

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0598/09
by Urszula Gacek (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Wiśnia nadwiślanka (Vistula cherry) - Application to register a geographical indication for an agricultural product or foodstuff

'Vistula cherry' is the name given to a local variety of juicy cherries. This variety, which is adapted to the local climate, was also known in the past as the 'Słupia cherry' (in Polish, *Słupska*, *Słupianka* or *Słupiec*) because it was first planted in Słupia Nadbrzeżna, in the early 20th century.

The Vistula cherry grows best in the Vistula Valley, between Ożarów, Tarłów and Lipsko, mainly because of the highly calcareous soil in the area. The area's microclimate also plays an important role. In 2007, there were 3 829 hectares of orchards, including 1 805 hectares of cherry trees, in the county (*powiat*) of Opatów. there are 886 hectares of cherry trees (mainly Vistula cherries) in the municipality of Tarłów and 418 hectares in the municipality of Ożarów.

The application for the Vistula cherry to be registered as a regional product is based on a joint initiative by the Opatów county authorities, the local branch of the Agricultural Market Agency and representatives of the Nadwiślanka agricultural cooperative. The designation 'regional product' will, among other things, enable the fruit itself and the Opatów area as a whole to be more widely promoted.

According to information released by the Polish Agriculture Ministry in December 2006, the application to register *Wiśnia nadwiślanka* as a protected geographical indication was sent to the Commission by decision of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on 29 December 2006 in accordance with the Act of 17 December 2004 on the registration and protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs and on traditional products.

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 Świętokrzyska region.

As an MEP from the Świętokrzyska region, I should like to enquire:

- what stage has been reached in the processing of the above application?
- when the Commission expects to take a decision on the matter?
- why it is taking the Commission three years to deal with registration?