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Subject: Recommendation from the Commission to the Council authorising the Commission to open negotiations with the Eastern countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries for agreements on protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs

Delegations will find attached the partially declassified version of the above-mentioned document.



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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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COVER NOTE

from: Secretary-General of the European Commission,
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

date of receipt: 19 April 2007

to: Mr Javier SOLANA, Secretary-General/High Representative

Subject: Recommendation from the Commission to the Council authorising the
Commission to open negotiations with the Eastern countries covered by the
European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries for agreements on
protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs

Delegations will find attached Commission document SEC(2007) 491 final.

Encl.: SEC(2007) 491 final



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 18.4.2007
SEC(2007) 491 final

RESTREINT UE

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

authorising the Commission to open negotiations with the Eastern countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries for agreements on protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs

A. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The policy to internationally promote geographical indications and widen the protection of existing geographical indications (GIs) is one of the priority strategies for enhancing sustainability in international trade of agricultural products. This should allow for improving quality of agricultural products, limiting deceptive practices and avoiding usurpation of prestigious denominations. It will help by adding value to the EU agricultural exports and thus accentuating the competitiveness of the EU economy. **NOT DECLASSIFIED** .

Presently, the creation of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has contributed, *inter alia*, to enhancing the key importance for the EU of the Mediterranean and Eastern European markets. Within the action plans established with each of these countries, leading to future Neighbouring Agreements, the issue of geographical indications occupies a central role in the EU agricultural strategy. Some of these action plans call explicitly for the negotiation of an agreement on geographical indications.

The Mediterranean countries already benefit from a general mandate mentioning the protection of GIs'. Therefore, to attend to the EU trade interests in all other closest markets and in order to complete the coverage of the whole area, the Commission considers it opportune to request directives for negotiations with the East European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries¹. **NOT DECLASSIFIED** .

Timetable

Negotiations will start as from the adoption of these negotiating directives with those countries which have already expressed their readiness to enter into negotiation with the EC. Bearing in mind the large number of countries potentially involved, the agreements will be gradually put in place.

B. RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the above, the Commission recommends that:

- the Council authorise the Commission to negotiate with the Eastern countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries agreements aiming at the protection of geographical indications on agricultural products and foodstuffs;
- the Council appoint a special Committee to assist in these tasks, in this case Article 133 Committee;
- the Council issue the attached negotiating directives.

¹ The Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The EFTA countries are: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

ANNEX

Directives for the negotiation of agreements on protection of geographical indications on agricultural products and foodstuffs with the Eastern countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EFTA countries

1. General objective

Conclusion of agreements on protection of geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs.

2. Content of the agreements

– **NOT DECLASSIFIED**

With regard to the other agricultural products and foodstuffs:

- the agreements' provisions will cover the protection of geographical indications, which includes, particularly, the elimination of misuses or abuses of geographical indications.