

Brussels, 17 December 2009

## **Conclusion of negotiations between the European Union and Switzerland on the protection of geographical indications**

***On 11 December 2009, the European Union and Switzerland concluded negotiations on a bilateral agreement for the protection of their respective Geographical Indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs. After finalisation of the preliminary procedures, the draft agreement will protect the Geographical Indications of each of the two parties on the territory of the other.***

The draft agreement covers the approximately 800 Geographical Indications (GIs) currently registered in the EU and 20 or so GIs registered in Switzerland. This will ensure that the entire range of Geographical Indications is protected, as the agricultural trade agreement between the EU and Switzerland, in force since 1 June 2002, already covers the protection of wines and spirit drinks. The draft agreement will introduce a mechanism for updates and makes provision for regular consultations, which will be of particular use when it comes to integrating new Geographical Indications.

The draft agreement is a response to the willingness expressed by the Member States to promote the protection of Geographical Indications internationally, and is a reflection of the converging views of the European Union and Switzerland on this matter.

The conclusion of an agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the protection of GIs will also have a positive impact on bilateral trade and in particular on Community exports of high valued added agricultural products. Switzerland occupies third place after the USA and Russia in terms of export value (EUR 4.8 billion) in the bilateral trade of agricultural products and processed agricultural products. A large proportion of these exports consists in a vast range of quality products. The draft agreement can serve only to consolidate and improve the position of food products protected by Geographical Indications on the Swiss market and, in more general terms, reinforce the European Union's quality policy.