

European Parliament rapporteur Paolo De Castro wants to improve proposal on geographical indications

Brussels, 20/09/2022 (Agence Europe) – The European Parliament’s rapporteur on the sensitive issue of geographical indications, Paolo De Castro (S&D, Italian), considers, in a working document to be presented to the European Parliament Agriculture Committee on 29 September, that the objectives of the proposal are good, but that it needs to be improved so that the reform *“leads to the strengthening and renewal of a system that is unrivalled in the world, capable of creating value without the need to invest public funds”*.

The European Parliament is thus starting its work on the revision of the Regulation on geographical indications. De Castro’s draft report could be presented on 8 November, with final adoption in the European Parliament Agriculture Committee expected around February or March 2023.

EUIPO. At EU Council level, the working group on GIs on Tuesday 20 September analysed suggestions for articles presented by the Czech Presidency of the EU Council on the role of the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).

On the competences of the EUIPO, De Castro essentially considers that this agency can be counted on for a certain number of tasks (protection of GIs on the Internet, opposition procedures, etc.), but that control must remain in the hands of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture (DG AGRI) and the national authorities.

Several EU agriculture ministers had criticised aspects of the proposal to transfer new powers to the EUIPO for the examination of GI cases in June.

However, the EUIPO has already been examining applications for four years, as its director, Christian Archambeau, pointed out (see [EUROPE B12952A2](#)).

Producer groups, GI protection. The rapporteur welcomes the objective of strengthening the role of producer groups by replicating the best practices already implemented by some Member States and preserving the existing specificities and flexibilities in terms of recognition. Furthermore, he believes that the proposal represents a step forward in the protection of GIs, but that there is still room for improvement, starting with the definition of evocation. Such a definition *“should represent only a minimum basis, which does not limit the possibility for the EU Court of Justice to broaden its interpretation, perhaps by adding additional elements (in addition to terms and symbols) that could constitute a direct and clear link with a GI, such as colour or taste”*, the working document says.

As regards ingredients, the use of GI names in the name of a processed product should be prohibited, unless the producer group concerned or the competent national authority authorises their use through an official authorisation procedure.

Finally, De Castro believes that the introduction, but only on a voluntary basis (and not mandatory), of additional **sustainability** commitments to be respected in the production of GI products is certainly a “*positive*” element “*that can enhance the reputation and visibility of a GI*”.

The Commission adopted its proposal on 31 March this year, aiming in particular to increase the use of geographical indications throughout the EU.

Link to Mr De Castro’s working document: <https://eur.eu/f/35u> (Original version in French by Lionel Changeur)