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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
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Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on applying a generalised scheme of tariff preferences and repealing Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council - Preparation for the trilogue

1. On 23 September 2021, the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for a revised version of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 on applying a generalised scheme of tariff preferences (the GSP Regulation) (documents ST 12184/21 + ADD 1-4), which was scheduled to expire at the end of 2023.

2. The European Parliament appointed the Committee on International Trade (INTA) as the lead committee. The European Parliament plenary adopted its report on the proposal on 18 May 2022.

3. On 20 December 2022, the Permanent Representatives Committee adopted the Council mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament, as set out in ST 16270/22.

4. Trilogue meetings were held by the Swedish Presidency, but agreement could not be reached on two key issues: the possibility to withdraw GSP preferences if GSP beneficiaries did not co-operate with the EU on readmission of their own nationals illegally present in the EU; and safeguards, particularly for rice production.

5. Given the failure of the trilogue negotiations to reach an agreement, on 27 November 2023 the current Regulation was extended until the end of 2027[1].

6. On 13 March 2024, the Permanent Representatives Committee adopted a revised Council mandate expecting to address the European Parliament's concerns expressed during the trilogue negotiations[2]. The revised mandate focussed on three points: readmission, safeguards and the date of entry into force.

7. On 13 March 2024, after the adoption of the revised Council mandate, the European Parliament cancelled the trilogue scheduled for 14 March 2024, and, in light of the European elections in June 2024, paused the negotiations.

8. In November 2024, the European Parliament appointed Ms Majdouline Sbai (Verts/ALE, FR) as rapporteur.

9. On 20 May 2025, Mr Bernd Lange (S&D, DE), chair of the INTA Committee, informed the Presidency and the Commission that, at the request of Ms Sbai, he had taken over the role of rapporteur. He confirmed that the European Parliament was now ready to resume trilogue negotiations on the basis of the Council mandate of March 2024, although he called for additional modifications on readmission and safeguards for the rice producing sector in the EU.

10. The Presidency held a trilogue with the European Parliament and the Commission on 17 June 2025, where progress was made to find a compromise solution on readmission, to address the WTO compatibility of the link between the withdrawal of GSP preferences and readmission, and solution on safeguards for rice.

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1 Regulation (EU) 2023/2663 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 November 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences.

2 ST 5770/24.

11. Following the Presidency's debriefing of the trilogue at the Coreper meeting of 19 June, on 20 June 2025, the Presidency informed the members of the Trade Policy Committee (Generalised Scheme of Preferences) about a possible alternative avenue for compromise on automatic safeguards. This alternative is based on the mechanism of automatic tariff-rate quotas set at the historical average volume of imports in case there is a significant upsurge in imports. The threshold / trigger for what is considered a 'significant' increase is to be negotiated at the trilogue.

12. On 20 June, following the TPC GSP meeting, the Presidency circulated a document illustrating the details of how this mechanism would work.

13. On this basis it appears that there may be a possibility to conclude the trilogue negotiations if all sides are willing to show flexibility.

14. Against this background, and with a view to concluding trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm:

- if it can accept automatic safeguards for rice as in the original Parliament mandate;
- or, should the Parliament's proposal on automatic safeguards for rice not be acceptable to the majority of delegation, if it can accept a solution along the lines of the safeguard provisions outlined in the Presidency document of 20 June.

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