



Brussels, 15.9.2015
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2015/0205 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the signature, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products and amending the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

Both Parties, the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco, aim to protect geographical indications (GIs) on both sides in order to improve the conditions of bilateral trade, promote quality in the food chain and stimulate sustainable rural development under the terms of the Euro-Mediterranean Roadmap for Agriculture.

Article 9 of Protocol 1 and Article 8 of Protocol 2 to the Association Agreement with Morocco, as amended by the Agreement on Agriculture, made provision for opening negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

Those negotiations went smoothly. For the EU, the negotiations had two objectives: on the one hand, fostering the protection and use of geographical indications (the Kingdom of Morocco will protect the full list of EU geographical indications), and on the other hand intervention in the event of any misuse of EU geographical indications. The Kingdom of Morocco, for its part, has an interest to foster and protect its current geographical indications on EU territory and strengthen its relations with the EU.

The negotiations were concluded on 16 January 2015. The agreement provides for protection of geographical indications (PDOs and PGIs) which are protected in the respective Parties.

The objective of this proposal is to authorise the Council to designate the person(s) empowered to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Union, subject to its conclusion.

2. RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Not applicable

3. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

No budgetary implications

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular the first subparagraph of Article 207(4), in conjunction with Article 218(5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) On 14 November 2005 the Council authorised the Commission to conduct negotiations with the Kingdom of Morocco under the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part¹ (hereinafter the 'Association Agreement'), with a view to further liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products. The negotiations were to focus in particular on the protection of geographical indications.
- (2) The Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, the replacement of Protocols No 1, 2 and 3 and their Annexes and amendments to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part², (hereinafter the 'Agreement on Agriculture'), approved by Council Decision 2012/497/EU³, entered into force on 1 October 2012.
- (3) Article 9 of Protocol 1 and Article 8 of Protocol 2 to the Association Agreement, as amended by the Agreement on Agriculture, made provision for opening negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, at the latest within three months of the date of entry into force of the said Protocols. The negotiations, which began in December 2012, have been successfully concluded and the Agreement has been initialled.

¹ OJ L 70, 18.3.2000, p. 2.

² OJ L 241, 7.9.2012, p. 4.

³ OJ L 241, 7.9.2012, p. 2.

- (4) The Agreement aims to promote and enhance quality production, foster geographical indications and designations of origin by ensuring their protection and facilitate bilateral trade under the terms of the Rabat Euro-Mediterranean Roadmap for Agriculture of 2005.
- (5) The Parties have adopted convergent legislation on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin in their respective territory.
- (6) The Agreement will allow the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin.
- (7) Each of the Parties has conducted an examination and public consultation on the protection of its geographical indications and designations of origin.
- (8) The Agreement should therefore be signed on behalf of the Union, subject to its conclusion at a later date, and the Joint Declaration on the protection and promotion of geographical indications for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products should be approved,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The signature of the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products and amending the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part and of the Joint Declaration thereto is hereby approved on behalf of the Union, subject to conclusion of the said Agreement⁴.

Article 2

The Council Secretariat-General shall establish the instrument of full powers for the person(s) indicated by the negotiator of the Agreement to sign the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters, subject to its conclusion.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*

⁴ The text of the Agreement will be published together with the decision on its conclusion.