European Commission

25 YEARS
2001 – 2026

The EU's Trade Offer for Developing Countries

25 years of Everything But Arms in numbers



European Commission ·
Directorate-General for
Trade and Economic Security

Publication 2026 · Trade data 2002 to 2025

About this booklet



This booklet provides an overview in numbers of the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) as of September 2026.



1971
EU GSP created



25 years
Everything But Arms



1 January 2027
The new GSP Regulation

How to read the numbers

GSP-eligible imports	EU imports of goods that theoretically qualify for trade under a GSP preference, for that country and that product. Goods that already enter duty-free from every country do not count: there is no duty to remove.
Preferences used	Imports on which the GSP preference was actually claimed at the border. Where this booklet says a beneficiary country 'used' a value, it means the customs value of those goods in euros.
Preference utilisation rate	The ratio of imports from a country that used the preferences to the imports that were theoretically eligible for GSP preferences. It measures the rate of utilisation, not the value of the duty waived.
Duty savings or duty waived	The import duty not collected by the EU because a GSP preference was claimed.
GSP section / product groups	The product groupings the GSP Regulation itself uses, built from the chapters of the Common Customs Tariff. This booklet names the goods rather than the section codes.

Two things to keep in mind

- Values are in current euros. They are not adjusted for inflation.
- The data include the UK before 2021, and exclude the UK from 2021 onwards.

Sources: Trade figures: Eurostat COMEXT, EU trade since 1988 by tariff regime, extracted September 2026; Legislation: Regulation (EU) 2026/1395 and Regulation (EU) No 978/2012; Country programme figures, employment estimates and company information: the GSP Hub, the European External Action Service and DG TRADE.

Three entries into the EU market

WHAT MAKES THE EU TRADE OFFER FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES UNIQUE

The widest range of goods

Least-developed countries (LDCs) have exported a wider range of goods to the EU under Everything But Arms (EBA) than under any comparable scheme offered by other countries or blocs.

The largest savings

Everything But Arms delivers the largest duty savings in absolute terms of any comparable scheme, measured against those of the United States, Japan and Canada, according to UNCTAD*.

The most reliable

Everything But Arms applies automatically to every least-developed country and is granted with no end date. Comparable schemes elsewhere need to be periodically renewed, which leaves a business guessing whether the terms will still hold in five years. EBA does not expire: a company can commit and invest in the long term.

The EU offers three preferential arrangements, presented below. Each of them responds to different development needs. A country benefits from one of them at a time. They differ in how much duty is removed, which countries qualify, and what conditions need to be met.



EVERYTHING BUT ARMS for LDCs

- **0 duty, No quota** — All products except arms and ammunition
- **UN LDC** classification
- **3 years** Transition period after LDC graduation
- **46** countries benefiting
- **EUR 33.2 bn** used in 2025
- Valid until: **No expiry date**



STANDARD GSP

- **26%** tariff free, **40%** tariffs reduced
- Low-income and lower-middle-income
- **11** countries benefiting
- **EUR 19.2 bn** used in 2025
- Valid until: **31 December 2036**



GSP+

- **66%** of EU tariff schedule lines are duty free
- Ratifying and implementing international conventions
- Countries have to apply and meet requirements
- **8** countries benefiting
- **EUR 12.5 bn** used in 2025
- Valid until: **31 December 2036**

* UNCTAD, The Generalized System of Preferences: How much does it matter for developing countries?, UNCTAD/DITC/TSCE/2023/1, 2023, p. vii.

The scheme covers

65 countries **6** regions **3.7 billion** people

More than a billion of them live in a least-developed country.



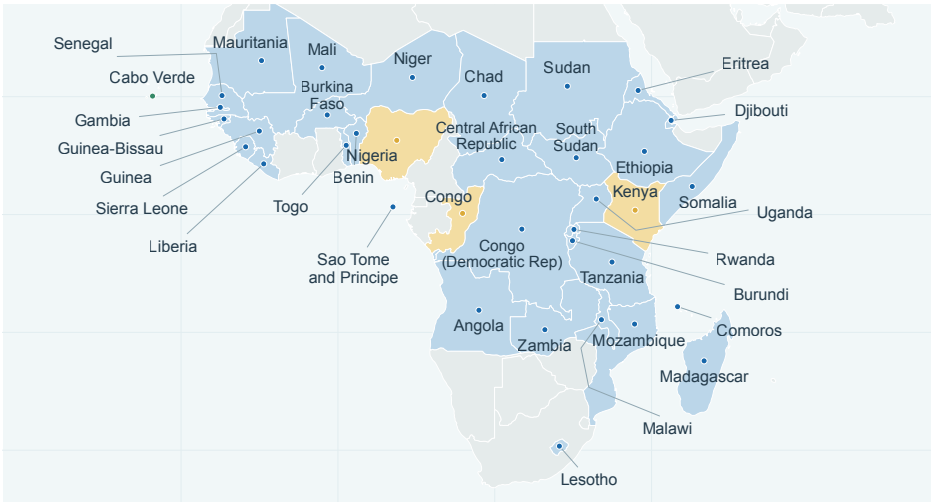
65 Countries | **46** EBA | **8** GSP+ | **11** Standard GSP

The 65 beneficiary countries, by region and arrangement

Sub-Saharan Africa

37 Countries — **33** EBA | **1** GSP+ | **3** Standard GSP

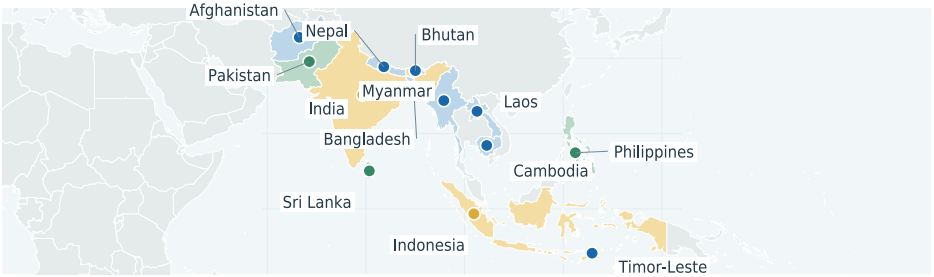
7.44 % share of the scheme



South & South-East Asia

13 Countries — **8** EBA | **3** GSP+ | **2** Standard GSP

91.26 % share of the scheme

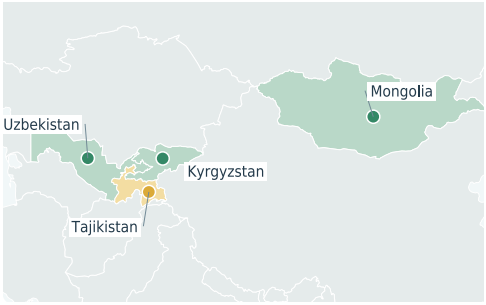


The other four regions

15 Countries

Central Asia & Mongolia

0.98 % share of the scheme

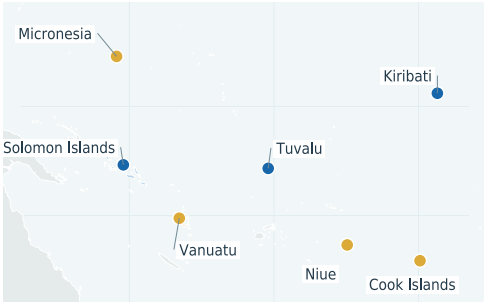


4 Countries

● **0** EBA ● **3** GSP+ ● **1** Standard GSP

Pacific

0.09 % share of the scheme



7 Countries

● **3** EBA ● **0** GSP+ ● **4** Standard GSP

Latin America & Caribbean

0.17 % share of the scheme

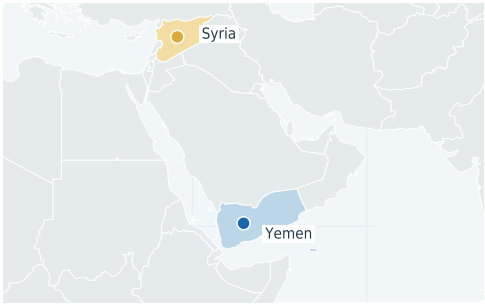


2 Countries

● **1** EBA ● **1** GSP+ ● **0** Standard GSP

Middle East & Other

0.06 % share of the scheme



2 Countries

● **1** EBA ● **0** GSP+ ● **1** Standard GSP

What the preferences are worth

EUR
5.4 billion
worth of EU import duties were waived for goods from GSP beneficiary countries in 2025

More than EUR
3.5 billion
of those benefited least-developed countries under Everything But Arms



What it is worth to one country

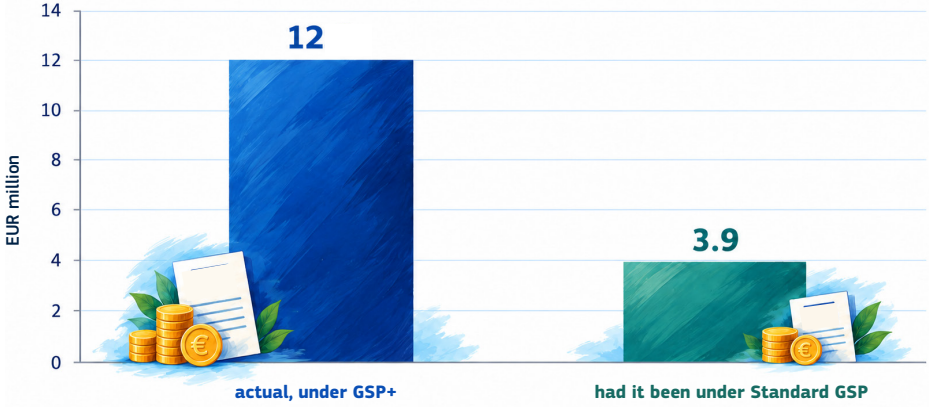
Cabo Verde is the only African country in GSP+. Between 2022 and 2024 its GSP+ status waived EUR 12 million of EU import tariffs. Standard GSP would have waived EUR 3.9 million. Being in GSP+ rather than Standard GSP represented EUR 8.1 million in extra savings to a country of about half a million people.

A development success story



Cabo Verde graduated from LDC status and from Everything But Arms. The country successfully applied and has benefitted from GSP+ since 2014, and has now reached upper-middle-income status according to the World Bank.

Cabo Verde: duty waived under GSP+ against Standard GSP, 2022 to 2024



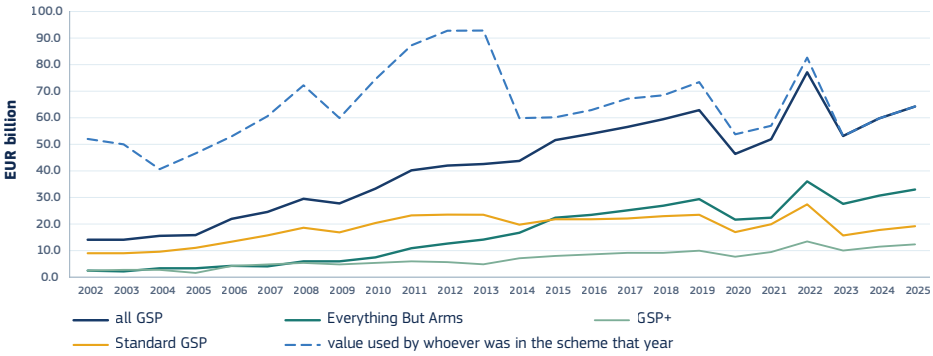
More than EUR 1 trillion



worth of goods entered the EU under GSP preferences from today's 65 beneficiary countries between 2002 and 2025. Of that, 39 % or EUR 0.4 trillion worth of goods entered under Everything But Arms.

Trade under the GSP is a small share of total EU trade, 2.6 % in 2025. For the 65 beneficiary countries themselves it is more than a third of everything they export to the EU. The preferences remained a factor of stability through the pandemic, the energy shock, and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Imports using GSP preferences, 2002 to 2025*

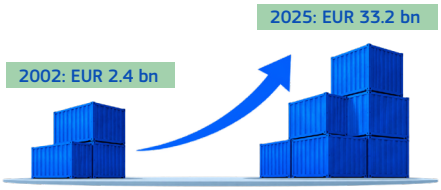


**This series follows today's 65 beneficiary countries back to 2002. The dashed line shows all of the scheme's beneficiary countries over time: in 2002 the scheme had 179 beneficiary countries and EUR 52 billion of goods used the preferences. The two lines converge in 2023, which is the first year in which the scheme had exactly the 65 countries it has today.*

Today the scheme has 65 beneficiary countries, as the others moved on to trade agreements of their own or grew out of eligibility. For these 65 countries the preference utilisation rate rose from 62.8 % in 2002 to 89.0 % in 2025.

14 times

the growth of Everything But Arms between 2002 and 2025, the fastest of the three arrangements.



In 2002, the first full year of EBA, the 65 countries in the GSP scheme today used preferences on EUR 14.2 billion of imported goods. In 2025 they used EUR 64.8 billion, four and a half times as much.

What products use the scheme

58.6 %

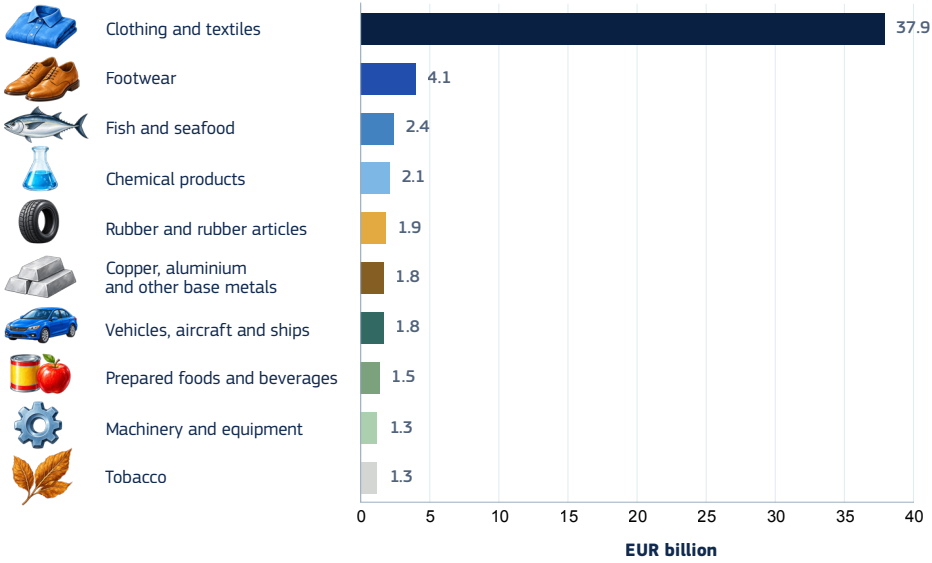
of GSP preferences in 2025 were used for clothing and textiles.



The scheme is not only about clothing: out of 35 product groups covered, 32 used the preferences in 2025, from fish and cut flowers to rubber, machinery and pharmaceuticals. Two other groups (pulp and recovered paper and works of art), already enter the EU duty-free from every country in the world. The last, arms and ammunition, is the only product group the scheme leaves out.

The scheme as a whole grew **4.5 times** between **2002 and 2025**. Clothing grew **5.9 times** and footwear **5.6 times**.

Preferences used by product group, 2025



The bars represent the top ten product groups and their share of all goods that entered the EU under a GSP preference in 2025.

Preference utilisation rate

89 %

of GSP-eligible imports entered the EU under a preferential arrangement in 2025

94.9 %

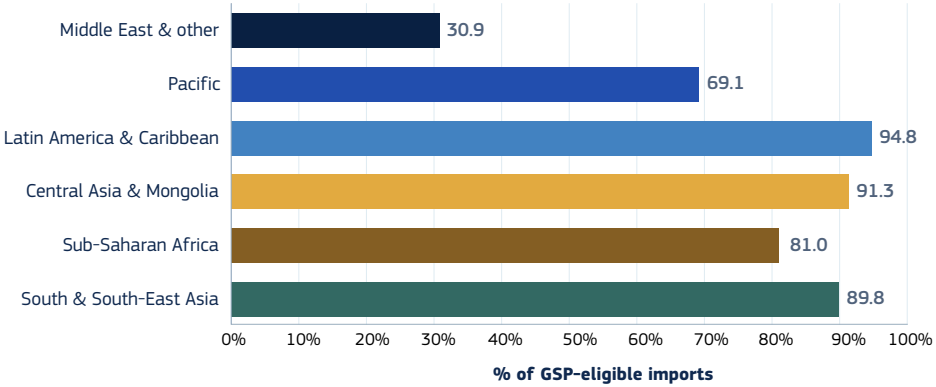
under Everything But Arms in 2025, the highest of the three arrangements



Where utilisation is highest

More than EUR 100 million of GSP-eligible imports into the EU come from 21 beneficiary countries. In 2025, ten of these 21 beneficiary countries used more than 95 % of what they qualified for, and 14 used more than 90 %. Some reach almost 100 % in a single product group: Ethiopia does so in cut flowers. Bangladesh, which has the largest trade flow in the scheme, claimed 96.3 % on EUR 21.1 billion of eligible trade.

Preference utilisation rate by region, 2025



Can the utilisation rate increase?

Yes! It depends on how well the scheme is known to exporters, administrative capacity at both ends of a shipment, and the presence of another EU trade arrangement that suits a particular consignment better.



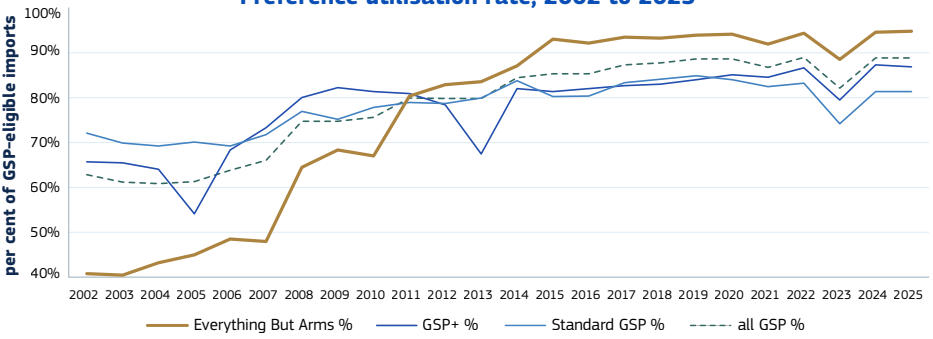
24 years of rising utilisation rates

41 % → 95 %

preference utilisation rate under Everything But Arms, 2002 to 2025. EBA began with the lowest preference utilisation rate of the three arrangements and now has the highest.



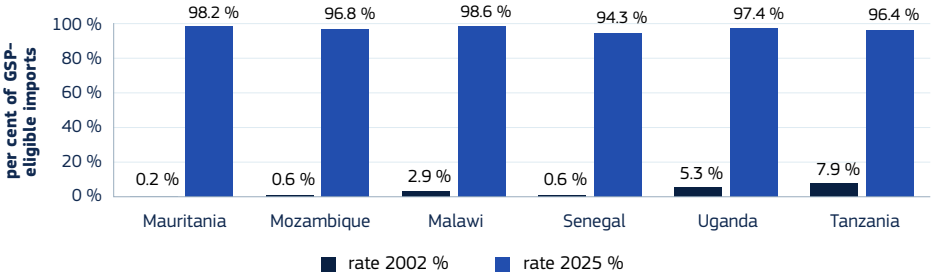
Preference utilisation rate, 2002 to 2025



Who increased their preference utilisation rate the most

Six countries, all of them LDCs in Africa and each with more than EUR 50 million of GSP-eligible trade today, claimed the preference on under 8 % of their eligible exports in 2002. In 2025 every one of them claimed it on more than 94 %.

Preference utilisation rate in 2002 and in 2025



GSP beneficiaries in Africa

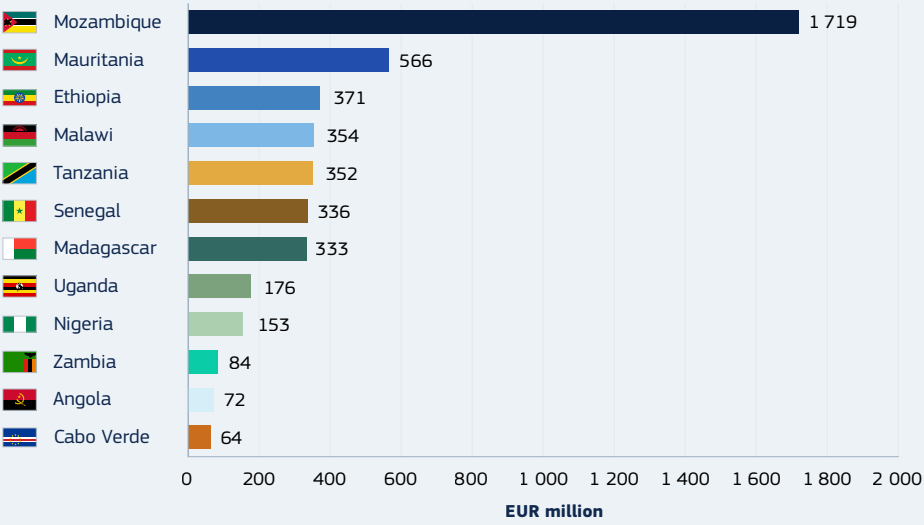
37 beneficiary countries

33 of them in EBA

EUR 4.82 billion of goods used a preference in 2025

7.4 % of the scheme by value

Preferences used by African beneficiary countries, 2025



Almost all exports of African GSP beneficiary countries to the EU are duty-free



In 2025 the 37 African GSP countries sold the EU EUR 45 billion of goods, and 97 % of it entered without paying duty. Most of this value is duty-free for every country in the world, whatever its origin (the so called Most Favoured Nation treatment). EUR 4.82 billion came in using GSP preferences. The 33 African countries using Everything But Arms claimed the preference on 91.1 % of everything that qualified, up from 88.9 % in 2024.

Exports from African GSP countries using the preferences have grown 43 times since 2002

In 2002 the 37 African countries that are beneficiaries today used preferences for a total of EUR 112 million of exports to the EU. In 2025 the amount was EUR 4.82 billion, 43 times as much. Mozambique alone is EUR 1.72 billion, a little over a third of the African total. Africa is one of the fastest-growing regions. There is more untapped potential – the region is still 7.4% of the trade under the scheme against 57% of the beneficiary countries.



What are the main products

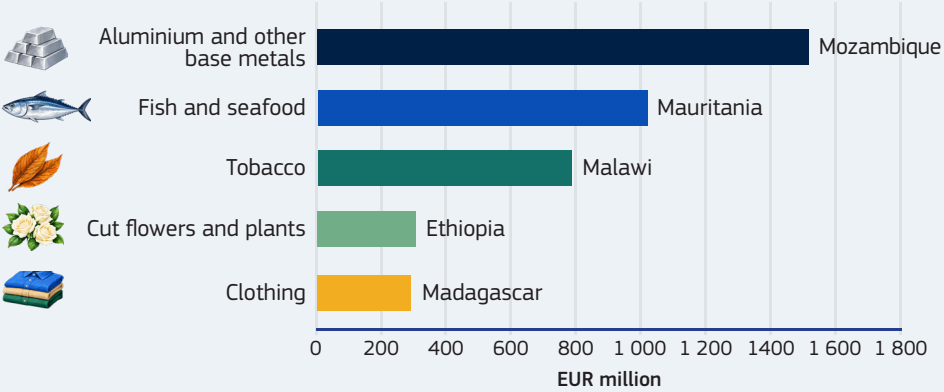
82 %

of African GSP trade is from the following five product groups



Top five product groups

What Africa sells under the scheme (EUR million used), 2025*



**The top exporter countries for each product group are listed on the right.*

The goods

Aluminium and other base metals are the largest at EUR 1.54 billion, almost all of it is aluminium from Mozambique. Fish and seafood follow at EUR 1.02 billion, led by Mauritania at EUR 529 million and Senegal at EUR 236 million. Tobacco is EUR 794 million, mostly from Malawi and Tanzania. Cut flowers and plants are EUR 318 million, and clothing EUR 299 million.

How much of it is claimed

91.6 % to 99.6 %
Preference utilisation rate
in cut flowers, tobacco, aluminium, fish and seafood

31 of 35
Product groups
entering the EU under a preference in 2025

Focus on Mauritania

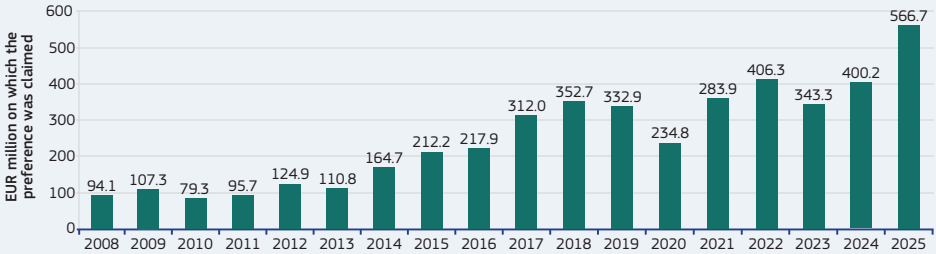
EUR 414 million

of frozen octopus sold to the EU in 2025 with a preference utilisation rate of

99.5 %



Mauritania: preferential exports to the EU, 2008 to 2025



Strong use of EBA preferences by Mauritania's exports of frozen octopus



In 2008, its first full year under EBA, Mauritania used the preference on **EUR 94 million** of exports to the EU. In 2025, the EU's preference-eligible imports from Mauritania amounted to around **EUR 577 million**, of which about **EUR 567 million**, **98 %**, actually used the preferences.

A quarter of what the EU buys

Mauritania is the EU's second largest supplier of frozen octopus after Morocco, at **24 %** of the EU's total imports of it. Without EBA, Mauritania's frozen octopus exports would face an EU tariff of **8 %.**



24 %
of EU frozen octopus imports



8 %
tariff without EBA

Focus on Ethiopia's growing garment sector

Single transformation under EBA

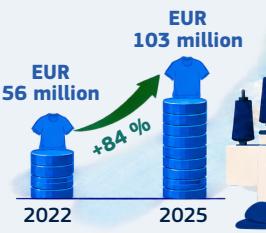


1 Fabric bought abroad
2 Cut and sewn in Ethiopia
3 Duty-free entry into the EU

Exporters in EBA beneficiary countries enjoy generous rules of origin

The single transformation rule allows EBA beneficiary countries to use imported fabrics, rather than imported yarns for producing fabrics domestically, for their garment production, and to export these duty-free to the EU.

The EU's preferential imports of garments from Ethiopia rose by 84 %.



In 2026 about
40 000
workers in Ethiopia
are employed in garment production.



Manufactured goods made in Africa use GSP preferences

Almost all furniture and toy exports from Rwanda, worth about EUR 0.8 million, and from Cabo Verde, worth about EUR 1 million, used GSP preferences in 2025.

In Madagascar, exports of machinery, furniture and toys have preference utilisation rates above 50 %, and Madagascar's duty-free exports of these products under EBA reached almost EUR 7 million in 2025.



What the EU does besides removing the duty

The GSP works together with EU support to drive industrialisation

The EU and its Member States are together the largest provider of Aid for Trade in the world, at **EUR 16.2 billion** in 2023.



Export expansion and value addition in Benin, driven by the EBA and aided by Support for Sustainable Development in Agriculture

The Program to Support Sustainable Development in the Agricultural Sector (PADDSA) provided budget support (EUR 55 million) for the implementation of agricultural sector reform capacity building and pilot actions for the sustainable development of agriculture (EUR 15 million).

Helped by the reforms supported by PADDSA, the value of agricultural exports increased from **EUR 220 million** in 2014 to **EUR 527 million** in 2020 (with 2020 figures down by 10 % compared to 2019 due to the pandemic).

Benin's exports to the EU in 2014 and in 2020, before and after the EU budget support





Products benefiting include cotton and cotton products, cashews, shea butter and pineapples. For example, EU pineapple imports from Benin passed from **EUR 0.9 million** in 2017 to **EUR 6.3 million** in 2025. Of particular interest is the cotton value chain: Benin is becoming a regional textile hub, exporting "Made in Benin" garments to the EU, driven by the local processing of cotton.



The regional balance is shifting



43 times

growth in the value of goods that used GSP preferences from Africa's 37 current beneficiary countries, 2002 to 2025

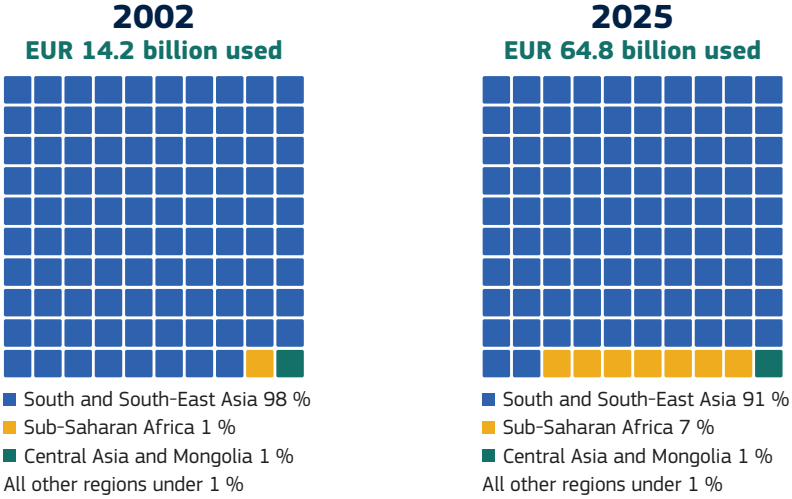
17 % → 51 %

2002 2025

Everything But Arms as a share of everything used under the scheme, 2002 to 2025

The scheme has moved steadily towards the countries it was designed to help most, as those countries have grown their exports and the larger, higher-income beneficiary countries have moved on.

The regional balance of trade under GSP



...in Asia



13 beneficiary countries

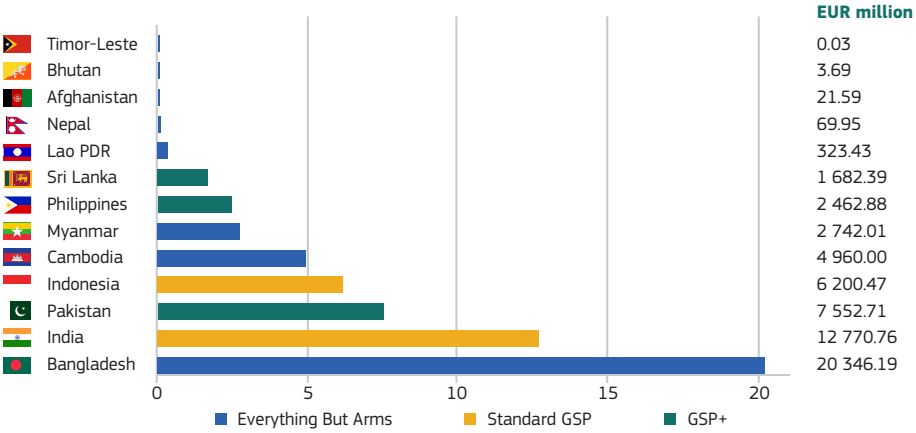
8 of them in EBA

EUR 59.1 billion of goods used a preference in 2025

91.3 % of the scheme by value

89.8 % utilisation rate across the region

Preferences used by Asian beneficiary countries



Where the scheme's volume is

The three largest users of the scheme are all here, and each uses a different arrangement: Bangladesh under EBA at EUR 20.3 billion, India under Standard GSP at EUR 12.8 billion, and Pakistan under GSP+ at EUR 7.5 billion.

And where the graduations are

Most of the countries approaching graduation are in this region, which is why the balance of the scheme will keep moving towards Africa. Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Nepal, Cambodia, India and Indonesia are scheduled for graduating. Each of them keeps its preferences through a transition period, and those leaving EBA can apply for GSP+.

The utilisation rates in Asia are high and the trade is specialised. Bangladesh used 96.3 % of what it qualified for and Pakistan 94.8 %, both on very large volumes, among the highest rates in the scheme at any scale.



What comes next

Duty waived in 2025 for the countries now in Everything But Arms, and what would have been waived on the same trade under GSP+ and under Standard GSP





A country that leaves EBA moves to another arrangement depending on its needs and interests, and which one it moves to makes a large difference to the duty the EU waives. Under GSP+ the duty waived for the countries now in EBA would have been broadly similar. However, GSP+ is applied for, not granted automatically. A country asks the European Commission for the arrangement, ratifies and effectively implements the 32 relevant conventions, and submits a plan of action. The European Commission supports beneficiary countries through that process.

The scheme aims to help countries reach a point where they no longer need its preferences. Graduating out of the scheme is an intended outcome.

Beneficiary countries move up in one of three ways



LDC graduation from the UN system
Countries graduating from LDC status retain EBA preferences for **three years**, preventing sudden tariff increases.



Economic graduation
Non-LDC countries reaching upper-middle-income status benefit from a **one-year transition** during which they continue benefiting from GSP.



Free Trade Agreements
Non-LDC countries concluding trade agreements with the EU receive a **two-year transition** to avoid preference gaps.

New GSP: What changes, and what does not



Regulation (EU) 2026/1395 was adopted on **17 June 2026** and applies from **1 January 2027** for ten years.

The three arrangements, the products covered and the transition periods are unchanged, and EBA still has no expiry date.

Conventions

Today
27

From 1 January 2027
32 five added, and Paris Agreement replaces the Kyoto Protocol

GSP+ economic conditions

Today
A diversification criterion and an import-share criterion

From 1 January 2027
The diversification criterion only

GSP+ application

Today
an application

From 1 January 2027
an application and a plan of action, published

Current GSP+ beneficiary countries

From 1 January 2027
must reapply; two-year transition to end 2028

Safeguards

Today
general, textiles, ethanol

From 1 January 2027
revised, plus an automatic rice mechanism

Monitoring

Today
GSP+ reporting

From 1 January 2027
strengthened, including enhanced engagement, with more transparency and civil society involvement

Grounds for withdrawal

Today
human and labour rights conventions

From 1 January 2027
all relevant conventions, adding environment, climate and good governance and readmission of own nationals, after a dedicated enhanced engagement of at least **12 months**; EBA countries have a further **24 months** before this condition can apply to them.

Five figures to remember



More than
EUR 1 trillion
of goods entered the EU under GSP preferences from today's 65 beneficiary countries between 2002 and 2025



EUR 64.8 billion
of goods used GSP preferences in 2025 alone, more than half of it from least-developed countries under Everything But Arms



41 % → 95 %
rise in the preference utilisation rate under Everything But Arms between 2002 and 2025



EUR 5.4 billion
of EU import duty reduced or waived in 2025, more than EUR 3.5 billion of it for least-developed countries



43 times
growth in the value of goods using GSP for Africa's 37 current beneficiary countries since 2002

Where to find out more

The GSP on the European Commission website

policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/generalised-scheme-preferences

The GSP Hub

gsphub.eu

Access2Markets

trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets

European Commission, Directorate-General for Trade and Economic Security.

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