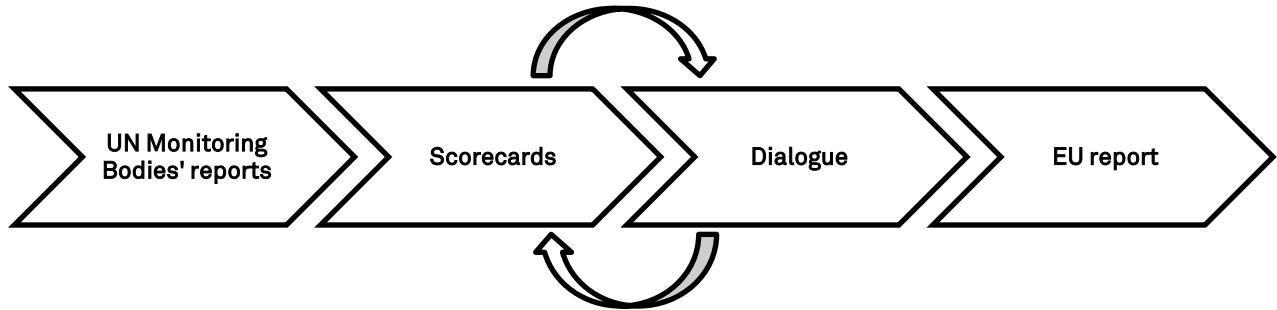


FACTSHEET: GSP+ Monitoring Process



What is GSP+?

GSP+ stands for Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus. The scheme allows eligible developing countries to pay no duties on some exports to the European Union. It is part of the EU's wider GSP regulation with the Standard GSP and Everything But Arms (EBA), but offers additional trade incentives. Current countries benefiting from GSP+ are: Armenia, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

A country's GSP+ status is dependent upon its ratification and implementation of [27 international conventions](#) on human and labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance. The scheme helps vulnerable countries "assume the special burdens and responsibilities resulting from the ratification of these conventions".ⁱ

In addition to implementing the required conventions, the GSP+ country must also comply with the ongoing monitoring process of the scheme. Each monitoring process is adapted to the country's specific context, but generally it develops as illustrated in the above graphic.

How is a Country's Baseline Assessed?

To start its GSP+ assessment of a country, the EU looks to reports prepared by the UN monitoring bodies and special rapporteurs for the relevant conventions. Recommendations laid out in these reports are the key source for a country's initial Scorecard.

What is a Scorecard?

A Scorecard is a **list of issues** that the European Commission prepares for each GSP+ country.

- It is a large but clearly structured document that highlights 1) progress and 2) relevant shortcomings that should be addressed by the country in order to effectively implement the 27 conventions.
- It facilitates annual exchange of information on the GSP+ commitments between the European Commission and the country.

How Does It Work?

Upon a country's entry into GSP+, the European Commission compiles the first Scorecard.

This initial Scorecard is received by the country when it enters GSP+. It indicates the baseline of the country's situation and draws its attention to key issues. The following Scorecards build on this qualitative analysis, recognising improvements and further identifying issues that the EU expects the GSP+ country to address.

Are the Scorecards Publicly Available?

No. According to the European Union, the Scorecards are kept confidential "in order to build trust between the parties that subsequently discuss it".ⁱⁱ

Several organisations have suggested that this secrecy inhibits key players (e.g. civil society organisations and labour rights organisations) from fully participating in the monitoring process.ⁱⁱⁱ

How do Scorecards Support Dialogue?

The Scorecard was introduced by Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament 2012 (“the GSP Regulation”) as part of a larger attempt to improve the monitoring process.^{iv}

The Scorecard is one of two interrelated tools within the GSP+ monitoring process. The other tool is the GSP+ dialogue, which the Scorecard contributes to. Based on the Scorecard, the European Commission, European External Action Service (EEAS) and GSP+ country enter an ongoing discussion to tackle shortcomings as well as discuss difficulties and progress. The outcomes of the dialogue are translated back into the following Scorecards.

From one Scorecard to the next, the GSP+ country is expected to demonstrate that it has made serious efforts toward addressing the identified problems.

What is the Purpose of the Monitoring Process?

This monitoring process is important in several ways:

- Ensuring regular monitoring and follow-up on the implementation of international obligations.
- Allowing for the identification not only of shortcomings and progress, but also constraints that may impede or prevent the country from implementing a convention effectively.
- Opening up space to create proposals for laws and practices to address challenges.
- Providing opportunities for the Commission to reach out to local stakeholders to 1) gather first-hand information and 2) build their awareness about the GSP+ process and the EU's expectations.

i See Preamble Clause 11 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008 <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012R0978>>
ii Directorate-General for External Policies: Policy Department, “Labour Rights in Exporting Processing Zones with a Focus on GSP+ Beneficiary Countries,” 2017, p. 36.
<[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU\(2017\)603839](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU(2017)603839)>

Why a Biennial Report?

Drawing from the monitoring process, the Commission provides a report to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union every two years. The report details 1) the status of the implementation of the conventions in each GSP+ country, and 2) the status of compliance of the countries with any reporting obligations under those conventions.

The next report, which will cover 2016 and 2017, will be issued in January 2018.

Drawing upon this report, the European Council and European Parliament review each GSP+ country. If the review finds that the country is failing to comply with its ratification, implementation or monitoring commitments, GSP+ status can be temporarily withdrawn until the country demonstrates compliance.^v

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iii See, e.g., FIDH, “Contribution to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the EU GSP,” May 2017 <<https://www.fidh.org/en/international-advocacy/european-union/contribution-to-the-mid-term-evaluation-of-the-eu-gsp>>; and Justice and Peace, “Scrutinising the New GSP+ Mechanism After Two Years: Will It Deliver on Human and Labour Rights?” 2016. <<https://en.justiceandpeace.nl/news/will-the-new-gsp-mechanism-deliver-on-human-and-labour-rights>>
iv See Regulation (EU) No 978/2012
v See Art. 15 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012