Quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

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The Council had an **exchange of views** on a proposal for a regulation on agricultural product quality schemes. It should be noted that the Commission drew up the "quality package", which consists of a set of proposals designed to put in place a coherent agricultural product quality policy aimed at assisting farmers to better communicate the qualities, characteristics and attributes of agricultural products to consumers, on the basis of the Council conclusions of 22 and 23 June 2009 on agricultural product quality.

The "quality package" consists of two texts:

- a proposal for a regulation on agricultural product quality schemes;
- a proposal amending the "Single CMO" regulation, (regulation No 1234/2007).

Delegations generally welcomed the Presidency's views on a '**local farming and direct sales**' scheme because of the development of this particular sector and consumer demand. However some Member States feared that this scheme could constitute an administrative burden and insisted on keeping the simplification of CAP legislation in mind. In addition, many Member States do not want a European scheme on this issue to interfere with national measures already in place.

Most delegations are in favour of rules for the **products of mountain farming** supported by the "quality package", but insist on definitions and criteria for such production. Some delegations mentioned the possibility of developing rules for agricultural products coming from very specific areas.

On both issues, many Member States are waiting for the impact assessments scheduled by the Commission before giving a definitive view.