EU/Iceland agreement: protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs

2016/0252(NLE) - 06/10/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

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: the EU and Iceland are signatories to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement). This Agreement provides for the free movement of goods, with the exception of agricultural and fisheries products. This Agreement provides that the contracting Parties shall undertake to continue their efforts to achieve progressive liberalisation of agricultural trade between them. Article 19 of the EEA Agreement contains provisions on trade in agricultural products. The 2007 EU-Iceland bilateral Agreement on trade preferences negotiated on the basis of Article 19 of the EEA Agreement includes among others a commitment by the Parties to promote trade in products with geographical indications (GIs).

The Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs was signed by the Commission subject to its conclusion at a later date. The Agreement should now be approved.

CONTENT: the draft Council decision seeks the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and Iceland on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The Parties agreed to promote between each other the harmonious development of geographical indications as defined in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and to foster trade in agricultural products and foodstuffs with geographical indications originating in the Parties' territories.

Under the negotiated GIs Agreement, 1 150 EU foodstuff GIs will be protected in Iceland.

Iceland has not yet registered any protected GI names. The Agreement provides, however, a mechanism for updating the GIs list and for including new GI names at a later stage through a Joint Committee process.