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EU Includes India in Revised Aquaculture Export List -- Seafood Trade and AMR Compliance

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EU Includes India in Revised Aquaculture Export List -- Seafood Trade and AMR Compliance

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WHY IN NEWS:

The **European Union** included India in its **revised draft list of countries permitted to export aquaculture products** to the EU from September 2026, under EC Delegated Regulation **(EU) 2023/905** governing antimicrobial medicinal products in food. India had been excluded from an October 2024 EU draft list due to **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) compliance concerns**; its reinclusion follows sustained technical engagement by the Ministry of Commerce and MPEDA. PIB announced the development on May 14, 2026. The EU is India's **third-largest seafood export market** (USD 1.593 billion, 18.94% of total export value in 2025-26).

INDIA'S SEAFOOD EXPORT SECTOR – OVERVIEW

India is one of the world's leading seafood exporters:

INDICATOR	DATA
Total seafood exports 2025-26	~USD 8.28 billion
Volume	~1.7 million metric tonnes
Top product	Frozen shrimp/vannamei (60%+ of export value)
Largest export destination	USA (~25% of value)
2nd largest	China (~20%)
3rd largest	EU (~18.94%) – USD 1.593 billion
Year-on-year EU export growth	41.45%
Nodal regulatory body	MPEDA (Marine Products Export Development Authority)

MPEDA

FEATURE	DETAIL
Full name	Marine Products Export Development Authority
Established	1972 under MPEDA Act, 1972
Ministry	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Headquarters	Kochi, Kerala
Role	Registration, quality control, market development, subsidy/grant schemes for seafood exporters
EIC	Export Inspection Council – separate body that issues Certificates of Inspection (CoI) for seafood

THE EU REGULATORY TRIGGER – AMR AND AQUACULTURE

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in Aquaculture

Aquaculture (fish and shrimp farming) has faced global scrutiny over the use of **antimicrobials (antibiotics and antifungals)** to:

- Prevent disease outbreaks in high-density farm ponds
- Treat infections in farmed fish and shrimp

The problem: **overuse or improper use of antibiotics** in aquaculture leads to:

- 1 **Antibiotic residues** in exported seafood (health risk for consumers)
- 2 **Antimicrobial Resistant bacteria** – bacteria that develop resistance to antibiotics (AMR)
- 3 AMR is a global public health emergency; WHO has declared it one of the top 10 global health threats

EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/905

This regulation:

- Lists countries that are **permitted to export aquaculture products** to the EU based on their domestic regulatory systems for antimicrobial medicinal products
- Requires exporting countries to demonstrate that their **aquaculture farms are free from certain antimicrobials** (especially critically important antimicrobials like fluoroquinolones and colistin)
- Countries not on the list **cannot export aquaculture products** to the EU from September 2026

India’s exclusion (October 2024 draft): The EU had flagged concerns about India’s monitoring systems for antimicrobial residues in aquaculture. MPEDA and the Commerce Ministry engaged in **bilateral technical dialogue** with the EU to demonstrate compliance improvements.

India’s reinclusion (May 2026): India submitted evidence of strengthened AMR surveillance, improved testing infrastructure at MPEDA-accredited labs, and updated National Residue Monitoring Plan (NRMP) protocols.

INDIA-EU TRADE – BROADER CONTEXT

FEATURE	DETAIL
India-EU bilateral trade (2025-26)	~USD 140 billion
EU rank as India’s trading partner	2nd largest (after USA)
India-EU FTA negotiations	Under way since 2022 restart; 10th round completed 2025
Key Indian exports to EU	Textiles, pharma, seafood, engineering goods, chemicals
Key EU exports to India	Machinery, aircraft, chemicals, luxury goods
EU market access architecture	Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) – India graduated from EU GSP effective January 1, 2026 (Regulation EU 2025/1909); now competes at MFN tariff rates

India’s GSP Graduation

India’s **graduation from EU GSP effective January 1, 2026** (under EU Regulation 2025/1909, adopted September 2025) removed preferential tariff rates for Indian exports to the EU. The seafood sector now competes at **MFN (Most Favoured Nation) tariff rates** – making non-tariff compliance issues (like AMR) even more critical to maintain market access.

FOOD SAFETY REGULATORY ARCHITECTURE – INDIA

BODY	ROLE
FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India)	Sets maximum residue limits (MRLs) for antibiotics in seafood for domestic market
MPEDA	Export certification, NRMP (National Residue Monitoring Plan) for seafood
EIC (Export Inspection Council)	Issues Certificates of Inspection for export consignments
CIBA (Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture)	R&D on disease management, antibiotic alternatives (probiotics, vaccines)

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

- India-EU trade relationship; non-tariff barriers; AMR as a trade issue
- India's GSP graduation (effective January 2026) and its implications for export competitiveness
- India-EU FTA negotiations status

GS Paper 3 – Economy

- India's seafood export sector; MPEDA role
- Antimicrobial Resistance as an economic and health challenge
- Food safety standards and export compliance

Keywords: MPEDA, EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/905, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), aquaculture exports, EU seafood market, National Residue Monitoring Plan, FSSAI, EIC, India-EU trade, GSP graduation.

Marine Products Export Development Authority; 1972; under MoCI; HQ Kochi; registers exporters, operates NRMP, subsidises infrastructure; partners with CIBA, CIFE, NIFPHATT for quality research.

WHO Global Action Plan on AMR (2015); India National Action Plan on AMR (2017-2021, extended); India is one of the world's largest consumers of antibiotics in livestock and aquaculture – a recognised AMR hotspot.

Frozen shrimp (*L. vannamei*, *P. monodon*) – 60%+ of value; frozen fish (ribbonfish, squid, cuttlefish); dried fish; live/chilled seafood.

EU unilateral trade preferences for developing countries; India graduated from EU GSP effective January 1, 2026 (Regulation EU 2025/1909); now competes at standard MFN tariffs for most goods.

Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture; ICAR institute; Chennai; researches shrimp/crab farming, disease management, antibiotic alternatives.

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