



**2020/0089 M (NLE)**

20.10.2020

# **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 between the European Union and the government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation on, and protection of, geographical indications (2020/0089 M (NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Nuno Melo

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the economic interest of the agreement between the European Union and China on geographical indications (GIs), given that agri-food exports from the EU to China grew at a sustained rate between 2010 and 2019, particularly products usually protected by GIs, such as wine and spirits; points out that this happened despite the well-known counterfeiting problem on the Chinese market, for example, of wines;
2. States, however, that the importance of the agreement goes beyond the volume of goods exchanged between the EU and China; understands that, by signing this agreement, China is taking an important step towards recognising the EU's GI system; considers that the EU's strategy is rooted in monetising the prestige attached to some names, regions and traditions when exporting GI-protected agri-food products around the world and preventing these names from being 'stolen' by competitors;
3. Points out that the agreement is of limited interest as far as fisheries and aquaculture products are concerned; highlights that, of the 275 GIs from the EU covered by the agreement, there is only one for an aquaculture product, Marennes Oléron oysters (France), and only one for a fish product (Scottish farmed salmon); emphasises, however, that this agreement should be strongly supported as it allows the inclusion and recognition in the future of EU fisheries and aquaculture products;
4. Recalls that the text of the agreement and the list of GIs were finalised before the European treaties ceased to apply in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Brexit); recalls in this regard that there are eight products in total from the United Kingdom in the preliminary agreed lists; urges the Commission to consult the Member States and to replace these products with products from EU Member States as soon as possible after the Brexit transition period ends;
5. Welcomes China's commitment to strengthening its legal framework for protecting the GIs covered by this agreement; calls on China to make every effort to step up its legal framework for tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by Chinese vessels around the world and to enforce it more strictly;
6. Points out that, taking into account the EU's wide variety of GIs, the number of fish products under the agreement is limited and further products, especially fisheries and aquaculture products, should be included at later stages, when possible;
7. Regrets the non-inclusion of more EU fisheries and aquaculture GIs in the list of protected indications covered by this agreement, when there are several Chinese fisheries and aquaculture products included in it; calls on the Commission to include in the agreement fisheries and aquaculture GIs such as Mejillón de Galicia (a mussel from Galicia, Spain), the first sea product to obtain an indication of this kind within the EU;
8. Welcomes the provision that producers of protected GI products can apply directly to the Joint Committee envisioned in this agreement if their product is not included in the

initially agreed lists, and also if their product subsequently acquires protection after the agreement enters into force; calls on current and potential stakeholders, including in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors, to explore this provision;

9. Stresses the need for the EU and China to work together to tackle and control ‘dumping’ and other practices that distort normal market rules and put the sustainability of EU businesses and jobs at risk;
10. Recalls nevertheless that the European Union has to be aware of the unacceptable practices carried out by the Chinese fishing fleet: notes that China has the worst ranking among the top five fishing nations in terms of global illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; considers that China lacks transparency in the registration of vessels in its fishing fleet around the globe and that it grants its companies substantial amounts of subsidies, thus creating unfair competition for the EU fishing sector; considers that such behaviour exerts an excessive level of pressure on resources and the environment; notes that numerous cases of forced labour and wrongdoing towards fishermen on Chinese vessels have been reported by different media;
11. Urges both parties to this agreement to strengthen their cooperation and coordination with regard to the protection and use of GIs at regional and/or global levels through the corresponding organisations and fora.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	12.10.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 25 -: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Clara Aguilera, François-Xavier Bellamy, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Isabel Carvalhais, Rosanna Conte, Rosa D'Amato, Fredrick Federley, Giuseppe Ferrandino, Søren Gade, Francisco Guerreiro, Anja Hazekamp, Niclas Herbst, Pierre Karleskind, Predrag Fred Matic, Francisco José Millán Mon, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Grace O'Sullivan, Caroline Roose, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Ruža Tomašić, Peter van Dalen, Theodoros Zagorakis
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Nicolás González Casares, Valentino Grant, Ivo Hristov, Petros Kokkalis

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

25	<b>+</b>
ECR	Ruža TOMAŠIĆ
GUE/NGL	Petros KOKKALIS
ID	Rosanna CONTE, Valentino GRANT
NI	Rosa D'AMATO
PPE	François-Xavier BELLAMY, Niclas HERBST, Francisco José MILLÁN MON, Cláudia MONTEIRO DE AGUIAR, Annie SCHREIJER-PIERIK, Peter VAN DALEN, Theodoros ZAGORAKIS
RENEW	Izaskun BILBAO, Fredrick FEDERLEY, Søren GADE, Pierre KARLESKIND
S&D	Clara AGUILERA, Isabel CARVALHAIS, Giuseppe FERRANDINO, Nicolás GONZALEZ CASARES, Ivo HRISTOV, Predrag Fred MATIĆ
VERTS/ALE	Francisco GUERREIRO, Grace O'SULLIVAN, Caroline ROOSE
1	<b>-</b>
GUE/NGL	Anja HAZEKAMP
0	<b>0</b>

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention