Agricultural products and foodstuffs: designations of origin, geographical indications (amend. Regul. 2081/92/EEC)

1996/0159(CNS) - 17/12/1996

If the EU does not take action on this matter, its non-European trading partners will use the TRIP's agreement within the framework of the WTO to dictate their legislation on indications of origin. This was the message sent out by Mr FANTUZZI (PSE, I) when his report on the protection of geographical indications (PGI) and designations of origin (PDO) for agricultural products and foodstuffs was unanimously adopted by the committee (chairman: Mr JACOB (UPE, F)). The regulation which this proposal seeks to amend allows Member States to maintain national measures authorizing the use of indications of origin for agricultural products or foodstuffs for a period of no more than five years from the date of publication of the regulation. These statements could mislead the consumer where the true origin of a product which has been established as exclusive by Community registration is "usurped, imitated or evoked". The European Commission's current proposal makes provision for the transitional period to commence on the date on which the name is registered. However, the committee is calling for this transitional period to be increased to no more than seven years from the date of publication of the regulation. The rapporteur has pointed out that this period only related, by way of exception, to the simplified procedure for registering PDO or PGI and that it was time to put an end to this practice because it had delayed implementation deadlines. These delays in registration had prejudiced producers and consumers, who were showing an increasing interest in a real policy of quality and transparency, especially since the mad cow crisis.