

4. India-Portugal Relation – International Relations

5th India-Portugal Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). India and Portugal held their 5th Foreign Office Consultations in Lisbon, reviewing cooperation in trade, defence, and energy, reaffirming support for India's permanent UNSC seat and the India-EU partnership. This builds on a long history dating from 1498 (Vasco da Gama), normalized in 1974 after Operation Vijay, and now includes a key 2021 labour mobility agreement and joint S&T research.

India-Portugal Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)

Event – The 5th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Portugal.

Location – Lisbon, Portugal.

Purpose – The consultations involved a comprehensive review of the entire range of bilateral cooperation between the two nations.

Key Highlights of the Consultations

Comprehensive Bilateral Review – Both countries discussed cooperation across a wide variety of sectors. Key areas included – trade and economy, defence and security, renewable energy, and agriculture, among others.

Multilateral Cooperation – India and Portugal reaffirmed their commitment to continue their close collaboration in multilateral forums. Specific emphasis was placed on the United Nations (UN). This cooperation is based on their shared approach to global governance and peacebuilding.

India-EU Relations – The delegations exchanged views on the broader India-European Union (EU) relationship. They also discussed regional and global developments of mutual interest.

India-Portugal Relations

Historical Connections

Ancient Ties – Relations trace back over 500 years to 1498.

Vasco da Gama – This is when Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama arrived in Calicut (Kozhikode), establishing the first direct sea route between Europe and India.

Portuguese Hub – Goa became the capital of Portuguese activities in Asia, with an influence spanning from Mozambique to Malacca.

End of Colonial Rule (1961) – India liberated Goa, Daman, and Diu under Operation Vijay. This action ended 450 years of Portuguese colonial rule in India.

Normalization (1974) – Relations were normalized following Portugal's Carnation Revolution (which ended its authoritarian regime). A Treaty of Recognition of Indian Sovereignty was signed on December 31, 1974, and came into force on June 3, 1975.

Political Relations

UNSC Support – Portugal actively supports India's candidature for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

NSG Support – Portugal also supports India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

India-EU Summits – Portugal was the first country to propose India-EU Summits, which began with the Lisbon Summit in 2000.

Major Bilateral Engagements

Intensified Cooperation (2017–2020) – This period saw numerous MoUs signed in key areas, including –

1. Defence
2. Renewable Energy
3. Information Technology (IT)
4. Marine Research
5. Startups
6. Agriculture

Labour Mobility Agreement (2021) – This was a landmark agreement, as it was the first such agreement Portugal signed with a non-EU country. It facilitates the legal migration of Indian workers to Portugal.

Cooperation in Multilateral Fora

Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) – India joined the CPLP as an Associate Observer in 2021. This enhances India's engagement with other Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) nations, such as Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique.

India–EU Leaders' Summit (2021) – This important summit was hosted by Portugal. It focused on post-COVID-19 cooperation in health, digitalization, and sustainable growth.

Shared Global Outlook – Both nations are aligned in advocating for –

1. UN reform
2. Sustainable development
3. Climate action

Trade and Investment

Bilateral Trade (FY 2023–24) – Total trade amounted to US\$1.36 billion.

Indian exports to Portugal – US\$1,183.80 million

Portuguese exports to India – US\$178.34 million

Major Indian Exports – Textiles, machinery, metals, chemicals, plastics, vehicles, and footwear.

Major Portuguese Exports – Machinery, metals, chemicals, minerals, textiles, and optical instruments.

Science and Technology Cooperation

Agreement (1998) – This agreement established the Indo–Portuguese Joint S&T Committee (JSTC).

6th JSTC Meeting (2023) – Established a joint €4 million research fund. Identified key focus areas – green hydrogen, net-zero industry, and startup exchange.

India–Portugal Tech Summit (2020) – This summit focused on cooperation in Healthtech, Cleantech, Agrotech, and Space–Ocean Research.

About Portugal

Location – Situated in Southwestern Europe, on the West Coast of the Iberian Peninsula.

Bordering Nations/Waterbodies

East & North – Spain

West & South – Atlantic Ocean

Islands (Autonomous Regions) – Includes the Azores and Madeira Archipelagos in the North Atlantic, which are administered by Portugal.

Terrain

North – Characterized by mountainous regions.

South – Features rolling plains and lowlands.

Major Mountain Ranges

Serra da Estrela (contains the highest point on mainland Portugal at 1,993 m).

Serra do Marão

Serra de São Mamede

Climate – Predominantly a Mediterranean Climate with mild winters and warm summers, moderated by the Atlantic Ocean.

North – Tends to be cooler and wetter, influenced by Atlantic westerlies.

South – Tends to be warmer and drier, with semi-arid tendencies in the Algarve region.

Rivers

Tagus (Tejo) – The longest river on the Iberian Peninsula, which flows through Lisbon.

Minho – The northernmost river, which forms part of the border with Spain.

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