

**Major interpellation for written answer G-001003/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 139

Mara Bizzotto

on behalf of the ID Group

Subject: Strengthening the system for protecting PDO and PGI denominations in the EU after the Prosecco/Prosek case

On 22 September 2021 the Commission published in the Official Journal¹ the application for the protection of the traditional term 'Prosek' submitted by Croatia for four wines with a protected designation of origin (PDO), under Article 113 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products.

The application for recognition of the name 'Prosek', which is not provided for in Croatia's EU accession treaty, clearly conflicts with the Italian PDO 'Prosecco', which is recognised and protected by EU law and which protects more than 8 000 Italian producers.

On 15 July 2013, in reply to question E-006284/2013², then Commissioner Ciolos stated that: 'the use in trade of the term in question may raise legal problems [...], since it could conflict with the protection of the Italian PDO 'Prosecco'. The Croatian authorities are aware of that legal point of view'.

By publishing in the Official Journal the application for the name 'Prosek', the Commission has set a dangerous precedent that seriously jeopardises the entire PDO and PGI system in the EU.

Any recognition of the Croatian wine would be in breach of the EU-protected system of protected designations of origin and geographical indications which, pursuant to Article 103(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, '[...] shall be protected against any misuse, imitation or evocation, even if the [...] protected name is translated [...]']'.

The judgment of the Court of Justice of the EU in Case C-783/19³ on the name 'Champanillo' (little champagne) stated that evocation may result from a 'conceptual similarity' between the PDO and the designation at issue [...]; it also stated that the decisive criterion is whether consumers, when confronted with the disputed name, have an image triggered directly in their mind that is that of the product covered by the PDO.

It is therefore vital to strengthen the system of geographical indications that guarantee the authenticity, quality and protection of more than 3 400 names of EU agricultural and food products, fisheries and aquaculture products, wines, spirits and grapevine products.

In the public consultation which ended on 9 April 2021, the Commission invited stakeholders to present their proposals to improve the geographical indications regime; this will be followed by legislative action by the Commission for the future reform of the EU Geographical Indications system in the context of the Farm to Fork strategy.

In view of this, can the Commission answer the following questions:

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021XC0922%2801%29&qid=1632301627306>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2013-006284-ASW_EN.html

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<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?oqp=&for=&mat=or&lgreg=en&jge=&td=%3BALL&jur=C%2CT%2CF&num=C-783%252F19&page=1&dates=&pcs=Oor&lg=&pro=&nat=or&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&language=en&avg=&cid=42231032>

1. In the reform of the EU Geographical Indications system, how does it intend to tighten up the rules governing designations, homonyms and evocations in order to ensure maximum protection for all PDOs and PGIs from any attempt at fraud?
2. How will it ensure that the EU is able to defend its PDO/PGI/GI/TSG denominations, both in the internal market and outside Europe, from multiple attempts at fraudulent or instrumental use by countries, organisations or private companies?