

The European Commission's alleged failure to initiate a temporary withdrawal procedure from the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences against Bangladesh

Case 1369/2019/JN - Opened on 22/07/2019 - Decision on 24/03/2020 - Institution concerned European Commission (No maladministration found) |

The case concerned the actions taken by the European Commission regarding Bangladesh in the context of the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences. The complainants considered that Bangladesh does not fully respect fundamental labour rights and that, therefore, the Commission should start the procedure allowing it to withdraw Bangladesh's trade preferences under the scheme.

The Commission informed the Ombudsman of how it has engaged with Bangladesh on the issue so far and the actions it has taken. It said that it may decide to withdraw Bangladesh's trade preferences as a measure of last resort.

The decision as to whether or not to launch a withdrawal procedure involves complex policy judgments. The Commission has a broad margin of discretion in determining when to do so. The Ombudsman took the view that the explanations the Commission had provided for its chosen course of action were reasonable. She closed the inquiry with a finding of no maladministration.