

Geographical Indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products

2022/0089(COD) - 01/06/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 603 votes to 18 with 8 abstentions, **amendments** to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Union geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, and quality schemes for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2017/1001 and (EU) 2019/787 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

The matter has been referred to the committee responsible for interinstitutional negotiations.

The regulation would lay down rules governing the following quality schemes: (a) protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs) for wines, agricultural products and foodstuffs and geographical indications for spirit drinks; (b) traditional specialities guaranteed (TSGs).

Members stressed that high-quality products represent one of the biggest assets the Union has, both for its economy and cultural identity. Those products are the strongest representation of the “made in the EU” brand, recognisable throughout the whole world, which generate growth and preserve our heritage. Wines, spirit drinks and agricultural products are European assets that need to be further strengthened and protected.

Citizens and consumers have the right to expect any geographical indication and quality system to be backed up by a solid verification and control system, whether the product comes from the EU or a third country.

Geographical indications

The unitary and exclusive system of geographical indications, protecting the names of wines, spirit drinks and agricultural products which have characteristics, attributes or a reputation linked to their place of production, should: (a) help producers to obtain a fair return for the quality of their products; (b) contribute to the achievement of the objectives of rural development policy by supporting farming and processing activities and farming systems associated with high-quality products.

The system should:

- ensure that consumers receive reliable information and a guarantee of authenticity and traceability of the quality, reputation and other characteristics linked to the place of production of these products and can easily identify them on the market, including in the domain name system and in e-commerce;
- guarantee the simple, efficient and user-friendly registration of geographical indications, taking into account the uniform, appropriate and effective protection of intellectual property rights in the internal market, including the Union's digital markets;
- ensuring effective controls, enforcement, use and marketing throughout the EU, as well as in the domain name system and in e-commerce;
- preserving know-how and promoting and supporting local and regional products;

- ensure effective protection of the intellectual property rights of producers of these products on third-country markets.

According to Members, geographical indications should be **better protected online**.

Top level domain name registries and other domain name registries operating in the EU should revoke or transfer a domain name registered under that domain to the recognised producer group designated by the geographical indication concerned or to the competent authority of the Member State from which the geographical indication in question originates, if that domain name has been registered by its holder without any rights or legitimate interest in the geographical indication.

In particular, a producer group should be able to pursue legal action, including civil and criminal action, to ensure the offline and online protection of the geographical indication and the intellectual property rights directly related to it, including websites, domain names and e-commerce, and to claim damages.

The EUIPO should be empowered, under the delegated acts, to establish and manage an alert system monitoring registration of domain names in the Union which could conflict with the names included in the Union register of geographical indications.

Processed products

Parliament is calling for better protection of GIs in processed products. Processed products containing a GI ingredient should not be allowed to be named after the GI unless authorised to do so by the GI producers.

Commission scrutiny of registration applications

The examination period should not last more than five months from the date of submission of the application for registration. In duly justified cases, the scrutiny procedure could be extended by a maximum of three months. National authorities should handle most requests for changes to existing GI registrations without the Commission having to check them again.

The Commission should remain responsible for registration, amendment and cancellation procedures, due to a strong relationship with the Common Agricultural Policy and the expertise needed to ensure that the specificities of wines, spirit drinks and agricultural products are adequately assessed.

Producer groups

Producer groups should be given the means to better identify and market the specific characteristics of their products, as well as adequate resources to exercise their powers and responsibilities. Member States should be able to ensure that the contribution to the costs of exercising the powers and responsibilities of the recognised producer group is compulsory for all producers of products covered by the geographical indication concerned. A producer group could be set up on the initiative of interested producer groups.

Sustainability undertaking

To enable the adoption of sustainability commitments, producers should receive financial support, through pre-determined, specific and easily accessible funding, and should be properly informed of the opportunities arising from the adoption of sustainability commitments.

These commitments should contribute to one or more social, environmental or economic objectives, including:

- climate change mitigation and adaptation, including energy efficiency and decrease water consumption;
- preservation and sustainable use of soil, landscapes and natural resources;
- preservation of biodiversity and plants varieties, and transition to a circular economy;
- reduction of the use of pesticides, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the use of antimicrobials;
- improving animal health and welfare;
- attracting and sustaining young producers of products benefiting from a protected designation of origin or a protected geographical indication;
- contributing to the valorisation of rural areas as well as cultural and gastronomic heritage.

Recognition of the European system

All EU geographical indications should be protected under bilateral and multilateral trade and other international agreements through the recognition of the European system as such. In this respect, the EU should make major **commercial and diplomatic efforts** to ensure the protection of traditional practices that bring together historical, cultural and gastronomic heritage while ensuring sustainable production.