

Brussels, Friday 28 November 2025

Subject: Urgent concerns for automatic safeguard threshold for rice in the GSP Revision

Dear Bernd,
Dear Raphaël,

In light of the ongoing trilogue negotiations on the revision of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Regulation, we would like to draw your urgent attention to a critical issue that directly threatens the viability of the European rice producing countries such as Greece, Spain, Portugal Italy, Bulgaria as well as Romania.

The Presidency's proposed threshold for triggering the automatic safeguard mechanism for rice is far too high to offer any meaningful protection. Current import levels from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) already exceed 540,000 tonnes, substantially above the 345,000-tonne baseline representing the 2016–2018 average that had previously been deemed sufficient to trigger safeguard measures in 2019.

Moreover, the proposed de minimis clause, allowing up to 6% of total imports per LDC, effectively grants a quota of around 95,000 tonnes—a level that would incentivise triangular exports and undermine the safeguard entirely. As indicated by the EU farmers, many LDCs export only minimal amounts to the EU (less than 1.000 tonnes) and could thus be used as platforms to re-route rice originating from major exporters, distorting the market and circumventing controls.

This situation places southern European farmers, particularly in Greece, Spain, and Italy, in a structurally disadvantaged and unsustainable position, endangering at the same time our food security. Production costs for EU growers far exceed the prices of duty-free imports from Cambodia and Myanmar, which enter the EU market at approximately €400/tonne, a level impossible for EU farmers to match without selling below cost.

The consequences are severe: abandonment of cultivation, loss of rural livelihoods, and the erosion of the EU's rice-processing sector, which has already lost significant market share due to unfair competition and the rapid rise of retail-packaged imports entering directly into EU by LDCs.

For the reasons above, we call on you to ensure that the final agreement regarding the Revised GSP Regulation establishes a realistic safeguard mechanism, with a robust activation level, and sets additional country-specific export limits, ensuring proportionality and non-discrimination.

Only a workable and market-reflective safeguard mechanism capable of preventing irreversible damage to EU rice production, ensuring balanced import flows, and protecting thousands of farming families in southern Europe, could truly safeguard the future of the EU's rice sector, avoiding structural collapse and ensuring that European farmers are not unfairly displaced by unchecked import pressures.

Thank you very much for considering the above raised concerns and including them in the potential final agreement of the trilogue negotiations.

Kind regards,

The undersigned Members of the European Parliament

1. Yannis Maniatis (S&D, Greece)
2. Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D, Greece)
3. Nikos Papandreou (S&D, Greece)
4. Dario Nardella (S&D, Italy)
5. Nicola Zingaretti (S&D, Italy)
6. Giorgio Gori (S&D, Italy)
7. Camilla Laureti (S&D, Italy)
8. Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D, Italy)
9. Cristina Maestre (S&D, Spain)
10. Sandra Gomez Lopez (S&D, Spain)
11. André Rodrigues (S&D, Portugal)
12. Sérgio Gonçalves (S&D, Portugal)