

Generalized tariff preferences GSP: exclusion of the Union of Myanmar/Burma of the GSP for industrial goods

1996/0317(CNS) - 18/12/1996 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: the regulation seeks temporarily to withdraw access to generalized tariff preferences for industrial goods from the Union of Myanmar because of this country's use of forced labour.

SUBSTANCE: Pursuant to Article 9 of Council Regulation (EC) No 3281/94 applying a four-year scheme of generalized tariff preferences (1995 to 1998), these preferences may be withdrawn in whole or in part where a beneficiary country (the Union of Myanmar being one such) uses any kind of forced labour. After a complaint to the Commission by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and an examination and investigation by the Commission, it was established that this country made use of forced labour on large scale. This type of work, formally prohibited by ILO Convention No 29, was said to be imposed routinely for military operations and for civilian and military infrastructure building projects, backed by coercion and violent reprisals. Myanmar had, moreover, refused to cooperate in the investigation launched by the Commission to verify the practice of forced labour. Consequently, the Commission is requesting through the proposal that the benefits of the GSP in the industrial sector be withdrawn from the Union of Myanmar.