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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on applying a generalised scheme of tariff preferences and repealing Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 (**first reading**)
- Adoption of the legislative act
= Statement

Greece, Spain and Italy have requested that the following statement be entered in the Council minutes

Concerning the draft Regulation on applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences, Greece, Spain and Italy, which jointly represent around 85% of the EU's production of rice, would like to state the following. The inclusion of an automatic safeguard for rice is a crucial milestone.

However, our objective as proponents of the safeguard was not the safeguard itself, but rather the protection that the safeguard would grant. Unfortunately, the result of the negotiation suggests that the safeguard will be insufficient to alleviate the situation faced by the European rice sector.

We have engaged constructively throughout the process and have shown flexibility in the search for compromise but the combination of an annual revision of the thresholds and a 45% surge would, in our view, render the triggering of this safeguard virtually impossible.

We are therefore not in a position to endorse the outcome of the trilogue held on 1 December 2025, as the parameters of the automatic safeguard mechanism for rice are not defined in a manner that ensures its effectiveness, nor its timely activation when necessary to safeguard the viability of European rice sector.

Looking ahead, a holistic view will be needed to address the different challenges that the European rice sector faces and take those into account in future agreements.
