

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0227/09
by Urszula Gacek (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: 'Łącko apples' - Application to register a geographical indication for an agricultural product or foodstuff

Łącko apples are produced in an area lying within part of the territory of Małopolska region. This area includes the municipalities of Łącko, Podegrodzie and Stary Sącz, situated in the district of Nowy Sącz, and the municipality of Łukowica, in the district of Limanowa. Any producer wishing to produce a product bearing a protected indication is required to submit a declaration with the Stowarzyszenia Łącka Droga Owocowa association in Łącko.

According to historical sources, fruit-growing was known already in 12th century. Dried fruits were transported along the Dunajec to the Wisła and on towards Gdańsk, from where they were shipped to other countries in Europe. Łącko orchards are also described in documents dating from the 16th century as farm and parish gardens.

After WWII there were some 600 000 fruit trees in Łącko and the surrounding area. According to current figures, there are now 1 148 000 apple trees in the municipality of Łącko, of which 6 000 are more than 25 years old.

According to information from the Polish Agriculture Ministry of 2 July 2007, the application to register 'Łącko apples' as a protected geographical indication was sent to the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The award of a protected geographical indication will make this product more competitive and will help to protect the traditions and cultural heritage of the Małopolska region.

As an MEP for the Małopolska region, I should like to enquire:

- whether the Commission has completed its checks on the application's compliance with the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.
- when a final decision will be taken on 'Łącko apples'.
- what stage has been reached in the processing of the above application.