

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0906/10  
by Kader Arif (S&D)  
to the Commission

Subject: Extension of TRIPS Article 23 protection

In a context of fierce global competition, it is essential that the negotiations in progress within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) result in an agreement that will foster mutually effective protection of geographical indicators. A small number of countries would appear to be exerting pressure on WTO members to take the negotiations on the extension of the protection afforded under Article 23 of the TRIPS Agreement, out of the Doha Round. That article only currently affords protection to wines and spirits which have been produced according to the traditions of a specific area. Article 22 of the TRIPS Agreement clearly does not guarantee sufficient protection of European foodstuff production, as is demonstrated by the numerous cases of usurpation of geographical names on third-country markets.

Can the Commission give an assurance that it will defend the extension of Article 23 protection in the WTO negotiations?

In addition to ensuring that the necessary progress is made on this issue, can the new Commissioner indicate what strategy will be used to ensure a positive result for Europe in the Doha Round negotiations, in particular as regards strengthening the international protection for geographical indicators?