

EN

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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
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The co-legislators agreed on the political elements of the new Generalised Scheme Preferences (GSP) Regulation on 1 December 2025¹. Currently, this brings certainty and predictability to 65 developing countries and also to EU companies. As regards rice, the GSP regulation fully recognises the importance of the EU rice production:

(i) Rice is defined as sensitive product, without tariff preferences for all standard GSP and GSP+ beneficiary countries. Only Least Developed Countries, such as Cambodia and Myanmar, benefit from tariff preferences when exporting rice to the EU;

(ii) There are three different safeguard mechanisms (general safeguards, special safeguards and the special surveillance mechanism) which also apply to the EU rice sector, if the relevant conditions are met, and support the viability of the EU rice sector and the smooth functioning of the market;

(iii) There will be a new, fully automatic safeguard mechanism, only for rice, if the conditions are met. This is the result of two years of negotiations between the co-legislators, after careful consideration of the positions of both institutions and of relevant stakeholders, including the rice sector.

Beyond GSP rules, any food product imported in the EU market must comply with the EU's sanitary and phytosanitary requirements. This is not negotiable.

Moreover, the EU Vision for Agriculture² will strive toward fairer global level playing field for agriculture. The Commission also works to strengthen control on imports and will establish a principle that the most hazardous pesticides banned in the EU are not allowed for imported products.

Additionally, for the next two years the Commission announced a 50% increase in the number of audits carried outside EU.

¹ <https://gsphub.eu/about-gsp/gsp-review>.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A vision for Agriculture and Food Shaping together an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations COM/2025/75 final; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0075>.