

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001167/25
to the Commission**

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(19 March 2025)

Subject: Pakistani exports stifling the Beet sector

The beet sector is going through a major crisis, triggered by the ban on neonicotinoids, for which a solution has yet to be found. This crisis has been aggravated by the lift on customs duties for Ukraine, whose sugar exports increased from 20 000 tonnes pre-war to 500 000 tonnes in 2023.

The EU-Mercosur trade agreement risks increasing the strain, as it would see a further 190 000 tonnes of sugar and 650 000 tonnes of ethanol imported into the EU. Also contributing to this destabilisation are the exports of industrial alcohol from Pakistan, exempt from customs duties, which benefit from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP+) in return for efforts to ensure human and labour rights are upheld. Since 2018, its exports have increased from 2% to 20% of the EU market, rising by more than 200% between 2021 to 2022. Yet we are witnessing the sharpest democratic backsliding since 2008, with the agricultural sector under the control of the Pakistani army and fundamental rights clearly being violated ⁽¹⁾.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2015/478 and Regulation (EU) 978/2012:

1. Will the Commission activate the safeguard clause on the basis of the evidence provided for over a year by the EU industry concerned?
2. Will it investigate the failure to comply with the principles of good governance laid down in the GSP+?

Supporters ⁽²⁾

Submitted: 19.3.2025

Answer given by Mr Šešćovič on behalf of the European Commission
(16 April 2025)

Pursuant to Article 30 of the regulation 978/2012 (the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Regulation) ⁽¹⁾, where imports of products included in Annex I to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union cause, or threaten to cause, serious disturbance to EU markets, the Commission, on its own initiative or at the request of a Member State, is to adopt an implementing act in order to suspend the preferential arrangements in respect of the products concerned.

On 15 May 2024, the Commission received a joint request from several Member States to adopt measures under Article 30 of the GSP Regulation with regard to ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin originating from Pakistan falling under Combined Nomenclature (CN) codes ex 2207 10 and ex 2207 20. On 15 October 2024, the Commission invited stakeholders to provide any views and information they consider relevant to the determination of a serious disturbance to EU markets caused by imports from Pakistan of products under tariff codes ex 2207 10 and ex 2207 20, as well as any other relevant input. The Commission is currently analysing the available data.

Pursuant to Article 13 of the GSP Regulation, the Commission monitors on a continuous basis the effective implementation of the relevant international GSP conventions.

¹ <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/la-revue-de-presse-internationale/la-revue-de-presse-internationale-emission-du-vendredi-31-janvier-2025-7626409>

² This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Julie Rechagneux (Pfe), Mélanie Disdier (Pfe), Malika Sorel (Pfe), Julien Leonardelli (Pfe), Valérie Deloge (Pfe), Gilles Pennelle (Pfe)

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/978/2025-01-01>