



# DEEPENED EU - ESA ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

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June 2026



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

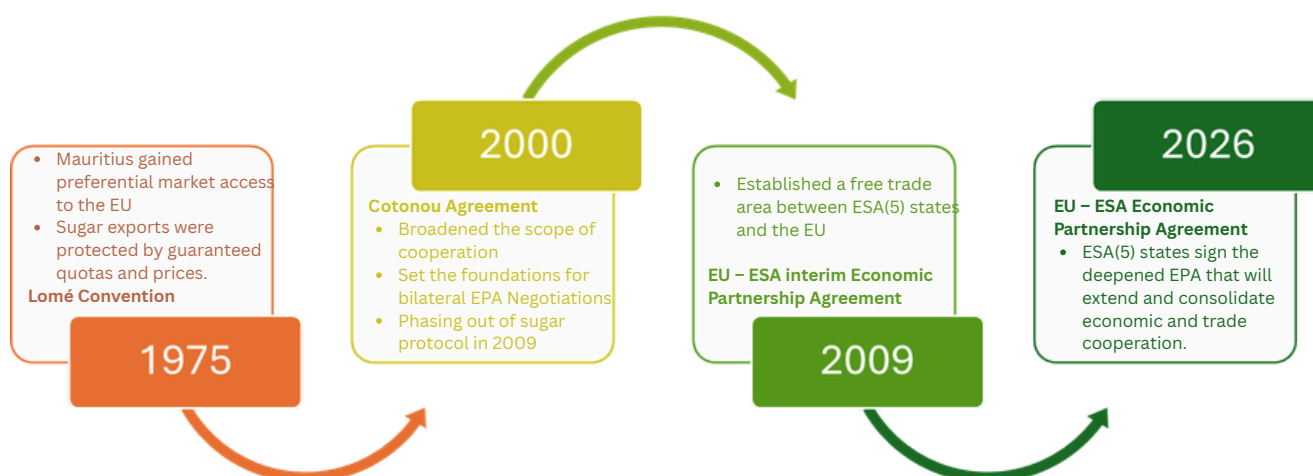
The EU–Mauritius trade relationship, spanning over five decades and evolving from the Lomé Conventions through the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the interim EPA, reached a landmark milestone with the conclusion of the Deepened Economic Partnership Agreement. The EU remains a critical trading partner for Mauritius, absorbing 35% of total exports (MUR 26.3 billion) and supplying 18% of total imports (MUR 57.1 billion) in 2025, with Mauritius' export base having diversified well beyond sugar to include fish and seafood, garments, medical devices, jewellery and rum.

The Deepened EPA modernises and significantly expands the existing framework across multiple dimensions. It preserves full duty-free, quota-free market access for all five ESA states while introducing more flexible rules of origin and enhanced cumulation provisions; strengthens customs and trade facilitation and, for the first time, introduces binding commitments across more than 100 service subsectors designed to reduce barriers to service delivery, business establishment and improve regulatory transparency.

The Agreement further promotes trade and sustainable development and aligns with national commitments under the Paris Agreement. Additionally, it provides a structured cooperation framework to help Mauritian exporters adapt to evolving standards and sustainability requirements.

The Deepened EPA is expected to be a transformative agreement that moves the EU–ESA relationship well beyond goods trade towards a more comprehensive, modern and future-oriented economic partnership.

# FROM THE LOMÉ CONVENTION TO THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT



Established through the Yaoundé Conventions of 1963 and 1969 and subsequently strengthened by the Lomé Conventions (1975–2000), this partnership granted ACP countries preferential access to the European market, complemented by financial and technical assistance. For Mauritius, these trade arrangements played a significant role in diversifying export destinations beyond its traditional dependence on the United Kingdom, particularly for sugar exports.

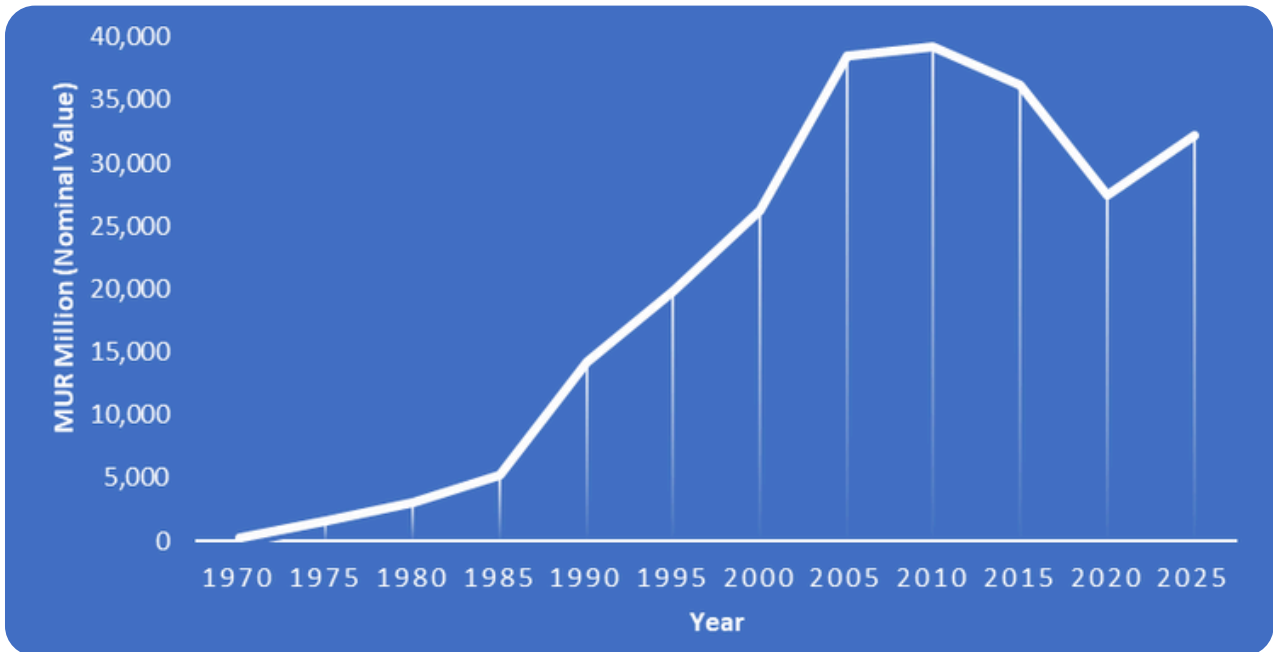
The signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2000 marked a new phase in EU–ACP relations by broadening cooperation to include development objectives, good governance, and enhanced participation of ACP countries in the global trading system. In response to growing concerns regarding the compatibility of non-reciprocal trade preferences with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, the Agreement also established a transitional framework for the negotiation of reciprocal, development-oriented trade arrangements between the EU and ACP states.

Negotiations between the EU and the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) group were launched in Mauritius in February 2004. ESA countries adopted a phased approach, prioritising the conclusion of an interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) focused on trade in goods, while continuing negotiations towards a more comprehensive agreement. Mauritius, alongside Madagascar, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Comoros and Zambia, played an active role throughout this process.

Following the entry into force of the Interim EPA, the EU and ESA continued negotiations to expand the agreement beyond trade in goods and to create a more comprehensive framework for economic cooperation, culminating in the conclusion of technical negotiations for a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in June 2026.

# ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Mauritius Exports to Europe (1970 - 2025)



Over the years, the European Union has remained one of Mauritius' principal export destinations. While sugar historically dominated Mauritian exports to the EU, the country's export basket has progressively diversified to include higher value-added products such as fish and fish preparations, special sugars, apparel, medical devices and rum. This evolution reflects Mauritius' successful economic transformation and its ability to adapt to changing international trade regimes and market conditions.

## SUGAR INDUSTRY

The sugar industry was the primary beneficiary of the preferential trade arrangements established under Lomé Convention. Through the ACP–EU Sugar Protocol, Mauritius enjoyed guaranteed access to the European market at preferential prices that were significantly higher than prevailing world market prices. These arrangements provided stable export earnings, supported rural employment and investment in the sugar sector, and contributed substantially to the country's economic development.

The reform of the EU sugar regime and the eventual termination of the Sugar Protocol in 2009 marked a major turning point for the sector. The end of guaranteed quotas and prices required the industry to undergo significant restructuring and modernization. In response, Mauritius shifted its focus towards higher-value sugar products, including special sugars, while also diversifying into energy production and other sugar cane by-products.



## TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY

The textile and garment industry emerged as a key pillar of Mauritius' economic diversification strategy during the 1980s and 1990s. Preferential access to the European market under the Cotonou agreement enabled Mauritian textile and apparel exports to compete effectively in Europe and contributed significantly to industrialisation, employment creation and foreign exchange earnings.

The Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (iEPA) provided more flexible rules of origin which allowed garments manufactured in Mauritius using imported fabrics to qualify for preferential access to the EU market, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of the Mauritian textile sector and supporting its integration into global value chains.

## FISHERIES AND SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

The fisheries sector has become an increasingly important component of Mauritius' export portfolio. Under the iEPA, Mauritian exports of fish and fish preparations benefit from duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market.

The Agreement also introduced more flexible rules of origin for tuna products, allowing the use of non-originating fish under specific conditions while retaining preferential market access. These provisions have supported the development of Mauritius as a regional seafood processing and export hub, contributing to export diversification and value addition within the blue economy.

## OTHER EXPORT INDUSTRIES

Beyond sugar, textiles and fisheries, preferential access to the European market has also supported the emergence of several export-oriented sectors in Mauritius, namely jewellery, medical devices and rum.

The jewellery industry has benefited from access to a large consumer market, enabling local manufacturers to expand exports of high-value products and strengthen their presence in international value chains. Similarly, the medical devices sector has emerged as a dynamic component and high value added of Mauritius' manufacturing base, with exports to the EU supported by compliance with European quality and regulatory standards. Mauritian rum has also gained increasing recognition in the European market, benefiting from growing consumer demand for premium and specialty spirits.

Preferential market access has significantly enabled local producers to expand their export presence and capture niche market opportunities within the EU.



# TRADE WITH EU

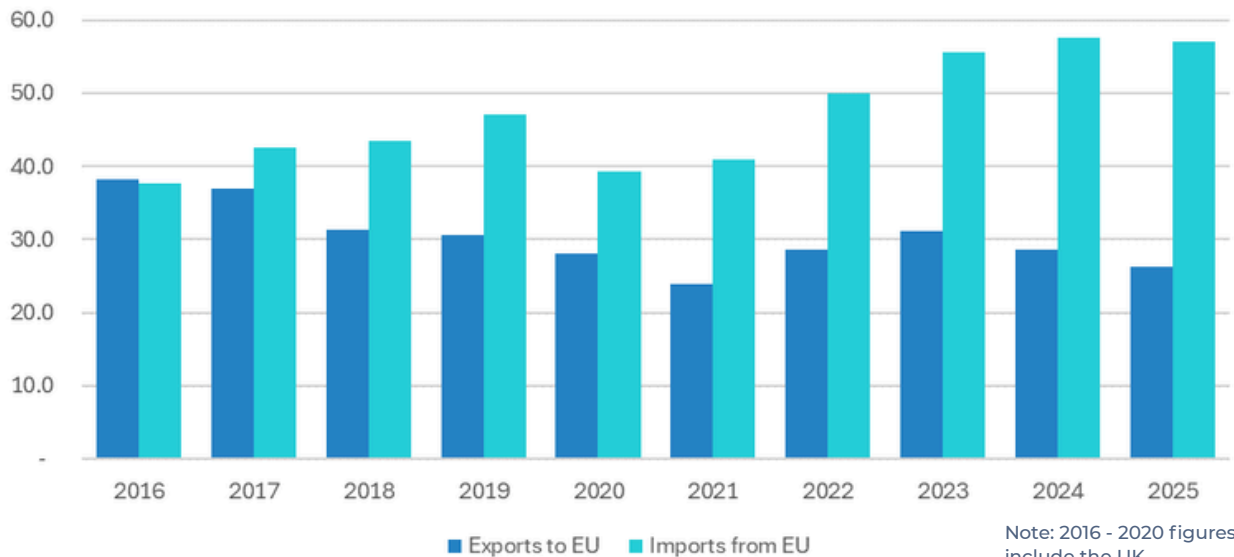
Trade with the European Union plays a pivotal role in Mauritius' external trade, with the EU remaining one of the country's main export destinations and an important supplier of key products, including food, machinery and equipment.

This preferential trade relationship has been built over the last decades and is currently governed by the current EU-ESA Interim Economic Partnership Agreement, which grants duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market for Mauritian exports. At the same time, the Agreement provides a preferential market access framework for EU products to enter on the Mauritian and other ESA markets.

## Mauritius Trade Snapshot with EU (2025)

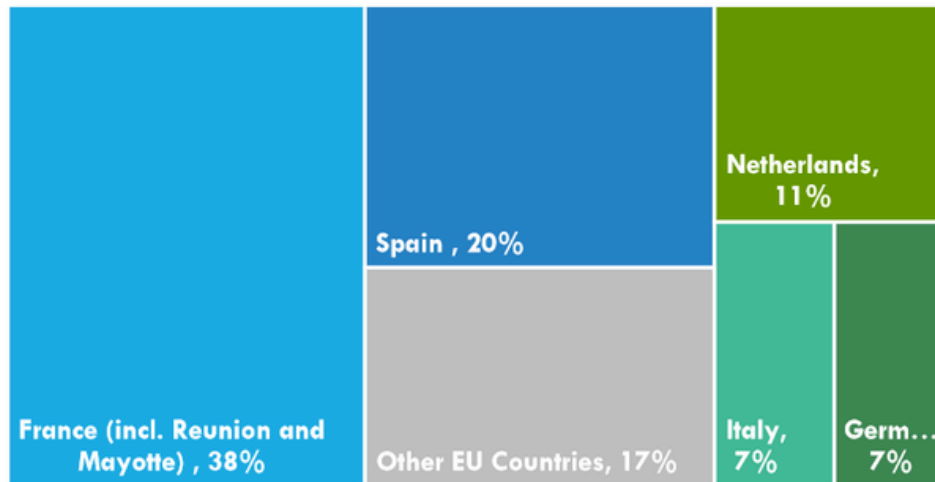
Exports to EU <b>MUR 26.3 B</b>	EU Share of Total Exports <b>35%</b>	Imports from EU <b>MUR 57.1 B</b>	EU Share of Total Imports <b>18%</b>
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## Evolution of Exports and Imports between EU and Mauritius (2016-2025)



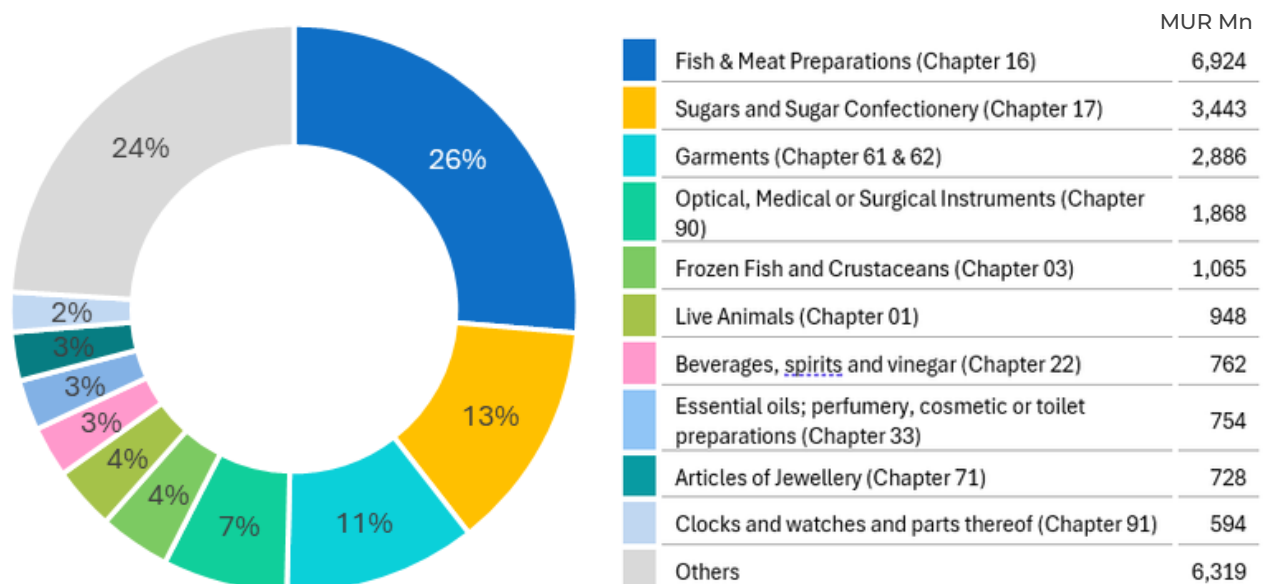
# EXPORT PROFILE

Exports to EU: Country Share (2025)



Mauritius' exports remain highly concentrated in a few EU countries, namely France, Spain, Netherlands, Italy and Germany, where these top five countries already represented 83% of total exports to EU in 2025. While France remains the leading destination for Mauritian exports within the EU, its share is gradually declining. At the same time, exports have increasingly reached other member states, including Germany, Ireland, Sweden, and Finland, reflecting a gradual diversification of market access.

Main Product Categories Exported to EU (2025)



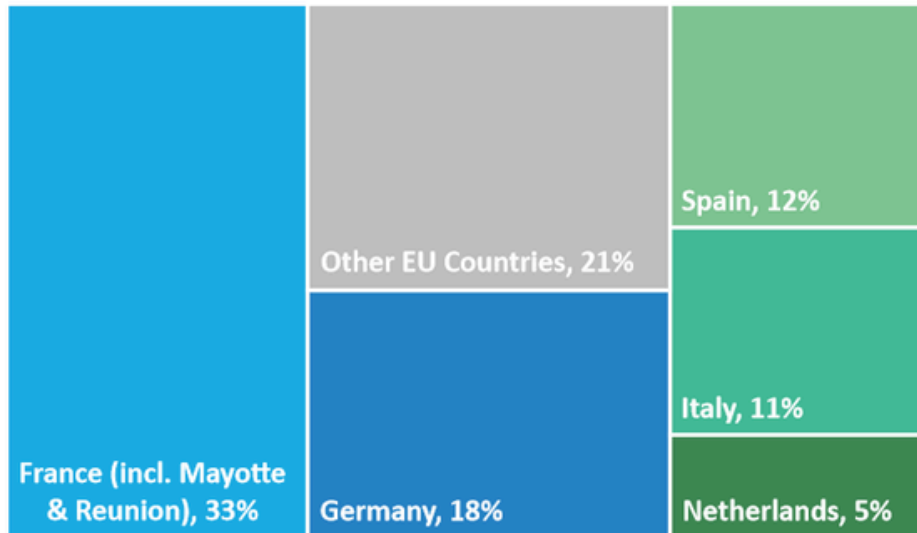
The EU has consistently been the primary export destination for Mauritius in key product categories such as fish products, cane sugar, and medical instruments. The composition of exports to the EU is markedly different from exports to other regions, targeting a consumer segment with relatively higher purchasing power and a preference for value-added products.

## Top Products Exported to EU (2025)

HS Code (4-digit)	Product Descriptions	Value Exported to EU (MUR Mn)	Share to Total Exports to EU	Main Export Markets
1604	Prepared or Preserved Fish	6,920	26%	Spain (42%), Netherlands (30%), Italy (8%)
1701	Cane or beet sugar	3,437	13%	France (21%), Belgium (16%), Spain (14%)
9018	Medical Instruments and Appliances	1,608	6%	France (89%), Germany (9%)
0106	Other live animals	948	4%	Spain (59%), France (35%)
6203	Men's or boys' suits	770	3%	Italy (37%); Netherlands (26%); Spain (12%)
0303	Frozen fish	656	2%	Spain (90%), Portugal (8%), Italy (1%)
3303	Perfumes and toilet waters	493	2%	Spain (53%), France (19%), Netherlands (15%)
6109	T-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted	479	2%	France (45%), Germany (22%), Reunion (18%)
6204	Women's or girls' suits, ensembles	468	2%	Germany (41%), Italy (21%), Reunion (14%)
9113	Watch straps, watch bands and watch bracelets, and parts thereof	409	2%	France (100%)
7404	Copper waste and scrap	403	2%	Germany (95%), Netherlands (5%)
4202	Cases/bags	387	1%	France (83%), Reunion (12%)
7102	Diamonds, whether or not worked, but not mounted or set	368	1%	Belgium (99%), Italy (1%)
0302	Fish, fresh or chilled, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat	330	1%	Italy (44%), Spain (40%)
6110	Jerseys, pullovers, cardigans, waistcoats, knitted or crocheted	314	1%	France (55%), Reunion (9%), Belgium (9%)
9506	Articles and equipment for general physical exercise (re-exports)	299	1%	Reunion (67%), Ireland (33%)
3004	Medicaments (re-exports)	293	1%	Belgium (68%), Czech Rep (20%)
2208	Undenatured ethyl alcohol	290	1%	Netherlands (71%), France (16%)
1902	Instant noodles	265	1%	France (45%), Ireland (30%)
3304	Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin	249	1%	France (54%), Denmark (30%)

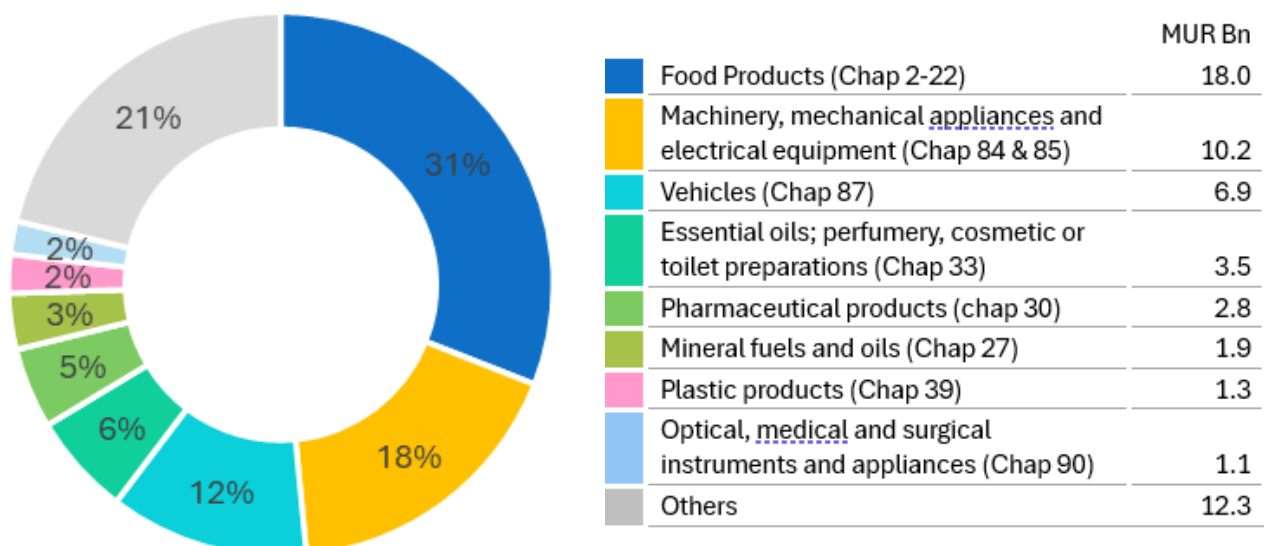
# IMPORT PROFILE

Imports from EU : Country Share (2025)



Mauritius' imports from the European Union remain highly concentrated in a limited number of member states, with the top five suppliers accounting for approximately 79% of total imports from the bloc in 2025. While traditional partners continue to dominate trade flows, imports from countries such as Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Sweden, and Romania have recorded notable growth in recent years.

Main Product Categories Imported from EU (2025)



Imports from the European Union are primarily composed of higher-value manufactured goods, including machinery, transport equipment, pharmaceutical products, electrical machinery, and industrial inputs. These products are essential to Mauritius' productive capacity, infrastructure development, and consumer market. Mauritius also imports food products from the EU region, representing some 31% of total imports from EU in 2025.

## Top Products Imported from EU (2025)

HS Code (4-digit)	Product Descriptions	Value Imported from EU (MUR Mn)	Share to Total Imports from EU	Main Countries of Import
8703	Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons	5,252	9%	Germany (77%), Slovakia (7%)
0303	Frozen fish	4,089	7%	Spain (75%), France (22%)
3004	Medicaments	2,548	4%	France (34%), Germany (25%)
2710	Petroleum Oils and Oils	1,736	3%	Netherlands (61%), Denmark (20%)
1001	Wheat and meslin	1,625	3%	France (93%), Lithuania (7%)
8517	Telephone sets	1,369	2%	France (96%), Ireland (1%)
3303	Perfumes and toilet waters	1,359	2%	France (54%), Spain (36%)
1905	Bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits and other bakers' wares	1,064	2%	France (36%), Belgium (13%)
1806	Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa	1,039	2%	Italy (33%), France (23%)
3304	Beauty or make-up preparations and preparations for the care of the skin	1,021	2%	France (57%), Italy (22%)
2402	Tobacco and tobacco products	857	2%	Lithuania (72%), Poland (22%)
2106	Food preparations not elsewhere specified or included	844	1%	France (39%), Ireland (13%)
8422	Dish washing machines, cleaning machinery	800	1%	Germany (78%), Italy (9%)
0406	Cheese and curd	781	1%	France (43%), Denmark (23%)
1901	Malt extract	764	1%	Poland (43%), France (41%)
2309	Preparations of a kind used in animal feeding	717	1%	France (45%), Portugal (43%)
2204	Wine of fresh grapes	697	1%	France (87%), Italy (8%)
8471	Automatic data processing machines	653	1%	France (50%), Ireland (17%), Poland (16%)
6907	Ceramic flags and paving	550	1%	Spain (56%), Italy (42%)
9403	Other furniture and parts thereof	531	1%	France (34%), Italy (32%)



# DEEPENED EU-ESA ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Deepened EPA significantly expands the scope of cooperation between the Parties through new commitments in the following areas:

- Trade in Goods and Rules of Origin
- Trade in Services, Investment Facilitation and Digital Trade
- Trade and Sustainable Development
- Economic Development Cooperation
- Competition Policy
- Transparency in Government Procurement
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Dispute Settlement and Institutional Arrangements

The Deepened EPA modernises the existing framework for trade in goods and updates the rules of origin, which provides additional flexibilities, particularly with respect to cumulation, while maintaining the quota for non-originating tuna. Enhanced provisions on customs and trade facilitation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical barriers to trade are expected to reduce non-tariff barriers, increase regulatory transparency, and improve the efficiency and predictability of bilateral trade.

The Agreement also introduces an ambitious framework for trade in services, investment facilitation and digital trade. These provisions aim to improve market access, enhance transparency and regulatory cooperation, and facilitate cross-border business activities. The investment facilitation chapter establishes measures to create a more predictable and business-friendly environment, thereby encouraging investment flows and fostering stronger commercial partnerships between the Parties.

In the area of intellectual property, the Agreement strengthens the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, including geographical indications. This is expected to provide enhanced recognition and protection for Mauritian products with distinctive geographical characteristics, such as Mauritius Unrefined Sugar and Rhum de Maurice, thereby supporting their commercial value and international market positioning.

Overall, the Deepened EPA represents a significant evolution of the EU–ESA trade relationship, moving beyond a predominantly goods-based arrangement towards a comprehensive and modern economic partnership.

# TRADE IN GOODS

The new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) preserves duty free quota free market access that has been central to trade relations between the EU and the ESA countries. On the other hand, recognising the need to protect sensitive sectors, ESA States have maintained a limited exclusion list of products from tariff liberalisation.

The EPA introduces simplified and more transparent rules of origin, enabling products to qualify as originating either through being wholly obtained or sufficiently transformed according to a single set of product-specific rules. Enhanced cumulation provisions provide greater sourcing flexibility by allowing the use of materials originating from a wider range of countries, including other ACP EPA signatories, EU Overseas Countries and Territories, beneficiaries of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences and countries with trade agreements with the EU.

The Agreement also preserves existing derogations for processed tuna, maintaining annual quotas of 8,000 tonnes for preserved tuna and 2,000 tonnes for tuna loins, while introducing new derogations for products such as salted fish, bed linen and furnishing articles. In addition, it strengthens cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade, with a focus on transparency, alignment with international standards and technical assistance to support compliance with EU requirements.



Enhanced  
Rules of  
Origin



Improved  
Customs  
Procedures



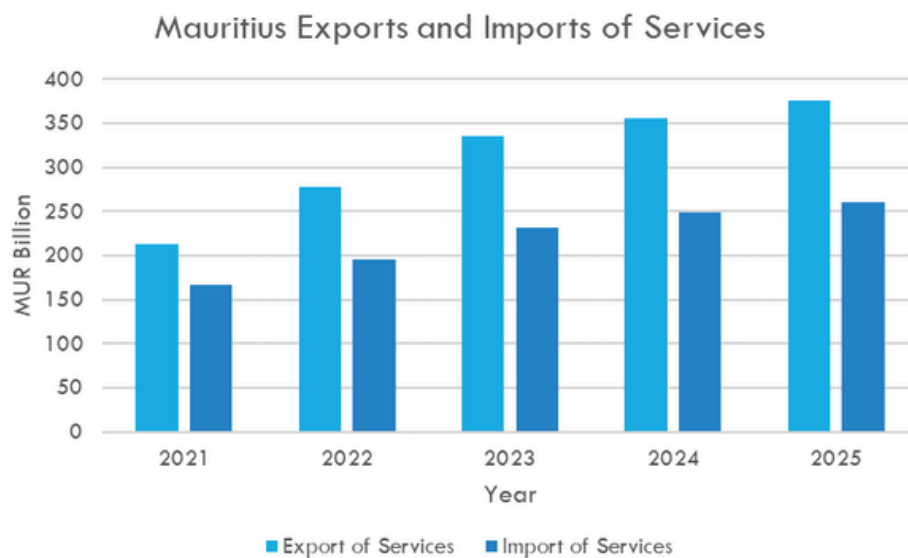
Facilitated  
Standards  
Compliance



Simplified Procedures  
for Authorised  
Economic Operators

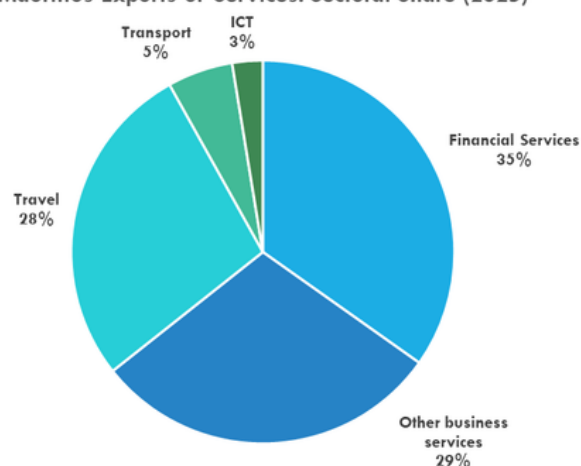
# SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

Trade in Services and Investment are important new areas covered under the Deepened EPA, reflecting the increasing role of services, technology and investment in the economic development of ESA countries, including Mauritius.



Export of services have increased steadily from 2022 onwards. By 2025, exports had reached a record high, demonstrating the resilience and growing importance of the services sector to the Mauritian economy.

**Mauritius Exports of Services: Sectoral Share (2025)**



# SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

The new EPA introduces a modern and comprehensive framework for trade in services and investment, aimed at reducing barriers and creating new opportunities for businesses operating across borders. The Agreement improves market access by limiting restrictions on the number of service suppliers, the value of transactions, service output and other regulatory requirements that may constrain trade.

The EPA is also strengthened by sector-specific provisions to ensure that service suppliers face regulatory certainty and are not subjected to discriminatory practices.

Commitments cover more than 100 service subsectors. Key areas include:



Distribution & Logistics



Finance



ICT



Manufacturing



Professional



Auditing & Accounting



Health



Travel



Legal



Construction

## TRADE IN SERVICES FACILITATION

**Enquiry and information mechanisms** aimed at improving transparency and facilitating trade in services are established. Through dedicated contact points, interested service suppliers will be able to access information on licensing and qualification requirements, applicable procedures, and technical standards relevant to their activities in the EU market.

**Regulatory best practices** aimed at making administrative procedures more efficient and predictable for businesses are promoted. This includes the promotion of single application systems, the processing of applications within reasonable timeframes, and the establishment of procedures for the review, resubmission or appeal of administrative decisions.

# INVESTMENT FACILITATION

In the area of investment, the EPA aims to facilitate business establishment and expansion by addressing barriers related to foreign ownership, performance requirements, technology transfer obligations and other investment-related restrictions. These provisions are intended to create a more predictable and transparent business environment, encourage investment flows and strengthen commercial partnerships between the Parties.

**Improved access to information** for investors and businesses through the publication and sharing of investment-related laws, regulations and procedures with government agencies, investors and other interested stakeholders. This includes information relating to company registration, access to utilities, property acquisition, construction permits, insolvency procedures, capital movements, currency convertibility, taxation, access to finance and available investment incentives.

**Facilitated business linkages and investment opportunities** through the sharing of information on domestic suppliers and business partners. This would help investors identify potential local collaborators, suppliers and service providers.

**Investment facilitation focal points** or similar mechanisms that will serve as first points of contact for investors regarding measures affecting investment are created. For businesses, these mechanisms should contribute to greater clarity, improved coordination with public authorities and a more efficient investment facilitation process.



# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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The effective protection and commercialisation of intellectual property (IP) are increasingly important drivers of innovation, product differentiation and value creation. For export-oriented enterprises, intellectual property can play a key role in enhancing competitiveness, supporting brand development and facilitating access to higher-value market segments.

In addition to reinforcing traditional forms of intellectual property protection, the EPA introduces provisions relating to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. These provisions recognise the economic value of indigenous assets and may support opportunities in sectors linked to biodiversity, cultural industries and the sustainable use of natural resources.

A notable feature of the Agreement is its strengthened framework for the protection of Geographical Indications (GIs). The recent recognition of Mauritius Unrefined Sugar and Rhum de Maurice demonstrates the potential for Mauritian products with unique characteristics and heritage to build stronger market recognition and differentiation.

The effective integration of intellectual property into business strategies can support export growth by helping enterprises protect and commercialise their innovations, brands and unique products in both Mauritius and the European Union.



# TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainability has become an increasingly important component of international trade policy. As consumers, investors and regulators place greater emphasis on environmental and social responsibility, trade agreements are evolving to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The EPA strengthens cooperation among the Parties on trade-related aspects of environmental protection, climate change and labour standards, while reaffirming their commitments under key international agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the Montreal Protocol.

The Agreement promotes the sustainable management of natural resources through provisions relating to biodiversity, forestry and marine biological resources. In addition, the Parties commit to encouraging trade and investment in goods and services that contribute to environmental objectives, including climate-related technologies, environmental solutions and energy-efficient products and services.

Recognising the broader role of business in sustainable development, the EPA also addresses issues such as gender equality and responsible business conduct. These provisions reflect the growing importance of sustainability considerations in global value chains and international markets.

European green and sustainable initiatives are driving a new generation of regulatory requirements that are increasingly shaping global trade. As these initiatives are progressively implemented, exporters seeking access to the EU market are required to comply with more stringent sustainability, environmental and traceability standards.

The EPA provides an important framework for enhanced cooperation, capacity building and technical support to help businesses adapt to evolving market requirements and standards, thereby supporting their continued access to the EU market.



Sustainability,  
Recyclability  
and Eco-  
Design



Deforestation  
Free and  
Traceable



Carbon  
Border  
Adjustment  
Mechanism



Corporate  
Sustainability  
Due Diligence  
Directive



Digital  
Product  
Passport

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is one of the principal objectives of the Economic Partnership Agreement. From the Cotonou Agreement up to the current trade regime, ESA countries have benefited from various types of support to ensure their development and participation in global and bilateral trade.

The EPA's economic development framework aims to strengthen the competitiveness of ESA economies and support the effective implementation of the Agreement. It promotes economic diversification, productive capacity, digitalisation, trade development and investment attraction to drive structural transformation.

The framework also supports stronger trade and investment policies, sustainable development objectives, and improved regulatory environments. By fostering deeper regional integration and closer economic ties across Africa, it seeks to enhance trade, investment and economic cooperation within the ESA region and beyond.

In light of the rapidly evolving global trading environment, driven by new regulatory requirements, technological developments and shifting consumer patterns, the EPA introduces mechanisms that allow the Agreement to evolve alongside these changing trade realities. Regular dialogue, monitoring and review processes are intended to ensure that the Agreement continues to address the needs of the market and reflects developments affecting the effective implementation of the agreement.





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