

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 of Preferences (GSP) in December 2025¹. The EU rice sector will have more tools to protect its interests in the GSP context, in recognition of its sensitivity and importance: (i) rice is defined as a sensitive product, without tariff preferences for all standard GSP and GSP+ beneficiaries; (ii) there are three safeguard mechanisms (general safeguards, special safeguards and special surveillance) which apply also to the rice sector; (iii) there will be a new, fully automatic safeguard mechanism, only for rice if the conditions are met. The Commission will ensure this instrument is activated immediately, based on existing mechanisms for management of surveillance or quota.

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

Moreover, the EU Vision for Agriculture² will strive toward fairer global level playing field for agriculture, including on pesticides. The Commission also works to strengthen controls on imports and 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 Commission³ announced a 50% increase in the number of audits carried outside the EU. Also, the Unity Safety Net proposed in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (EUR 6.3 billion over seven years, roughly doubling the current agricultural reserve) will help safeguard farmers from potential major market disruptions.

Finally, under the EU promotion policy to boost the EU's agri-food competitiveness and its export market diversification, EUR 205 million is available to launch programmes and actions in 2026.

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>.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2979.