



A thought for today

*India wants the world not just to be interconnected
but also that it should be sensibly run*

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Modi In Germany

*India must cement mutually beneficial
ties with an evolving EU*

Marking growing warmth in bilateral ties, India and Germany have signed a slew of pacts covering cyber security, urban development, vocational education and infrastructure during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the European nation. In fact, Modi even took the opportunity to emphasise that India and Germany are made for each other. There's great scope for synergy. German investments in Indian infrastructure under the Make In India framework or the Smart Cities initiative can do wonders for the Indian economy. Meanwhile, India is a huge market for German companies – an equation that Berlin would like to strengthen further.

Germany today is looking for stable partners in the developing world in light of uncertainties in the overall global order. Europe, for example, is undergoing fundamental shifts following Brexit. Add to



this US President Donald Trump trying to modify America-Europe relations by asking EU members to shoulder greater responsibility for their defence. Trump has also criticised the American trade deficit with Germany, stating this needed to change. All of this compelled German Chancellor Angela Merkel to comment that the US and UK may no longer be completely reliable partners.

It's in this context that Modi's ongoing Europe tour needs to be seen.

Germany has decided to play the role of sheet anchor of EU and is even quietly going about laying the foundation of a combined European defence force by integrating military divisions from smaller European nations. Then there is Germany's determination on climate change mitigation efforts – something that isn't shared by Trump. And with Emmanuel Macron – a strong Europhile – being elected French President, the Germany-France relationship is likely to shape the future direction of Europe. This is precisely why Modi's schedule also includes visits to Spain and France. As EU evolves, India would do well to reaffirm its support to the European bloc and push for investments and technology transfers.

Besides, it needs to be borne in mind that China too is eyeing developments in EU for its own strategic interests. For New Delhi to not lose out to Beijing, the former should devote more resources to actualising the India-EU free trade agreement. As Europe emerges from America's shadows it will become a veritable standalone pole of the multipolar global order. India needs to capitalise on this and take ties with the continent to the next level.