

Question for written answer E-004912/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Anna Maria Cisint (PfE)

Subject: Request for action to protect Italian and European rice production

Though the new agreement concerning the revision of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) introduces an automatic safeguard clause for rice imports from developing countries, its activation conditions are so difficult to trigger that it does not provide any meaningful protection to the Italian and EU rice industries. EU rice imports will only be subject to tariffs if they outstrip 561 000 tonnes in a given year, an unreasonably high figure which was calculated by taking the average amount that the EU has imported from the likes of Myanmar and Cambodia over the last ten years and increasing it by 45 %. It is also a concern that a large proportion of rice from Asian countries is produced using banned plant protection products and child labour.

A key sector at national level, Italian rice-growing accounts for around 50 % of Europe's needs. Unfortunately, production is falling significantly as a result of tariff-free Asian imports, which also threaten EU food security.

In view of the above:

1. How will the Commission ensure reciprocity of standards for rice imported from Asian countries in a manner that takes the threat to consumer health into account?
2. Were imports to exceed the agreed threshold, how will the Commission go about triggering the aforementioned automatic clause in a timely manner?
3. What other complementary actions will the Commission take to support European rice production?

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