

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1472
ANSWERED ON 31/07/2026

INDIA-EU FOOD EXPORT REJECTIONS AND FTA NEGOTIATIONS

1472. SMT. JEBI MATHER HISHAM

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the EU has flagged 365 Indian food and agricultural products citing pesticide residues and heavy metals, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures taken to reduce such rejections;
- (c) whether the matter has been raised during India-EU FTA negotiations;
- (d) the estimated financial loss to Indian exporters due to such rejections in the last two years;
- (e) whether Government has taken up non-tariff barriers with the EU, the outcome and whether it seeks regulatory cooperation, mutual recognition of standards and faster approvals under the FTA; and
- (f) whether a timeline is fixed for concluding and enforcing the India-EU FTA, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (f) During the period from June 2025 to May 2026, 131 notifications were received through EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) citing pesticide residues and heavy metals. These were distributed across herbs and spices (31.2%), cereals and bakery products (20.6%), fruits and vegetables (19.8%) and nuts, nut products and seeds (12.9%) and others (15.5%).

The Government has implemented several corrective and preventive measures to minimize export rejections. Under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM), Trade Regulations, Accreditation & Compliance Enablement (TRACE) support scheme has been launched and implemented to enhance the capacity of eligible MSMEs by providing partial reimbursement of eligible expenditure incurred on testing, inspection, certification, audits, traceability systems, and other conformity assessment requirements mandated by importing countries. In addition to providing digital traceability systems like TraceNet (for organic products), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) provides financial assistance to registered exporters for the implementation and certification of quality, sustainability, and Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS), thereby

facilitating compliance with international standards and market access. To address the concerns related to quality control and to ensure compliance with international standards, Export Inspection Council (EIC) conducts periodic awareness and training/outreach programs for relevant stakeholders in the exports. The overall financial losses incurred by individual private exporters depend on varying factors such as whether goods were re-consigned, redirected to alternative non-EU destinations, or destroyed at destination ports. The issue of non-tariff barriers is taken up with EU on a regular basis. As a result of these engagements, EU has listed 123 Indian fishery establishments between September 2025 and July 2026. Also, recently India has been included in the updated draft list of countries authorised to export food-producing animals and animal products to the EU as per Regulation (EU) 2024/2598 ensuring that India's exports of such products to EU continue unhindered. The India–EU FTA has provisions for enhanced cooperation on non-tariff barriers in Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) chapters. It facilitates recognition of conformity assessment results, enables equivalence of SPS measures on technical justification, promotes digitisation and information sharing, and adherence to international standards, thereby facilitating smoother market access and strengthening regulatory predictability for exporters.

India and the European Union (EU) announced the conclusion of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on 27th January 2026 at the 16th India–EU Summit, held in New Delhi. The Agreement will come into force after signing and ratification by both the Parties. The process of signing and ratification will be carried forward by both the Parties in mutual consultation.
