

## **India-Greece Bilateral Relations**

India's has traditionally enjoyed friendly bilateral ties with Greece. This has been mainly characterized by the political support each country has shown for the other on core position at the international level. Over the years close personal ties have also been forged between senior political leaders in both countries.

2. Greece has consistently supported India on sensitive issues such as Jammu & Kashmir, India's membership in a reformed and expanded UNSC, our membership to various non-proliferation regimes like the NSG etc. Following India's nuclear weapon test in 1998, while other European powers were calling for sanctions against India, the Greek defence Minister paid a bilateral visit in December 1998 and signed an MoU on Defence Cooperation. India has similarly shown consistent support to Greece on its core international interests particularly related to the Cyprus issue, and its positions on the maritime issues with Turkey.

3. **Historical Linkages**: Historically India's contacts with Greece can be traced back to 2500 years ago. Trading between the Mauryan Kings and Greece is evidenced by coinage and writings. In 326 BC, Alexander's expedition led him to the North-Western part of the Indian subcontinent as far as the Hyphasis (Beas River) where he fought with Raja Puru, King of Pauravaa (between the Jhelum and Chenab) and King Ambhi who ruled at Taxila. The Mauryan dynasty was a contemporary to Alexander. Chanakya in Chandragupta's Court records in Arthashastra speaks about Yavan Ambassador in the Kings' court named Megasthenes. Gandhara art is believed to be a fusion of Indian and Greek influences.

4. **Recent high level bilateral visits**: Diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in May 1950. Greece opened its Embassy in Delhi in 1950 and India its Embassy in Athens in 1978. Exchange of visits at HOS/HOG and Foreign

Ministers level has been taking place at a moderate frequency since the establishment of diplomatic ties (**Annexure 1**).

5. Recent Foreign Minister level visits include the visit of Greek Foreign Minister G. Gerapetritis to India in February 2024.

6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Greece on 25 August 2023 during which both sides announced their decision to upgrade the relationship to a 'strategic partnership'. Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis paid a State Visit to India on 21-24 2024 on a State Visit and also delivered the keynote address at the Raisina dialogue 2024.

7. **Main Institutional Dialogue Mechanism/recent meetings thereof**: The three main mechanism for institutionalized bilateral dialogue are the Foreign Office Consultations mechanism (*Secretary-level*), the "Joint Committee (JC)" mechanism (*MoS/Deputy Minister-level*) and the MOD mechanism involving meetings of JS(PIC) MoD/Secretary General MoD.

8. Following the Summit in August 2023, it was also decided to establish a new dialogue mechanism between the National Security Council Secretariat in India and its equivalent body in Greece. Dialogue tracks under this new institutional mechanism will take place under the direct supervision of the two National Security Advisors.

9. The 8th Session of the Joint Economic Committee was co-chaired by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Mrs. Anupriya Patel and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Konstantinos Fragkogiannis in Athens on April 15, 2022. (May see *Annexure 2*)

10. The 13<sup>th</sup> round of India-Greece Foreign Office Consultations were held on 14 June 2023 in Athens between Secretary (West), MEA and the Greek Secretary General in the Foreign Office.

11. The last round of talks under the MoU on Defence Cooperation took place on in

New Delhi between JS(PIC) MoD and Director General (IC) in Greek MoD on 1-4 July 2024.

### **August 2023 Summit**

12. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an Official Visit to Greece on 25 August 2023. The visit was considered significant as it was the first visit by an Indian PM level in more than 40 years. As the visit was taking place against the backdrop of significant developments in Europe and around the world the Prime Ministers decided to look at bilateral ties with a fresh lens including developing further the strategic idea of Greece acting as a gateway for India to Europe. It was decided to announce upgradation of bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership with enhanced cooperation in the political, security and economic fields. On the same occasion Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also honoured personally with the conferment of the 'The Grande Cross of the Order of Honour' by the President of the Hellenic Republic.

### **February 2024 Summit.**

13. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis paid a State visit to India on 21-22 February 2024 the first visit of a Greek Prime Minister in 16 years. On the occasion of the State Visit he also attended the inaugural ceremony of Raisina Dialogue 2024, where he delivered the keynote address.

14. **Defence Cooperation:** While the MoU on Defence Cooperation was signed in 1998 cooperation in this area has remained limited- mainly restricted to occasional high-level military-to-military exchanges or limited scope participation in each others' military training exercises. Indian Naval ships often pay 'port of call' visits to Greek ports while visiting the Mediterranean sea in view of Greece's strategic location. They use the occasion to conduct limited duration PASSEX exercises. However, in July 2024 an official level JWG (*Joint Working Group*) mechanism was established which held its first meeting.

The recent participation of the Greek Airforce with in the IAF multinational exercise

“Tarang Shakti-2024’ with four fighter jets and the Indian Airforce’s participation in the multi national air “Exercise INIOCHOS-24” hosted by Greece in September 2024 with 4 SU-30 MKI represented a significant upgrade in the scope of military to military cooperation.

15. The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the JWG also finalized the annual Military Cooperation Program that presently guides military to military cooperation activities..

16. **Economic Cooperation/Trade/Investment/agreements:** As per D/o Commerce figures India-Greek bilateral trade in **FY 2022-23** was **US\$ 1943.62 million (approx. US \$2 billion)**. Indian exports were US\$ 785.72 million, while imports from Greece US\$ 1157.90 million.

17. A review of the top five Export and Import products (*Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority*) provides some indication of the structure of this trade:

<b>Structure of Exports to Greece</b>		<b>Structure of Imports from Greece</b>	
<i>Name</i>	<i>% of X</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>% of M</i>
Non-alloyed Aluminium+alloyed aluminium	36.06% (33.58%+2.48%)	Petroleum oils/oils from bituminous minerals etc	36.77%
Shrimps/molluscs	4.95% (3.29%+1.66%)	Aluminium waste and scrap+Aluminium foil	10.73% (8.02%+2.71%)
Electrical components/equipment	2.61%	Paper or paperboard/unbleached paper or paper board	7.73% (4.70%.+3.03%)
Aluminium alloys	2.48%	Ferrous waste/scrap	4.59%
Salts/nucleic acids	2.15%	Medicaments	2.71%
<i>Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority data</i>			

18. *Flagship business partnerships in Greece/investments:* The Indian infrastructure company **GMR Airports** Ltd. Has entered into a Euro 850 million joint venture with the Greek GEK-Terna for the construction and operation (*30-year concession*) of a new

international airport at Kasteli in Crete Island. Indian multinational United Phosphorous Limited has opened a Greek subsidiary **UPS Hellas** and plays a dominant role in the Greek domestic market of plant protection products, fertilizer and Bio-solutions. Dubai based **SWITZ** group owned by Indian Business man T. Khorakiwala has invested US\$ 600 million in various bakery companies in Greece. **UTI India** has entered into a partnership with Euro Bank Greece to sell two of its international mutual fund products.

19. **Culture/Education/People-to-People ties:**

- *Culture:* Under the “Agreement Concerning Cultural Relations”(1961) a practice has developed of signing a limited duration CEP for cultural cooperation from time to time. The “Cultural and Educational Exchange Programme” for the Years 2022-2026 (2022) has been finalized.
- In 2002, Ambassador Dimitris Velissaropoulos who had written several books on India was conferred with Padma Shri award - first ever given to a Greek citizen. In October 2002, the Sahitya Academy elected Dr. Vassilis Vitsaxis, a distinguished Greek diplomat and well-known scholar, as its Honorary Fellow in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of the understanding of Indian culture. Prof. Nicholas Kazanas, a distinguished Greek Indologist, was conferred with Padma Shri award in 2021.
- *Education:* A "Dimitrios Galanos" Chair for Hellenic Studies has been established at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in September 2000.

An MoU between FSI and Greek Diplomatic Academy for cooperation in the field of diplomatic training (2018) was signed but is not active.

As part of educational reforms being undertaken in Greece, Universities in the Hellenic Republic have started exploring expanding educational opportunities for Indian students. Most efforts are presently taking place at the individual university level, operating through educational agencies in India.

20. **Indian Community:** According to 2011 Greek census the number of Indian community in Greece is 11,333.

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**Bilateral Visits at President/PM/EAM Level****HOS/HOG Visits**

	<b><u>From India</u></b>	<b><u>From Greece</u></b>
1950s	PM Jawaharlal Nehru stopover on route to Commonwealth summit	
March 1982		President Constantinos Karamanlis- <i>State Visit</i>
September (23) 1983	PM Indira Gandhi	
November 1984		Prime Minister Andreas Papandreous ( <i>to attend state funeral of Late PM Indira Gandhi</i> )
January 1986		Prime Minister Andreas Papandreous- <i>State Visit and Chief Guest at Republic Day</i>
November 1986	President Zail Singh- <i>State Visit</i>	
July 1993	President Shakar Dayal Sharma	
January (12-18) 1998		President Mr. Constantinos Stephanopoulos
February (4-9) 2001		Prime Minister Konstantinos Simitis – <i>State Visit</i>
April (25-28) 2007	President APJ Abdul Kalam- <i>State Visit</i>	
January (10-13) 2008		Prime Minister Mr. Kostas Karamanlis - <i>State Visit</i>
February (4-5) 2010		Prime Minister Mr. George Papandreou - <i>To attend the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit</i>
June (16-19) 2018	President Ram Nath Kovind- <i>State Visit</i>	
August (25) 2024	PM Narendra Modi- <i>Official Visit.</i>	
February 21-22, 2024		Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis ( <i>State Visit</i> ) He also gave the keynote address at the Raisina Dialogue 2024

**EAM/Foreign Ministers visits**

	<b><u>From India</u></b>	<b><u>From Greece</u></b>
December 2000		Foreign Minister Mr. George Papandrou
November 2001		Foreign Minister Mr. George Papandrou (Transit Halt)
January (16-17) 2003	EAM Mr. Yashwant Sinha (India-EU Troika Ministerial and bilateral talks)	
November (25-28) 2017		Foreign Minister Mr. Nikos Kotzias
June (25-27) 2021	EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar – official visit	
March (22-23) 2022		Foreign Minister Mr. Nikos Dendias
Feb (05-07) 2025		Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis

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**Annexure-2**

**Joint Economic Committee (JEC) meetings between India and Greece**

<b>Date &amp; Place</b>	<b>Indian Representative</b>	<b>Greek Representative</b>
01 <sup>st</sup> JEC October 1986 New Delhi	Mr. Prem Kumar, Commerce Secretary	Mr. George Kandalepas, Secretary General, International Economic Relations.
2 <sup>nd</sup> JEC June 1995 Athens	Mr. Tejandra Khanna, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce	Mr. George Kandalepas, Secretary General, International Economic Relations.
3 <sup>rd</sup> JEC October 1996 New Delhi.	Mr. Tejandra Khanna, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce	Mr. Nicolaos Zachariadis, General Secretary, Ministry of National Economy
4 <sup>th</sup> JEC July 1999 Athens	Mr. P.P. Prabhu, Commerce Secretary, Ministry of Commerce	Mr. Stefanos Avgouleas, Secretary General for International Economic Relations, Ministry of National Economy.
5 <sup>th</sup> JEC November 2007 New Delhi	Mr. O.P. Arya, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce	Amb. P.D. Mantzouranis, Director General for Economic Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
6 <sup>th</sup> JEC March 2011 Athens	Mr. Jyotiraditya Scindia, MoS (C&I)	Mr. Spyros Kouvelis, Deputy Foreign Minister
7 <sup>th</sup> JEC November 2016 New Delhi	Ms. Rita Tiotia, Commerce Secretary	Mr. George Katrougalos, Alt. Foreign Minister
8 <sup>th</sup> JEC April 2022 Athens	Ms. Anupriya Patel, MoS (C&I)	Mr. Konstantinos Fragkogiannis, Deputy Foreign Minister

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