EU/Switzerland Agreement: protection of designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs (amend. EC/Switzerland Agreement)

2010/0317(NLE) - 20/10/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Switzerland on the protection of designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, amending the Agreement between the European Community and Switzerland on trade in agricultural products.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2011/738/EU on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation on the protection of designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, amending the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products.

BACKGROUND: the Agreement entered into force on 1 June 2002. Article 12 of the Agricultural Agreement provides that the Agricultural Agreement may be reviewed at the request of either Party.

The Commission negotiated, on behalf of the Union, an Agreement between the European Union and Switzerland on the protection of designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, which amends the Agricultural Agreement by inserting a new Annex 12.

The Agreement should now be approved on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: with this Decision, the Agreement between the European Union and Switzerland on the protection of designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, amending the Agreement between the European Community and Switzerland on trade in agricultural products is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

The objective of the Agreement is to ensure the **mutual recognition of protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs)** in order to improve the conditions of bilateral trade, to promote quality in the food chain and to retain the value of sustainable rural development.

Procedure: a technical procedure is provided to facilitate the mutual protection of designations of origin and geographical indicators. This procedure is managed by the Joint Committee referred to in Article 6(3) of the 2002 Agreement.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision shall enter into force on 20 October 2011. The Agreement shall enter into force as soon as the necessary procedures have been completed.