

EU/China Agreement: cooperation on and protection of geographical indications

2020/0089M(NLE) - 11/11/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 633 votes to 13, with 39 abstentions a non-legislative resolution on the [draft Council decision](#) on the conclusion of the agreement between the European Union and the Government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications.

A positive signal

Members welcomed the cooperation agreement on geographical indications (GIs) and their protection between the EU and China as a strong signal of China's willingness to cooperate with the EU and a positive signal to the international community.

The resolution welcomed the high level of protection provided by the agreement for a list of 100 European and 100 Chinese GIs, which exceeds the current level of protection offered by the WTO TRIPS Agreement, in particular for food stuffs, but also for wines and spirits. In addition, a further 175 GIs from the EU and China respectively are to be protected within four years of the entry into force of the agreement.

Members called on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the agreement and to proceed swiftly with the enlargement of the agreement in order to protect as many GIs as possible that meet the criteria, including GIs for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, keeping Parliament duly informed of the progress of the negotiations.

Continuing dialogue with China

Members regretted that despite the protection offered by the agreement, some EU geographical indications cannot be exported to China because of Chinese food import standards. They called on the Commission to continue its dialogue with China on the recognition of EU food safety standards, which are among the highest in the world.

China was also invited to:

- remove unjustified barriers to the export of agri-food products from the European Union;
- ensure reciprocity in global trade relations;
- respect, improve and strictly implement and enforce sanitary and phytosanitary standards in order to avoid unfair competition;
- support the current multilateral framework for the protection of geographical indications by becoming a member of the WIPO Lisbon Agreement and the Geneva Act, in force since 26 February 2020.

Protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights

Parliament recalled that more than more than 80 % of counterfeit and pirated goods seized in the EU in 2018 and 2019 originate from China, accounting for a loss of some EUR 60 billion for EU Member States.

It underlined the continued importance of strict controls and testing on all imported products to detect counterfeit and fraudulent food products.

Towards a comprehensive investment agreement

Parliament expressed concern about the many barriers that EU companies and farmers face in accessing and operating in the Chinese market because of the state-run system in China.

Members stressed the need for a level playing field between the EU and China in trade and investment, with particular attention to reciprocity in market access, public procurement and financial services. They called on both sides to engage in constructive cooperation in this regard. They reiterated their call on China to make progress on an ambitious reform of the WTO, including comprehensive rules on industrial subsidies.

Significant and ambitious progress should be made in the negotiations for a comprehensive EU-China investment agreement to address current market asymmetries. The resolution stressed the importance of including an ambitious chapter on trade and sustainable development to protect human rights, including core labour standards, promote sustainable development and combat climate change in line with the Paris agreement.

Recalling the importance of the EU's strategic relationship with China, Parliament called on EU Member States and institutions to speak to China with one voice and in a coordinated manner.