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BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA - BELGIUM

INTRODUCTION

India and Belgium share a long-standing and multifaceted bilateral relationship based on shared democratic values, commitment to the rule of law, federalism, and pluralism. Belgium was among the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with independent India in September 1947. As the two nations celebrate the historic milestone of the 80th anniversary of their diplomatic ties in 2027, the partnership has reached a new strategic maturity.

The relationship has developed across political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, and people-to-people domains. India and Belgium maintain regular high-level political exchanges—further consolidated by the launch of the inaugural India-Belgium Strategic Dialogue in 2026—and cooperate closely on issues of mutual interest. These include international security, counter-terrorism, defense manufacturing co-production, trade, investment, renewable energy, and cooperation through the European Union. Belgium has also historically supported India's aspiration for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Economic relations constitute an important pillar of the partnership. Belgium is a critical trading and investment partner for India within Europe, with cooperation extending particularly to diamonds and precious stones, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, engineering, technology, ports, and logistics. The India–Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU) Joint Economic Commission, established in 1997, serves as the main institutional mechanism for commercial cooperation and successfully convened its 19th session in late 2026 to unlock new avenues in aerospace, fintech, and semiconductor collaboration.



BILATERAL TRADE

Bilateral trade remains a core pillar of India–Belgium economic relations. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India–Belgium bilateral trade reached US$ 13.01 billion during FY 2025–26, characterised by a healthy, nearly balanced exchange with roughly US$ 6.60 billion in Indian exports and US$ 6.41 billion in Belgian imports. In late 2026, both nations formalised a landmark strategic roadmap to double this bilateral trade volume within the next five years.

While trade continues to be heavily dominated by precious metals and stones—linking the diamond hubs of Antwerp, Surat, and Mumbai—the commerce basket is highly diversified. India's major exports to Belgium encompass diamonds, iron and steel, organic chemicals, marine products (such as shrimp), tobacco, and engineering goods. India's key imports from Belgium feature diamonds, machinery, plastics, optical instruments, and chemical compounds. Propelled by the 2026 summit agreements, this commercial matrix is expanding rapidly into high-tech frontiers, notably connecting Belgium's premier imec semiconductor institute with India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem, alongside joint efforts in critical minerals, green hydrogen, and aerospace.



DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

India and Belgium maintain diplomatic missions in each other's capitals, reflecting the longstanding nature of their bilateral relationship. India's diplomatic mission in Belgium is the Embassy of India in Brussels, while Belgium maintains its diplomatic representation in New Delhi through the Embassy of Belgium. India established diplomatic relations with Belgium in September 1947, making Belgium one of the first European countries to establish diplomatic relations with independent India.

The Embassy of India in Brussels serves as India's principal diplomatic mission in Belgium and also plays an important role in India's engagement with the European Union, whose major institutions are based in Brussels. The Ministry of External Affairs maintains Belgium among India's official missions abroad, while the mission provides diplomatic, consular and other services to Indian nationals and promotes bilateral political, economic, cultural and people-to-people relations.

Diplomatic engagement is supported by regular visits and institutional dialogue between the two countries. In April 2026, the Government of India appointed Shri Pranay Verma as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Belgium and the European Union. The missions also facilitate high-level political exchanges, parliamentary contacts, business engagement and cooperation on regional and international issues.



TRADE RELATIONS

Trade and investment form an important pillar of India–Belgium bilateral relations. India–Belgium bilateral trade in goods amounted to approximately US$13.01 billion in 2025–26, making Belgium one of India's important trading partners in the European Union. Diamonds and precious stones constitute a particularly significant component of bilateral commerce, alongside chemicals, base metals, machinery and other manufactured products.

India's major exports to Belgium include precious metals and stones, chemicals and base metals, while important imports from Belgium comprise precious metals and stones, base metals, chemicals, textiles and machinery. The trade relationship therefore covers a broad range of sectors, with the diamond and precious-stone industry remaining a major area of commercial engagement between the two countries.
The India–Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union Joint Commission (India-BLEU JCM), established in 1997, is the principal institutional mechanism for discussing bilateral economic and commercial relations. The 19th India-BLEU Joint Economic Commission was held in Luxembourg on 29 October 2026. The mechanism provides a platform for addressing trade and investment issues and exploring opportunities for greater economic cooperation.

Investment is another important dimension of the economic relationship. Belgian FDI inflows into India amounted to approximately US$4.25 billion from April 2000 to March 2026, making Belgium the 18th-largest contributor to FDI in India. Around 235 Belgian companies operate in India, while Indian companies, particularly in IT and software, including TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and HCL, have established a presence in Belgium and use the country as a base for serving Belgian and wider European markets.

Recent economic engagement has sought to diversify bilateral cooperation beyond traditional trade. The Belgian Economic Mission to India in March 2025, led by HRH Princess Astrid, focused on sectors including climate and renewable energy, healthcare and life sciences, advanced materials and technologies, construction, ports and logistics, aerospace and defence. These initiatives provide opportunities for expanding India–Belgium trade and investment into emerging and high-technology sectors.

In addition, India and Belgium are working to facilitate greater market access and business-to-business cooperation. Both sides encourage participation of companies in trade fairs, business forums and economic missions, while exploring opportunities in clean energy, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, logistics, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing. The growing presence of Indian and Belgian companies in each other's markets provides a strong foundation for further diversification and expansion of bilateral trade and investment.

TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

India and Belgium have developed a framework of bilateral treaties and agreements covering taxation, social security, legal cooperation, renewable energy, biotechnology, shipping and other areas. An important instrument is the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income, signed in Brussels on 26 April 1993 and in force from 1 October 1997, which provides a framework for taxation of income and prevention of fiscal evasion between the two countries.

The two countries also have a Bilateral Social Security Agreement, which is in force and provides protections for workers and companies, including provisions concerning social-security contributions, portability of pension benefits and aggregation of contribution periods.
Legal and security cooperation was strengthened through the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed in 2021 and entering into force on 4 March 2023. The treaty provides a framework for cooperation between India and Belgium in criminal matters and mutual legal assistance.

Cooperation has also expanded into sector-specific areas. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Belgium in 2016, India and Belgium signed an MoU on cooperation in biotechnology and a Letter of Intent concerning shipping cooperation. More recently, the two countries have continued to develop agreements and MoUs in areas such as renewable energy, defence, diplomatic training, organised crime and cybercrime, and investment facilitation.

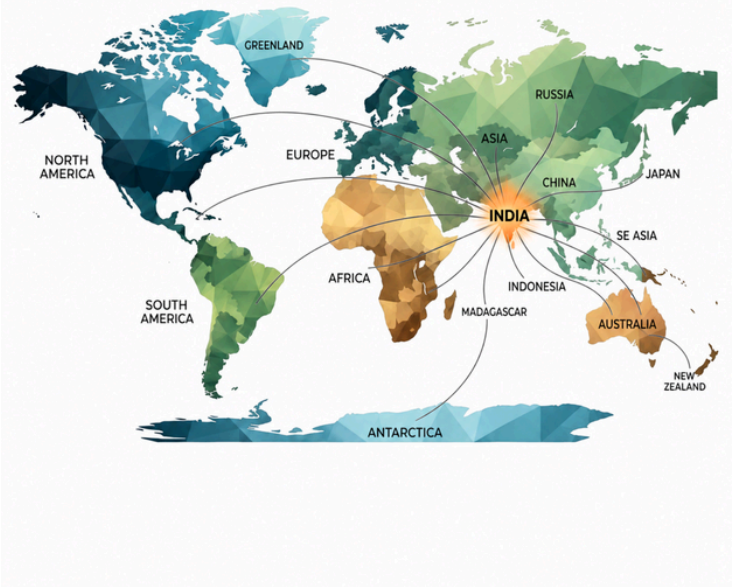
In addition, India and Belgium cooperate through the India–Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union Joint Commission, which provides an institutional framework for economic and commercial cooperation. These treaties, agreements and institutional mechanisms collectively provide a legal and administrative foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation across economic, legal, social, technological and strategic sectors.

In addition, India and Belgium have strengthened cooperation in renewable energy, defence, law-enforcement and diplomatic training. During the Belgian Prime Minister's visit to India in September 2026, the two sides concluded a Letter of Intent on Defence Cooperation, an MoU on Renewable Energy, an agreement between the CBI and Belgian Federal Police on combating transnational organised crime and cybercrime, and an MoU on diplomatic training. These new instruments broaden the legal and institutional framework of bilateral cooperation.

The two countries have also expanded cooperation in investment, consular affairs and business engagement. In September 2026, India and Belgium established an Investment Fast Track Mechanism and agreed to institutionalise the India–Belgium Business Forum, while also initiating a structured dialogue on consular matters. Together with the existing Social Security Agreement,



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