

## Jean Monnet Lecture Series on EU-Asia Connectivity

# The EU-India Connectivity Partnership: Challenges and Prospects to Strategic Cooperation

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### EU-India, new paths

- “The end of the Cold War led to the condition that resulted in the transformation of both actors. The EU transformed from the EEC to the EU and India transitioned from the Cold War period to the post-war period by adopting economic liberalization in the 1990s and nuclear testing in 1998. EU-India relations would (also) undergo a transformation. In 2000, the two sides agreed to hold a summit. By then, 16 summits had been held. The last one in 2021.”

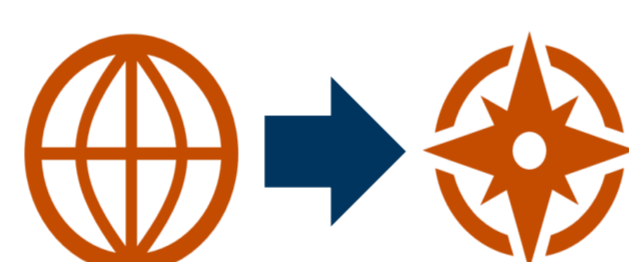


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- “If you look at what geopolitics and power shifts are producing, at least from a European/Western perspective, is a challenge to existing normative ideas, especially to what is called the “international liberal order”. Emerging powers are in a position to challenge or balance or offer a kind of checkmate to what has already been established since the end of the Second World War in 1945, which can also be called the embeddedness of these institutions. That’s why they resist change in a dramatic way.”

### Connectivity 2.0

- “There are signs that a new order is emerging that is trying to become probably the alternative over time. That may not be the intention, but it is something we need to be aware of.”



- “And then, what we also see is the pronounced shift in the economic power, the focus to connect in new ways. There is definitely a new intentionality, what we’re seeing today in terms of connectivity is called connectivity 2.0.”



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- “Two major developments took place, both in the 15th Summit which took place last year in July and the 16th Summit that was held this year where there was an expansion of political and economic relations and the intention to go beyond just looking at trade.”

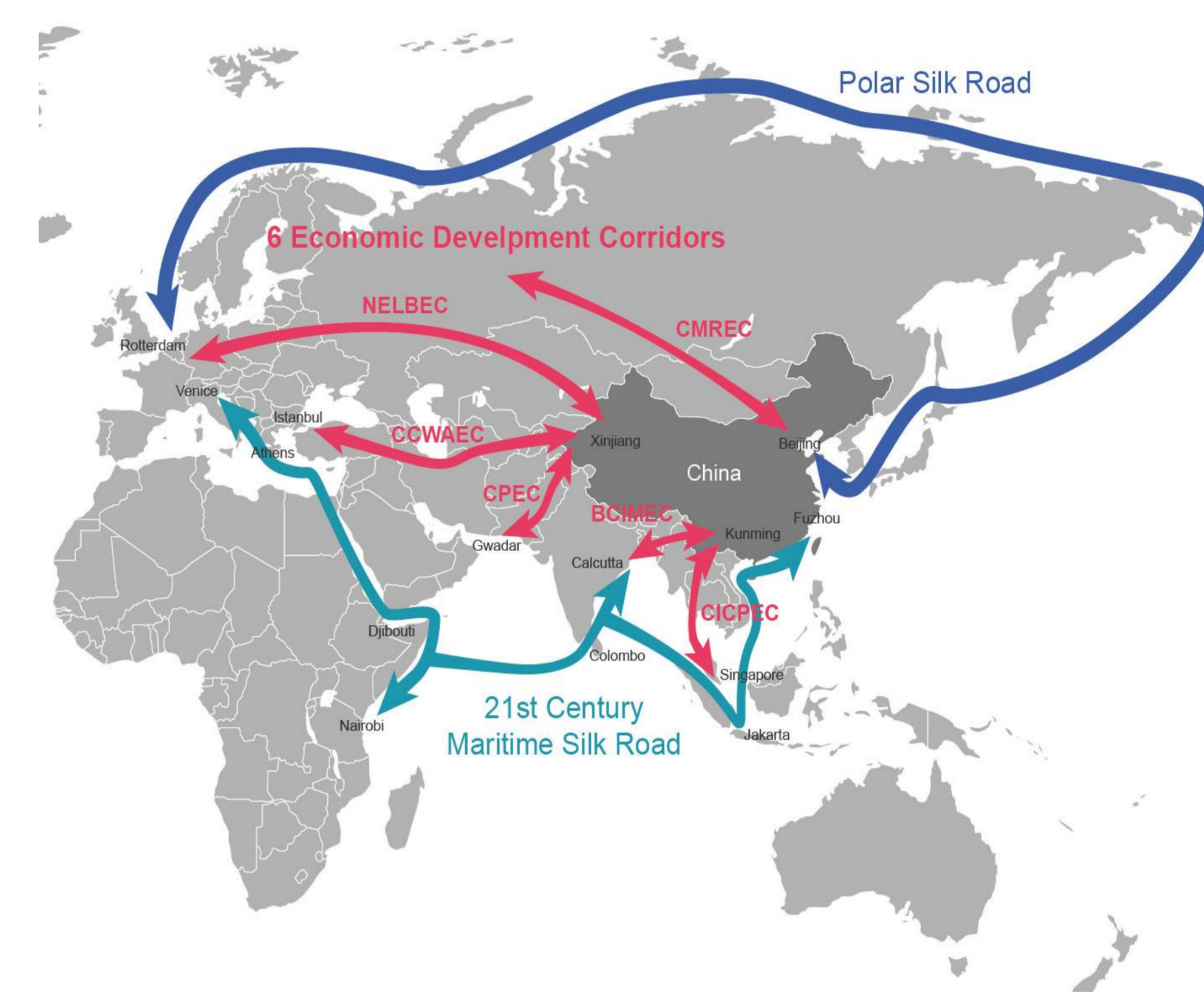
### Indo-Pacific Maritime Balance

- “A second important point worth considering is to look at the changing maritime balance of power that is happening in this part of the world that I am in. And I am talking about the great importance of the Indo-Pacific as a concept and as a new strategic reality. You have already had three European countries articulating an Indo-Pacific strategy, and you have also had the EU putting forward a document that is being further refined. This means that we are not just talking about the maritime waters, but how the balance of power is changing, how it is shifting here.”
- “So there is clearly an element of a new security dimension that is emerging when we talk about connectivity. It’s not just about securing the sea lanes of communication, it’s also about whether this area, in terms of what we’re saying, is a rules-based order.”

### Shifting Connectivity

- “When we think about modern connectivity, there is one word that quickly comes to everyone’s mind, which is the Belt and Road Initiative.”

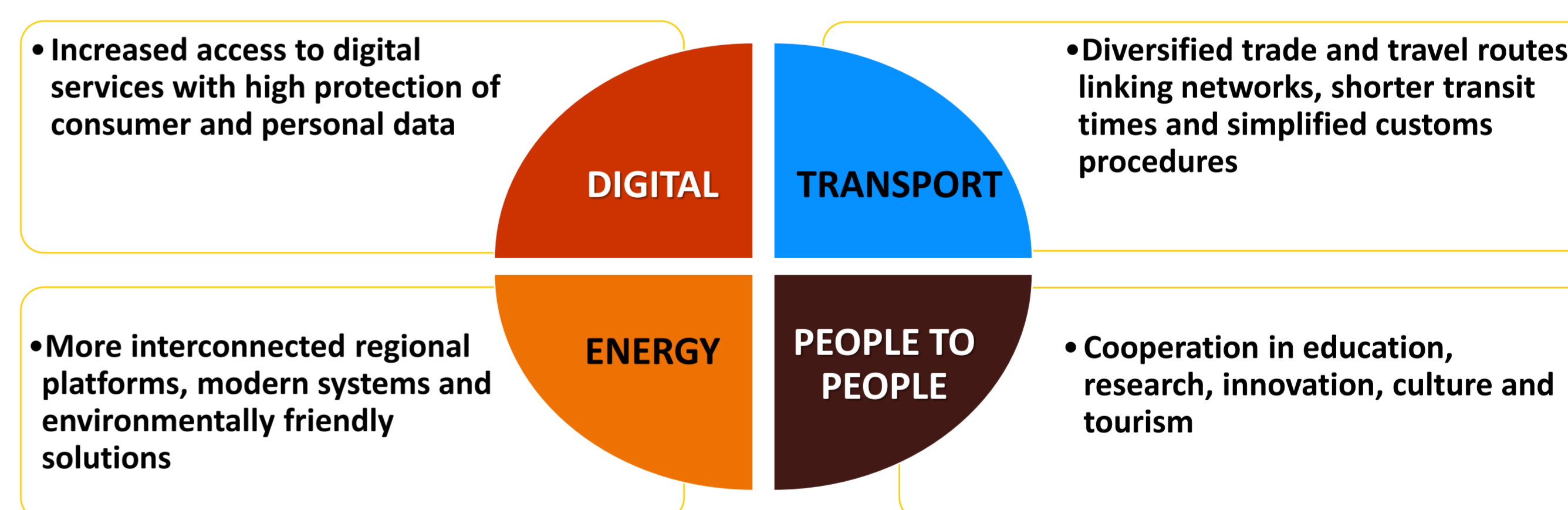
- “What we also encounter when we look at connectivity are problems with American leadership and hegemony, particularly in relation to the economic and political architecture that America has created. In particular, the period under the Trump administration saw a greater retreat of engagement with the US-led economic and political architecture.”



©Source: beltroad-initiative.com, 2021

### EU Connectivity Strategy

- “In 2018, Europe launched its connectivity strategy. So, there is a much larger framework that is already being offered and we find that this is subsequently being linked to what India has offered. For example, India had put forward a Look East policy in 2014, which was then upgraded to an Act East policy in 2019.”



- “Four areas have been identified in the partnership: Digital, Transport, Energy and People to People. All these four areas are also part of the EU-Asia connectivity strategy, so we don’t see a shift from that. You could rather say that the EU-India connectivity strategy builds on what the EU has already formulated in 2018.”

### Outlooks



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- “I think there is no getting away from the reality that we are looking at a complex interdependence that has been created. The growing rise of influence coming from different kind of actors. And in this there is a window of opportunity that has opened up for both the EU and India to now use this opportunity through the connectivity partnership to bring about definitive change.”