Generalized tariff preferences GSP: role of the GSP for the developing countries, 1995-2004

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The purpose of this communication is to define the role of the System of Generalized Preferences (SGP) for the next ten years (1995-2004). Several general guidelines are applied to the SGP: - compared with the current scheme, the level of liberalization is globally neutral as regards the impact of the preferential margin on the potential volume of preferential trade; - account is taken of the sensitivity of certain sectors or products for Community industry or agriculture. Sensitive sectors will no longer be protected against excessive imports by differentiation, as at present, but solely by a dual mechanism which acts preventively by modulating the preferential tariff margins established on the basis of the sensitivity of the products and contains a safeguard clause in order to deal with emergencies; - priority is given to increasing potential access to the Community market and ensuring that efficient use is made of preferences for averagely or less developed countries using graduation and by transferring preferential margins from more developed to less developed countries; - the implementation of this new graduation mechanism is staggered over time in order to give economic operators time to adapt.