

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001940/26
to the Commission
Barbara Bonte (Pfe)
(11 May 2026)**

Subject: Pakistan's GSP+ status and the arbitrary detention of human rights activist Idris Khattak

Since 2014, Pakistan has enjoyed privileged market access under the GSP+ scheme. Pakistan is one of the largest beneficiaries under the scheme. However, recent reports point to ongoing violations of GSP+ obligations.

The case of Idris Khattak starkly illustrates how Pakistan is flouting these obligations. Khattak is a renowned human rights activist specialising in enforced disappearances, but he himself disappeared in 2019. In June 2020, the Pakistani authorities acknowledged his detention.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded in a recent opinion that his detention is contrary to international law, that his right to a fair trial has been repeatedly violated, and that he is being held because of his work as a human rights defender.

1. Is the Commission aware of this case and of the recent opinion of the UN Working Group?
2. Does the Commission share the view that the unlawful detention of Idris Khattak in appalling conditions constitutes a breach of the conditions attached to GSP+ status?
3. Is the Commission considering initiating a formal investigation procedure that could lead to the temporary suspension of Pakistan from the GSP+ scheme in accordance with Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012?

Submitted: 11.5.2026

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(22 July 2026)**

The High Representative/Vice-President of the EU acknowledges the significance of the concerns raised regarding this case.

The EU delegation to Pakistan has been closely monitoring the case. The EU has consistently emphasised the importance of humane treatment, due process, fair trial guarantees and respect for fundamental freedoms in all its dialogues with Pakistan.

The EU has taken note of concerns expressed by international human rights actors, including UN Special Rapporteurs, remains attentive to developments and will consider appropriate steps, as necessary, in line with available information.

Moreover, this case has been raised by the EU during the eight Strategic Dialogue with Pakistan with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Ishaq Dar.

In cooperation with international partners, the Delegation will continue to follow this case with attention through diplomatic channels.

Broader engagement on human rights, including under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) framework ⁽¹⁾, remains an important tenet of the bilateral relationship.

As for any GSP+ beneficiary, Pakistan is subject to continuous monitoring of its implementation of 27 international conventions listed in the GSP Regulation ⁽²⁾, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The EU conducted a GSP+ monitoring mission in Pakistan in late 2025. A GSP monitoring report will be issued to the European Parliament and the Council by summer 2026.

This will include the EU evaluation, incorporating also findings from UN bodies, civil society, and organisations such as Amnesty International, and will inform the EU's decision on Pakistan's future GSP+ status, including in the context of Pakistan's possible reapplication for GSP+ under the new GSP Regulation, if it wishes to continue benefitting from the scheme.

⁽¹⁾ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/generalised-scheme-preferences_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/generalised-system-of-preferences-gsp.html>.