

EU/Morocco Agreement: protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products and amending the EC/Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement

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PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and Morocco concerning protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: both Parties, the EU and Morocco, aim to protect geographical indications (GIs) on both sides in order to improve the conditions of bilateral trade, promote quality in the food chain and stimulate sustainable rural development under the terms of the Euro-Mediterranean Roadmap for Agriculture.

Article 9 of Protocol 1 and Article 8 of Protocol 2 to the Association Agreement with Morocco, as amended by the Agreement on Agriculture, made provision for opening negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

Those negotiations went smoothly and the present proposal is the result of bilateral negotiations concluded on 16 January 2015.

It is now necessary to conclude this Agreement on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: The agreement provides for protection of geographical indications (PDOs and PGIs) which are protected in the respective Parties.

For the EU, the main objectives of the Agreement are:

- to foster the protection and use of geographical indications (Morocco will protect the full list of EU geographical indications),
- to intervene in the event of any misuse of EU geographical indications.

Morocco, for its part, has an interest to foster and protect its current geographical indications on EU territory and strengthen its relations with the EU.

The Agreement also aims to promote and enhance quality production.

Joint Committee and management of the Agreement: each of the Parties has conducted an examination and public consultation on the protection of its geographical indications and designations of origin. The Joint Committee has been entrusted with certain aspects of its implementation, in particular the power to amend certain technical aspects and certain Annexes thereto. The Commission should be authorised to represent the Union in the Joint Committee.