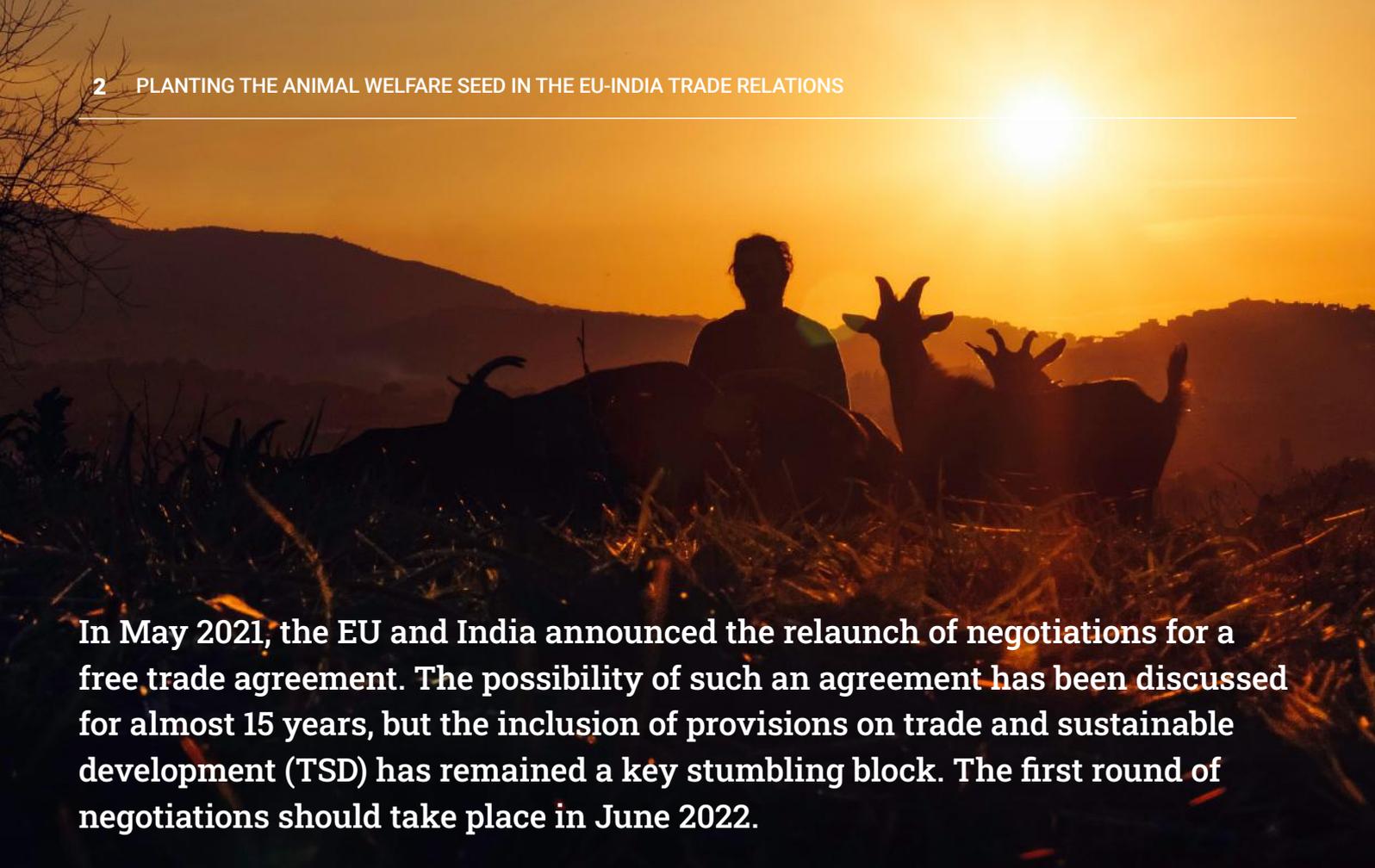


# PLANTING THE ANIMAL WELFARE SEED IN THE EU-INDIA TRADE RELATIONS

**EUROGROUP  
FOR  
ANIMALS**





**In May 2021, the EU and India announced the relaunch of negotiations for a free trade agreement. The possibility of such an agreement has been discussed for almost 15 years, but the inclusion of provisions on trade and sustainable development (TSD) has remained a key stumbling block. The first round of negotiations should take place in June 2022.**

At the occasion of an event held ahead of the EU-India 2021 Summit, key EU officials and stakeholders called for Brussels and Delhi to use this opportunity to start cooperating on animal welfare, and more generally on transitioning towards sustainable food systems.

Since the latest round of EU-India negotiations in 2013, the world has changed. The EU launched its European Green Deal and a new Trade Strategy in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic. Humanity increasingly faces challenges that threaten its survival, like the biodiversity and climate crises, the spread of zoonoses and the surge of antimicrobial resistance, and at the heart of these challenges often lies the food system, and animal welfare.

The Russian war on Ukraine, like the COVID-19 pandemic, has only confirmed that there is a need for Europe, and the world, to transition towards sustainable societies. Trade policy should not hinder this transition; rather it should contribute to it.

As the EU has announced its willingness to include a chapter on sustainable food systems - including provisions on animal welfare - in all future EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the relaunch of EU-India trade negotiations is a clear opportunity for the EU and India to start discussing animal welfare.

At the occasion of the 2020 EU-India Summit, Brussels and Delhi agreed a new Strategic Partnership for 2020-2025, under which they have committed to work together on biodiversity, antimicrobial resistance and strengthening food systems. This platform provides serious grounds to adopt an ambitious approach towards animal welfare in the context of the coming trade negotiations.

The EU is India's 3rd most important trade partner. In 2021, the EU and India exchanged €88 billion worth of goods including

€790 million worth of animal products. While, at the moment, the EU does not import a high volume of Indian animal products, trade agreements are negotiated to last, and the implementation of a trade agreement can lead to an increase in such imports, once sanitary criteria are satisfied.

The implementation of an FTA between the EU and India is thus likely to increase agricultural trade, and impact food production in both regions. Unconditional trade liberalisation has so far mostly favoured intensification of dairy and meat sectors, which is harmful not only to animals but also to the environment, biodiversity, public health and climate change. It also creates huge volumes of waste.



**MARIA DO CÉU ANTUNES**  
Portugal Minister of Agriculture

**“Why should animal welfare be discussed in the context of trade relations? Because we know that only by ensuring animal welfare can we guarantee efficient production, good animal and human health, and sustainable trade flows. The pandemic we are living through is the best example to illustrate the urgency of reflecting the need to ensure coherence between environmental, food and trade policies.”**



**MANUELA RIPA**  
Member of the  
European Parliament



**“The EU-India FTA needs to have strong TSD chapters. Under no circumstances should it lead to the stimulation of industrial animal agriculture.”**

Subsequently, Eurogroup for Animals and the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) call for the EU-India trade talks to include a strong animal welfare dimension when they restart, and on the EU and India to use existing political channels to set up cooperation on animal welfare in the meantime.

The most effective tool for ensuring that the future trade agreement does not stimulate the intensification of animal agriculture is conditional liberalisation, which means making the granting of preferential tariffs conditional on higher welfare and sustainability standards. The agreement could also be used to set strong actionable commitments around animal welfare in the context of sustainable food productions, wildlife welfare and conservation, as well as sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. If necessary, technical assistance should also be provided to India.

Future EU-India cooperation on animal welfare should focus on sectors where the regions have good reasons to strive to establish such cooperation – either because the EU imports some of these products, because the EU exports many live farmed animals to India, or because India is a key global producer.



**VARDA MEHROTRA**  
CEO of FIAPO



**“There has never been a better time to discuss animal welfare in the context of EU-India trade relations. Leaders have agreed to promote cooperation on issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance, but also on strengthening sustainable food systems, which clearly calls for the inclusion of animal welfare in the EU-India agenda.”**



**REINEKE HAMELEERS**  
CEO of Eurogroup for Animals



**“In light of the increasing interest in pursuing the FTA between the EU and India, it is important to make the voices of animals heard, but also to discuss and exchange views on how we can learn the lessons of Covid-19 and prevent future pandemics.”**

## ANIMAL WELFARE IN EU INDIA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS



INDIA IS THE  
**WORLD'S 3RD EGG  
PRODUCING COUNTRY**



**6TH FOR CHICKEN MEAT  
IN 2021**

## INDIA TO EU



### SHRIMP

EU'S 2ND LARGEST SOURCE  
**32,265 TONNES**



### TILAPIA

EU'S 3RD SOURCE  
**154 TONNES**



### GELATINE

EU'S 6TH SOURCE  
**1,988 TONNES**



### CASEIN

EU'S 4TH SOURCE  
**1,243 TONNES**



### RAW HIDES, SKINS AND LEATHER

EU'S 4TH SOURCE  
IN VALUE TERMS  
**€110 MILLION**

# THE LINKS BETWEEN ANIMAL WELFARE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## 1 NO POVERTY



- Negative impact of industrial farming on wages and working conditions
- Improved welfare can lead to higher productivity in livestock farming
- Positive economic impact of working animals (e.g. horses, donkeys, mules, oxen and buffaloes)

## 2 NO HUNGER



- Feed-food competition
- Improved animal welfare is linked to improved food quality
- Role of working animals in access to quality food

## 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING



- Poor animal welfare conditions are linked to:
- Overuse of antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance
- Spread of zoonoses
- More food-borne diseases
- Poor human health is linked to overly animal-based diets
- Positive impact of owning a pet on mental health

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



- Learning about animals can increase empathy and reduce interpersonal violence
- Role of working equids in accessing education

## 5 GENDER EQUALITY



- Learning about animals can increase empathy and reduce interpersonal violence
- Role of working equids in accessing education

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



- Industrial farming pollutes surface and ground water (e.g. nitrates)

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



- High proportion of work-related injuries in livestock sector
- Higher benefits of wildlife-based tourism, rather than trafficking
- Impact on mental health of witnessing poor animal welfare conditions





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## RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

- Improved animal welfare can reduce food losses along the production chain
- Consuming less meat and dairy products can help reduce:
  - Heart disease
  - Antimicrobial resistance
  - Water pollution
  - Agricultural emissions

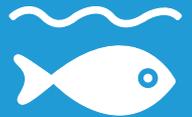
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## CLIMATE ACTION

- A shift towards more plant-based diets, and less farmed animals, is highlighted by most international organisations
- Animals can capture carbon

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## LIFE BELOW WATER

- Improved fish welfare can help reduce the use of antimicrobials
- Negative impact of relying on wild fisheries to produce fish meal

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## LIFE ON LAND

- Link between intensive livestock farming and deforestation
- Positive impact of higher welfare farming methods (i.e. agroecology, pastoralism) on biodiversity

## FOCUS ON KEY SECTORS

**As highlighted at the webinar “Planting the Animal Welfare Seed in EU-India Trade Relation”, jointly hosted by Eurogroup for Animals and FIAPO in May 2021, valuable opportunities exist for India and the EU to collaborate on animal welfare in their trade relationship, particularly in the aquaculture, poultry and dairy sectors.**

### Aquaculture

India is a leading country in the production and export of fisheries and aquaculture products and the government is strongly encouraging the continued development of the sector. While the country does not export large amounts of farmed fish to the EU at the moment, it is a key source for certain products, including *Penaeus* frozen shrimps and frozen tilapia.

Yet the aquaculture sector in India suffers from serious problems. Large quantities of chemicals, medicines and antibiotics are used in production, which pose significant risks to human and environmental health. The fish and other aquatic animals are not stunned pre-slaughter, but are killed by live chilling, asphyxiation, or through bleeding to death. Further, the fish suffer from high stocking densities during transport, as well as from a lack of oxygen and stress caused by constant movement over prolonged periods.

As the EU is working now on a review of its fish welfare standards, it could raise this topic with India and provide technical and financial support to the country to improve fish welfare at all stages. Stakeholders present at the May 2021 event foresee that this would lead to greater productivity and reduce the need for antibiotics. There is also a need to build a narrative around fish sentience and for more scientific research into the welfare parameters of different aquatic species found in India.

### Broiler Chickens and Laying Hens

India is the world’s sixth producer of chicken meat. The country’s annual chicken meat production rose from 2.8 to 4 million tonnes between 2013 and 2021, equating to over 2.5 billion chickens. India is also the world’s third largest producer of hen eggs. The EU was the leading destination for Indian egg products in 2014, with a value share of 26.5%, although this has reduced in recent years.

The poultry sector in India raises a number of welfare concerns. Laying hens suffer from debeaking, forced moulting and a lack of veterinary care, and battery cages are used in 80% of egg production. Broiler chickens also suffer from high stocking densities and the use of antibiotics as growth promoters contributes to leg problems and antimicrobial resistance. At wet markets, 90% of birds are slaughtered in unlicensed conditions and without stunning.

According to EU and Indian stakeholders discussing this topic, there is a lack of expertise among Indian poultry producers. The EU should thus cooperate with India to support its transition towards higher welfare systems. In particular, capacity building and technical assistance could contribute to the current discussions in India regarding the phasing out of battery cages and the introduction of space requirements.



## Dairy cows and cattle

While the EU does not currently import dairy products, bovine or ovine meat from India, it does import by-products of these industries, such as casein (1,243 tonnes in 2021), gelatine (1,988 tonnes in 2021) and raw hides, skins and leathers (€110 million in 2021).

Cattle and dairy cows in India suffer from cruel, often illegal, conditions. A major issue is a lack of space, as most animals are confined to tiny stalls and tethered by short ropes. Poor hygiene and a lack of ventilation leads to disease and stress, and antibiotics are used indiscriminately. Painful mutilations are common, particularly hot-iron branding, dehorning, and tail docking, and cattle trucks transport up to five times the number permitted under Indian rules. The animals are also slaughtered in front of each other, often without stunning.

EU and Indian stakeholders discussing this sector concluded that the future trade agreement could include an animal welfare cooperation that would aim at strengthening existing legislation impacting dairy cows and cattle. There is also a need to identify the gaps between the law and the reality on the ground, and to educate farmers to improve implementation.



**DR VIJAY PAL SINGH**  
Joint Director of the  
Food Safety and  
Standard Authority of India



**“India is the fourth largest consumer of antibiotics in animal food production. Unless we have animal welfare standards, we cannot think of sustainability.”**



## Our Recommendations

- The EU should only grant better trade preferences to products that respect animal welfare standards equivalent to those applied in the EU (during transport and on farm).
- Both partners should agree on a comprehensive cooperation mechanism on animal welfare. This could take the shape of a standalone political dialogue, or of a dialogue under the future FTA. In that context, the parties could also explore knowledge exchange and capacity building programmes to improve animal welfare practices and aim at upward regulatory alignment.
- The future EU-India Free Trade Agreement should include a comprehensive and enforceable Trade and Sustainable Development chapter that contains detailed language on:
  - the link between animal welfare and sustainable development; sustainable agriculture, or sustainable food systems;
  - wildlife conservation and trafficking (positive lists, rescue centres, including new species in CITES), with mention of species-specific concerns;
  - the importance of ensuring fish welfare to make aquaculture and fisheries sustainable;
  - enforcement, providing access to the dispute settlement mechanism for external stakeholders, creating clear roadmaps, identifying priority issues and monitoring them, and including last-resort sanctions.
- The Parties should also integrate an animal welfare dimension to any dialogue they might establish on antimicrobial resistance.

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Rue Ducale 29 – 1000 Brussels  
**Tel:** +32 (0)2 740 08 20  
**Email:** [news@eurogroupforanimals.org](mailto:news@eurogroupforanimals.org)  
[eurogroupforanimals.org](http://eurogroupforanimals.org)

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