

EU/USA Agreement on the Allocation of a Share in the Tariff Rate Quota: opening an autonomous tariff quota for imports of high-quality beef

2019/0142(NLE) - 09/07/2019 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to review the functioning of an existing trade agreement between the United States of America and the European Union ensuring an autonomous tariff quota for imports of high-quality beef into the EU.

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: in 2009, the European Union and the United States concluded a Memorandum of Understanding, revised in 2014, which provided an interim solution to a long-standing dispute in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) over imports of US beef treated with certain growth-promoting hormones. Under the agreement, a 45 000 tonnes quota of non-hormone treated beef was open by the EU to qualifying suppliers. Under WTO rules the quota also had to be made available to non-US suppliers.

On 19 October 2018, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations between the EU and the United States on the functioning of the tariff quota. Negotiations with the United States were concluded on 27 February 2019.

The signed agreement, subject to its conclusion at a later date, must now be approved.

CONTENT: the draft Council Decision concerns the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the EU and the United States on the allocation to the United States of a share in the tariff quota for high-quality beef referred to in the Memorandum of Understanding on the importation of beef from animals not treated with certain growth-promoting hormones and increased duties applied by the United States to certain EU products, which was concluded in 2009 and revised in 2014.

Under the new agreement, the existing quota will remain unchanged but 35 000 out of the total 45 000-tonne TRQ will be ring-fenced for the United States and phased in over a period of 7 years. The autonomous tariff quotas will continue to cover only products complying with EU's high food safety and health standards. This step is key to resolving a long-standing dispute between the EU and the United States on measures imposed by the EU in 1989 on US exports of beef treated with certain growth-promoting hormones. It also underlines the EU's commitment to a positive transatlantic trade agenda.