

GSP STAKEHOLDER FORUM

29 September 2020, 13:30-17:00

Venue: Charlemagne Building and interactive live stream


Registration required 



The GSP Stakeholder Forum will officially launch the GSP Hub Project under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). The Project aims at increasing the use of GSP, through bringing new EU investment, encouraging European companies to import from the beneficiary countries, and promoting international sustainability standards. The Forum will kick-off a series of thematic events and introduce new online tools which have been developed to centralise information on the GSP. It will also link GSP with sustainable development objectives, building in part on the recommendations of the GSP Mid-term Evaluation of 2018.

The Forum will focus on

- assessing the impact of COVID-19 on trade under GSP
- engaging business to benefit from the GSP
- involving civil society in monitoring by the European Commission of the GSP effects



EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences removes or reduces tariffs for products imported into the EU market from vulnerable developing countries. This helps the beneficiary countries to stimulate economic growth and job creation, contributing to poverty alleviation while balancing respect for international values and standards, including core conventions on labour and human rights.



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Agenda



13:30 REGISTRATION

14:00 OPENING BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ms. Ewa Synowiec, Director of Directorate C, Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, Asia (II), Trade and Sustainable Development, Green Deal

14:10 INTRODUCTION TO THE GSP HUB PROJECT

14:20 **ROUNDTABLE 1: HOW CAN GSP SUPPORT A POST-COVID RECOVERY?**

GSP beneficiaries are among the most vulnerable countries, which often means a high dependence on exports to the EU of mainly garment and footwear products (around 60%), but also agricultural products - notably in Africa. These sectors have been significantly disrupted due to falling consumption and the disruptions in supply/value chains which has led to significant loss of jobs and income, and hence has an impact on sustainable development commitments, health and migration in GSP beneficiary countries.

Moderator: Shada Islam (Independent Commentator, Advisor and Analyst)

- H.E. Mr Zaheer Aslam Janjua (Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union) (tbc)
- Ms Anna Cavazzini (MEP & Shadow Rapporteur on GSP)
- Mr Jordi Cañas (MEP & Shadow Rapporteur on GSP)
- Ms Luisa Santos (Deputy Director General, Business Europe)
- Representative from the International Labour Organisation (tbc)

15:05 **ROUNDTABLE 2: THE RELEVANCE OF GSP FOR AFRICA, IS THERE A SCOPE FOR ITS BETTER USE?**

Africa is an important partner of the EU and enhancing the EU-Africa relations is a key political priority of the European Commission. The EU is Africa's main trading and investment partner as well as a cooperation assistance donor. Moreover, the African continent has the biggest number of the GSP beneficiaries - 38 countries in total, with the majority benefiting from the Everything But Arms (EBA) arrangement of GSP for least developed countries. The session will focus on sectors where diversification can be achieved and which can move up value-chains.

Moderator: Annie Mutamba (Managing Director, Meridia Partners)

- Mr Escipi3n Joaqu3n Oliveira G3mez (Assistant Secretary General for Sustainable Economic Transformation and Trade, Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States)
- Mr Helmut Scholz (MEP & Shadow Rapporteur on GSP)
- Mr Ralph Kamph3ner (Director, Confederation of the German Textile and Fashion Industry)
- Industry Representative (European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade) (tbc)
- Mr Francisco Mari (Senior Policy Officer for World Food Matters, Agritrade and Maritime Affairs at Brot f3r die Welt)

15:50 **ROUNDTABLE 3: GSP AND CENTRAL ASIA: HOW CAN EU TARIFF PREFERENCES PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?**

There are 3 countries in Central Asia that are benefiting from the EU's GSP: the Kyrgyz Republic (GSP+), Uzbekistan (GSP, applied for GSP+) and Tajikistan (GSP, interested in applying for GSP+). The scope of the EU's relations is linked to the readiness of individual Central Asian countries to undertake reforms and strengthen democracy and the rule of law, protect human rights, and ensure the independence of the judiciary. In economic terms it is important that the countries concerned embark on the market-oriented reforms leading to modernising and diversifying the economy, including by supporting the private sector. This session will present the state of play of implementation of the EU's Central Asia Strategy with GSP as integral part. It will highlight the benefits and remaining challenges under the GSP and will address the current status related to the fundamental human and labour rights conventions covered under the GSP regulation.

Moderator: Iana Dreyer (Founder and Chief Editor, Borderlex.eu)

- H.E. Mr Muktar Djumaliev (Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Kingdom of Belgium)
- Mr Raphael Glucksmann (MEP & Shadow Rapporteur on GSP)
- Mr Stuart Newman (Senior Legal Advisor – Trade & Customs, Amfori)
- Mr Philippe Dam (Advocacy Director for Europe and Central Asia, Human Rights Watch)

16:35 CLOSING REMARKS

Reserve your spot through the pre-registration link below:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/stakeholderforum2020>

