EU/Norway agreement: additional trade preferences in agricultural products

2017/0259(NLE) - 13/11/2017 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude an Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural 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: as a reminder, the EU and Norway are signatories to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement) which provides for the free movement of goods, with the exception of agricultural and fisheries products.

Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area provides that the Contracting Parties undertake to continue their efforts with a view to achieving progressive liberalisation of agricultural trade.

In accordance with a Council Decision, the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the EU and Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products was signed, subject to its conclusion.

It is now necessary to approve this Agreement.

CONTENT: the Council is called on to approve, on behalf of the Union, the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products.

The Agreement reached following two years of negotiations will grant mutual duty-free access for 36 tariff lines, including for example various types of live plants, corn for feed, various berries and fermented beverages such as perry and cider.

As regards products such as meat, dairy, grains, vegetables and ornamental plants, Norway will grant the EU tariff quotas. In particular, Norway will offer in the meat sector an additional 1600-ton quota for bovine meat and smaller quotas for EU chicken and duck meat, pork, hams and sausages.

In the dairy sector Norway will open an additional 1200-ton quota for cheese.

As regards the remaining sectors Norway will offer additional market opening for EU ornamental plants, maize and lettuce.

The EU will reciprocate by opening a 700-ton quota for various types of chicken meat, a quota for preserved meat and offal. In the dairy sector the EU will offer Norway quotas for dried milk albumin and whey products.