



European  
Commission

## EU Trade and Development Policy

# 10 ways the EU supports the world's Least Developed Countries

Trade



**The EU is the world's biggest economy and its biggest exporter and importer.**

**By contrast, the world's poorest states – the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) - account for:**

- **less than 2% of the global economy**
- **just 1% of global trade in goods**
- **less than 1% of global trade in services.**

**Trade has great potential to help them grow.**

**But so far LDCs have struggled to export and reap the benefits of international trade.**

**That's why we're committed to helping them do so.**

## 1. Our doors are open - no customs taxes, no quotas



The EU is the world's most open market. For LDC exporters that means **no taxes** to pay at EU customs, and **no limits** on how much they can export.

And that applies to **whatever product or service** they offer, with just **one exception - arms and ammunition.**

## 2. We help LDCs export more

When it comes to Aid for Trade to LDCs, the **EU provides more** than any other country or region – **almost €3 bn** in 2013.



That money **helps LDCs develop** the things they need to compete and export around the world, like roads, bridges and ports.

# 10 ways in which EU trade and

## 3. We offer LDCs more than other developing countries



The EU's trade policy **treats LDCs differently** than other developing countries, by giving LDCs **better access** – full free access.

That gives LDCs **more space** to export to the EU than bigger, emerging economies – giving them a better chance to grow.

## 4. We help LDCs export more in services (not just in goods)



The EU **makes it easier** for businesses in LDCs to **sell services** like engineering, management consulting, and computer services in the EU than for firms from other countries.

That in turn helps LDCs develop their services sector – a vital part of any modern economy.

## 5. We're backing special rules to help LDCs innovate



If LDCs are to grow and produce more, they need **access to new technology**. So they want an opt-out from World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules on intellectual property, like patents and designs – which can block that access.

We're **backing LDCs'** demand. In fact we've even proposed a **permanent opt-out for medicines**, so patients in LDCs can afford the drugs they need.

# development policy supports LDCs

## 6. We're enabling LDCs to make trade a top priority



The EU supports LDC governments' efforts to **make trade a central** part of their plans to develop their countries.

And in 2015, the EU pledged another **€10m** to a programme specially designed to help them do so.

## 7. We're supporting LDC farmers



Often, richer countries **subsidise their farmers** to export, meaning that farmers in poorer states **struggle to compete** - and can even go out of business altogether.

In 2015 the EU and Brazil tabled a deal at the WTO that would **scrap these unfair export subsidies** to farmers.

## 8. We're backing fair trade



EU trade deals include measures specially designed to promote **fair and ethical trade** in products which many LDCs produce, including cocoa, coffee and other foods.

The EU also **funds projects** like one run by the International Trade Centre, a joint WTO-UN body. It **trains small-scale farmers** in LDCs to produce their crops in a more sustainable way.

## 9. We're helping make life easier for LDC exporters



The EU is a champion of the WTO's **Trade Facilitation Agreement**.

This will make it **much easier and cheaper** to clear goods through customs - giving a much-needed boost to exporters from the world's poorest countries.

The EU has pledged **€400m** over the next five years to help make the deal a reality. LDCs will get top priority.

## 10. We stand up for LDCs on the world stage



The EU is a leading member of the world's **international organisations**, like the WTO, the UN, and UNCTAD. In each one we make sure LDCs' needs get **top priority**.

We also encourage more advanced developing countries to **open up** their markets to LDCs and **provide finance** to help them develop.



In 2015, we signed up to the UN's  
17 Sustainable Development Goals  
(SDGs).

These include pledges to end  
poverty and deliver economic  
growth by 2030.

But the EU has gone  
further still in our own  
trade and development policy  
– including the Trade for All  
strategy we launched in 2015.

Here are the top 10 ways  
EU trade and development policy  
is helping LDCs harness trade  
for their own development.

**More information:**  
**[ec.europa.eu/trade](http://ec.europa.eu/trade)**  
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