



2015/0203(NLE)

08.03.2017

## DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Fisheries

for the Committee on International Trade

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion 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

(COM(2015)0446 – C8-0000/2015 – 2015/0203(NLE))

Rapporteur: Peter van Dalen

PA\_Leg\_Consent

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

This Agreement, in form of an exchange of letters, between the Kingdom of Morocco and the European Union concerns protection of geographical indications and designations of origin (GIs) for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products; the agreement, which is annexed to this exchange of letters, forms an integral part of the Association Agreement, as Protocol 6.

This Protocol is the result of the negotiations which took place in accordance with the Euro-Mediterranean Roadmap for agriculture ('Rabat Roadmap'), adopted on 28 November 2005 at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs with a view to speeding up the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

This negotiation started by virtue of Article 9 of Protocol 1 to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, on the other part ('Association Agreement'), to establish reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

The Annexes of the Protocol collect relatively 24 geographical indications on fisheries products, from Germany, France, Greece, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Poland and Sweden.

The Committee on Fisheries has always promoted ecological and geographical labels on fish. Traceability of captures, breeding, harvesting or processing may contribute significantly to an increase in support from both producers and consumers.

The Committee on Fisheries considers that any labels used in the marketplace must be independently monitored, in order to be absolutely reliable and credible for the consumer. The Committee on Fisheries believes that this Agreement marks a crucial step in progress on an EU- Morocco Free Trade Agreement in the future.

The Committee on Fisheries is aware of the sensitivities surrounding previous negotiations and the origin of products from Western Sahara and believes that all trade agreements should be concluded in a context fully respecting human rights.

The Committee on Fisheries takes into account the judgment of the European Court of Justice of 21 December 2016 (Case C-104/16P) and its implications; the GI agreement should hence not cover products from Western Sahara until the conflict between Morocco and the Front Polisario has been resolved according to international law.

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The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to recommend that Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the

Agreement.