

**Question for written answer E-004825/2025  
to the Commission**  
Rule 144  
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Subject: EU agreement with developing countries: European rice sector at risk

Updated rules are changing the Generalised Scheme of Preferences. The scheme lets developing countries export goods to the EU with low or zero tariffs, with the aim of eradicating poverty and integrating them into the world economy. In order to benefit from preferences, participating countries have to ratify international conventions on human rights and the environment added to the agreements by the EU.

To protect European rice production, a safeguard clause has been included that blocks imports beyond a certain limit, but producers say the clause fails to go far enough to prevent unfair competition from certain third countries such as Myanmar and Cambodia. The conditions set out in the agreement provide for the activation of the clause when the amount exceeds 561 tonnes.

Italy boasts 56.7 % of the European growing area and is the leading European producer with around 1.4 billion kg of rice per year, which amounts to over 50 % of EU production.

In view of the above, can the Commission clarify how it intends to demonstrate that this threshold is not excessively high and that third countries – which are often far from complying with our environmental and health standards – are not being protected to the detriment of the European rice sector and without any thought being given to the serious risk of unfair competition?

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