus University**

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Embassy of India, Budapest

Members of the House of European Affairs and Diplomacy, dynamic scholars of Corvinus University, and distinguished guests—a very warm welcome to the Embassy of India here in Budapest.

It is a distinct privilege for us to host the next generation of policymakers, analysts, and diplomats. As you study the shifting architecture of global affairs, your focus on the evolving dynamics between India, Hungary, and the European Union is both timely and essential.

Through sweeping structural reforms, a massive push in physical infrastructure, and a steadfast commitment to sustainable development, India has emerged as the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Under the ambitious national vision driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, India is undergoing a profound structural metamorphosis that fundamentally shifts its trajectory from a developing market to a primary engine of global economic growth and innovation. At the core of this transformation is a

relentless push toward comprehensive modernization, powerfully anchored by the unprecedented success of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). These pioneering digital systems have not merely revolutionized domestic financial inclusion—bringing hundreds of millions of unbanked citizens into the formal economy through seamless, real-time, low-cost digital transactions—but they have also established a highly scalable, open-source template that the broader Global South is eagerly adopting to leapfrog legacy financial networks.

Beyond this digital renaissance, sweeping physical infrastructure upgrades, streamlined regulatory frameworks, and targeted industrial initiatives are significantly accelerating the country's manufacturing capabilities. This calculated economic strategy is positioning India as a vital, stabilizing anchor in the ongoing global supply chain realignment, offering a dependable, democratic alternative for multinational corporations seeking resilience.

Simultaneously, India is expanding its role as a crucial provider of global sustainability. By spearheading the International Solar Alliance and directing massive investments toward green hydrogen, renewable energy capacity, and a steadfast commitment to a Net-Zero economy by 2070, the nation is demonstrating that

rapid economic expansion can operate in harmony with aggressive climate action.

India's confident, multi-aligned foreign policy and its vocal advocacy for the developing world offer a critical stabilizing force in an increasingly fragmented, multipolar landscape, fostering regional security and acting as an essential bridge between established powers and emerging nations.

The global community must pay close attention to these cascading developments, because India's modern relevance is no longer defined solely by its immense demographic dividend or its vast consumer market. Instead, by successfully synthesizing robust, inclusive economic growth, exporting transformative digital public goods like DPI, and maintaining a steadfast commitment to sustainable development and strategic stability, India is rapidly cementing its status as a foundational pillar of the 21st-century global order, actively providing replicable solutions to some of the world's most complex socioeconomic challenges.

It is upon this momentum that the India-EU strategic partnership is flourishing. We are witnessing a historic recalibration of global supply chains. As India rises as a trusted global player, our partnership with the European Union is transitioning from traditional

political dialogue to deep, structural economic integration.

This is evident in our joint commitment to connectivity. Whether it is through physical corridors like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), or through the digital realm where India's highly efficient and cost-effective Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is setting global benchmarks, we are actively building the bridges of the 21st century.

India and the EU are natural partners. We are the world's two largest democracies by collective geography and population. We share foundational commitments to rule of law, pluralism, open societies, and a rules-based international order. And we both understand, with increasing clarity, that the challenges of the 21st century — climate change, digital governance, supply chain resilience, and geopolitical uncertainty — demand cooperation, not fragmentation.

The India-EU Strategic Partnership, elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021, reflects this understanding. The leaders of India and the EU have committed to deepening cooperation across four pillars: foreign policy and security, sustainable development, digital transformation, and trade and investment.

The geopolitical context has added urgency to this partnership. As global supply chains are being restructured and new alignments forged, both India and Europe recognise the strategic value of each other. India, as one of the fastest-growing major economies, offers scale, a young demographic, technological capability and democratic stability. The EU, as India's largest trading partner bloc, offers capital, technology, regulatory standards and market access.

High-level political engagement has intensified. Leaders' summits, ministerial dialogues and sector-specific partnerships have multiplied. The EU-India Trade and Technology Council, launched in 2023, mirrors the framework that the EU has with only one other country — the United States. This signals the seriousness with which both sides regard this relationship.

India's global role — as a G20 Presidency holder in 2023, as a founding member of the Alliance for Global Good, and as a leading voice of the Global South — has also enhanced its relevance to European partners seeking to engage with the developing world through trusted interlocutors.

India and the nations of the European Union, including Hungary, are bound by a profound democratic connect. We share an unwavering faith in the rule of law,

institutional transparency, and the power of the people's voice.

This shared democratic ethos is not merely an abstract political philosophy; it is the very bedrock of our mutual trust. In a world of increasing geopolitical complexity, the confidence that stems from shared democratic values is what allows us to negotiate complex economic architectures, secure our supply chains, and foster deep, unhindered cultural exchanges. Trust is the true currency of international relations, and our shared democratic systems are the mint from which it is struck.

A transformative pillar of this new era is the India-EU Free Trade Agreement. This agreement is far more than a tariff-reduction mechanism; it is a geopolitical game-changer. It represents the docking of two massive economic zones, creating an integrated space that champions innovation, sustainability, and mutual prosperity.

For the European market, India offers unprecedented scale, a rapidly expanding consumer base, and a dynamic technological workforce. Furthermore, as we look at critical sectors like pharmaceuticals and advanced technology, India's strict IP enforcement environment ensures that we are not just a market, but a highly secure, reliable partner for European research, development, and manufacturing.

India and Hungary may be separated by geography, but we are brought together by something far more enduring — a shared civilisational curiosity, a mutual respect for culture and learning, and a practical convergence of interests that has only deepened over the decades.

Our diplomatic relations, established in 1948, are among the oldest that independent India has maintained in Central Europe. For more than seven decades, our two nations have cultivated a relationship that has proved resilient across the vicissitudes of history — from the Cold War era to Hungary's democratic transformation in 1989, and through every shift in the European and global order since.

Today, our bilateral trade stands at over USD 1 billion and continues to grow. Hungarian companies have found India to be a dynamic and rewarding destination — particularly in the fields of pharmaceuticals, information technology, engineering, and automotive components. Indian firms, in turn, increasingly look to Hungary as a strategically located manufacturing and logistics hub within the EU single market.

In the field of education, Hungary holds a special place in India's affections. Thousands of Indian students — particularly in medicine — have pursued their dreams at Hungarian universities. The Stipendium Hungaricum

scholarship programme has further broadened these ties, welcoming Indian students across disciplines. Corvinus University itself is emblematic of this intellectual bridge.

Our defence and security cooperation, while understated, has been consistent and meaningful. At the multilateral level, India and Hungary work together at the United Nations, the WTO, and in various multilateral fora, often finding common cause on issues of trade, development, and global governance.

People-to-people ties — through tourism, diaspora connections, cultural exchange and academic collaboration — form the invisible but vital sinew of our relationship. The Indian community in Hungary, though not large in number, is deeply integrated and contributes meaningfully to Hungarian society.

In short, the India-Hungary partnership is not one of headlines and grand summits alone — it is built on the quiet, consistent accumulation of trust, commerce, scholarship, and shared values.

[Hungary's Benefit and Role as a Pivot]

Because in all that I have described — the deepening India-EU strategic relationship, the transformative potential of the FTA, the unfolding connectivity architecture — Hungary is not a bystander. Hungary is,

or can be, an active and consequential participant. Indeed, I would argue that Hungary is positioned to be a pivot of deeper India-Europe relations, if it chooses to seize the opportunity.

Let me explain what I mean, beginning with the FTA.

When the India-EU FTA enters into force — as it will — Hungary will have preferential access to a market of 1.4 billion people. Hungarian exporters in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, agricultural products, food processing, speciality chemicals and automotive components will benefit from reduced or eliminated tariffs on their goods entering India.

Hungarian service providers — in education, healthcare, engineering, logistics and finance — will find new pathways into a market that is actively expanding its services sector.

Hungary's pharmaceutical sector — home to companies of global standing — will find particular resonance in India, which is itself the world's pharmacy, and where demand for innovative medicines, biosimilars and medical devices is growing rapidly. The scope for joint manufacturing, joint research, and co-development of pharmaceutical products between Indian and Hungarian companies is immense.

Hungary's strategic location — at the heart of Central Europe, at the crossroads of East and West, connected

by rail, road and river to the ports of Northern and Southern Europe — makes it a natural logistics and distribution hub for Indian goods entering the EU market. As Indian exports to Europe grow under the FTA, Hungarian infrastructure can play a crucial role in their onward movement.

Hungary's vibrant higher education sector — represented in this very room today — offers another dimension of partnership. Expanding the presence of Indian students in Hungary, deepening joint research programmes, and establishing Hungarian-Indian academic consortia in areas like data science, engineering and medicine can position Hungary as a leading educational gateway for India to Europe.

A pivot is not simply a beneficiary — a pivot is an active agent that uses its position to multiply value. Hungary can be this pivot for India-EU relations in several ways. First, as a voice within EU institutions: Hungary's engagement in EU-India negotiations, its advocacy for ambitious outcomes in the FTA, and its championing of a genuinely strategic India-EU relationship will enhance Budapest's own leverage and relevance within Brussels. Second, as a destination for Indian investment: India is the fifth-largest economy in the world and its outward foreign direct investment is growing rapidly. Hungarian investment climate reforms, combined with the EU

single market access that Hungary offers, make it a compelling destination for Indian companies in manufacturing, IT services, logistics and green technology. A single successful Indian anchor investment can catalyse a broader trend.

Third, as a platform for innovation and technology: Both India and Hungary are producing world-class talent in science, engineering and mathematics. A bilateral framework for start-up collaboration, technology transfer and joint innovation — modelled perhaps on similar frameworks Hungary has with other strategic partners — could unlock significant mutual value.

Fourth, as a cultural and diplomatic bridge: Hungary's historical relationship with India — grounded in decades of educational cooperation, cultural exchange and diplomatic goodwill — gives it a credibility and a warmth in Indian eyes that newer partners will take years to build. This is a comparative advantage that should be cultivated consciously.

I say this with deep conviction: in the architecture of India-EU relations that is being built today, there is a place at the table for Hungary — a prominent, active and consequential place — if Hungary chooses to claim it.

I encourage you to look closely at the future of the India-Europe and India-Hungary relationship. The world needs sharp, culturally fluent, and democratically grounded leaders to navigate the decades ahead.

Thank you all for taking the time to visit the Embassy today. I hope you find the exhibition inspiring, and I look forward to an engaging and insightful interaction with all of you. ***Thank You***