



## EUROPE INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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**Chairman: Ravi K Mehrotra, CBE Secretary General: Sunil Prasad**

EICC-2023

Brussels, 31 March 2023

Mr. Josep Borrell  
EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and  
Vice-President of the European Commission  
Brussels

Dear High Representative, Vice-President Mr. Borrell,

### Re: **Khalistan activities on EU soil**

I am writing to you on a matter that concerns not only India but the European Union as well and why if this issue is not addressed urgently, it may explode into unpredictable directions with potentials to damage EU's relation with India. This is about the upsurge of Khalistan movement from European Union soil. Despite the potential of relationship between EU and India in the realms of trade, energy, and security cooperating towards EU's multipolar Indo-Pacific strategy, EU's silence over upsurge in Khalistan movement in the EU countries raises the question of whether India-EU ties can move past misguided Sikh diaspora concerns.

You are aware that demands for an independent and separate state called Khalistan for Indian Sikhs in Punjab had led to over a decade of violence that killed thousands in the 1980s and early 1990s. Among the starkest public memories of this violence include the 1984 Golden Temple raid, the assassination of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the Air India flight terrorist attack that killed all 329 passengers on board, and the failed bombing of an Air India jet in Tokyo on the same day. Does EU understand the seriousness of upsurge of this movement from its soil? It is important that the activities of Khalistani groups located in some EU countries should be investigated to prevent a reoccurrence of the violence orchestrated by the Khalistan movement in the 1980s.

As you may also know that the Khalistan movement is outlawed in India and considered a grave national security threat by the government – a number of groups associated with the movement are listed as “terrorist organizations” under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. But strangely and sadly, it continues to evoke a level of sympathy in some EU countries including in Britain. The Khalistan forces have raised their ugly head once again in many EU countries. India has very often cautioned these countries about the depth of the problem, but EU does not seem to understand the gravity of the issue. They do not understand that their soil is being used to plot, plant, and execute murders in India. It is therefore very important for EU to have better understanding that if this menace is allowed to go out of control it will also threaten EU's peace and security.

Despite the challenges of managing India's distinct diversity, the Indian Union has successfully thrived under a strong overarching Indian national identity. For a country whose current integrity, is "reliant on a compact of pluralism," separatist Khalistan movement, threatens the core of India's unity—something India is particularly very sensitive to give the historic memory of a violent partition, the fallout of which even continues today in the form of cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

Pakistan's involvement in promoting Khalistan movement and fermenting violence is not new and it is no secret that with its long-standing goal of dismembering India through its "Bleed India" strategy, Pakistan actively supports the Khalistan movement in an attempt to turn Sikhs against India. In fact, Pakistan has been the lifeline for the Khalistan movement since it began 50 years ago. Khalistan is Pakistan's geopolitical project and more than anything else, it is a project for bringing about the destruction of the Indian state in a welter of communal disturbances. You may know that Pakistan has also been funding organizations involved in drug smuggling and money laundering to strengthen the secessionist movements.

There are signs of renewed push by Pakistan to whip up Khalistani movement issue in EU countries by using EU's ultra-liberal ecosystem as its breeding ground. The bigger issue at stake today is whether EU nations currently understand the gravity of what is going on in its soil. We are of the view that EU member states would do well to grasp the changing dimension of the Khalistan warfare and where exactly a line should be drawn between "freedom of expression" and dissent.

We are concerned that some EU governments for decades have failed India in the context of the Khalistan militancy. During the 1980 and 1990s, when India was up against a powerful secessionist insurgency that threatened its unity, they allowed Khalistan supporters to indulge in anti-India propaganda, recruit militants and raise funds to fuel terrorism in India. Hundreds of wanted Khalistan criminals were provided sanctuary in EU countries. Over the past two years, Khalistan activists have held violent demonstrations in major EU cities using European liberal laws to carry anti-India activities.

In the name of democracy, civil liberty, and free speech the complete reluctance by EU countries to act against pro-Khalistan outfits such as the Sikhs for Justice (SJF) concerns us. The very fact that the pro-Khalistan groups are getting more dangerous by the day and the reality that some European countries are refusing to act is deeply disturbing. A revival of this movement, particularly on EU soil will not only act as an impediment to capitalizing the momentum in the EU-India relationship but will affect the peace and security of EU countries. In order to keep the EU-India strategic partnership on track and maintain peace and harmony in the EU countries, we urge EU leadership in Brussels and the leadership of EU member countries to take appropriate steps to crack down on these separatist elements swiftly.

We also urge you to investigate and prosecute radical Khalistan supporters in the EU countries who provide financial and material support to Khalistan terror groups operating in India. Their activities should be investigated to prevent a reoccurrence of the violence orchestrated by the Khalistan movement in the 1980s. Would you allow secessionist forces in the EU regions to take shape and size of Khalistan movement, allow them nurturing divisive

ideologues, adopt extremism and use violent methods for their objectives? Certainly not. This is exactly what we are trying to convey to you, and I hope I have been able to place before you the danger the secessionist forces poses to EU's security if it is allowed to groom on EU's soil. We hope EU realises the extent of the problem that it will face if it continues to remain silent and not act against these forces.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Antonio Guterres', written in a cursive style.

Secretary General