

# Council adopts law to strengthen protection for geographical indications for foods and drinks

Today, the Council formally adopted a regulation improving the protection of **geographical indications** (GIs) and other quality schemes for **wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products**, both online and offline, while also simplifying the registration procedure for GIs.

The regulation will bring tangible benefits to the rural economy and safeguard the EU's **gastronomic heritage** across the world.

## Main improvements

Among the improvements to the existing GI system are the following:

- a **strengthened role for producer groups** by granting them power and responsibilities to manage their GIs, including to represent their members in intellectual property enforcement networks
- the possibility for member states to designate producer groups as '**recognised producer groups**' with **exclusive rights** to be exercised on behalf of all producers of the product designated by a GI
- a **reaffirmed Commission role** in the examination of applications for registering products as GIs
- greater **protection** of geographical indications including **online**, in domain names that contain geographical indications, via geo-blocking; to that end, the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) has been entrusted to set up a **domain name information and alert system**
- greater protection of a GI name designating an **ingredient** when it is used in the name of a related processed food; in those cases, recognised producer groups will have to be notified and the percentage of the ingredient will need to be indicated

## Next steps

The regulation will now be signed and published in the Official Journal of the EU. It will enter into force on the twentieth day following its publication.

## Background

Geographical indications are **intellectual property rights** that protect the names of products with specific features or qualities or a specific reputation and which are linked to their area of production.

Those products are protected against copying or fraud, while the geographical system guarantees that they have been manufactured in accordance with high standards in their region of origin.

The names of agri-food products and wines are protected as **Protected Designations of Origin (PDO)** and **Protected Geographical Indications (PGI)**, and those of spirit drinks as **Geographical Indications (GI)**. Famous examples include Parmigiano Reggiano, Champagne, Kalamata olives, Polish Vodka, Queso Manchego and Gruyère.

The European Union also protects Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG). These are the names of agricultural products that emphasise the traditional aspects of a product without being linked to a specific geographical area. Examples of famous TSGs are Pizza Napoletana and Vieille Kriek.

These quality schemes give producers a **competitive advantage** by allowing them to better market their products and increase their sales, including with the support of local producer groups.

- [Strengthening geographical indications: Council and Parliament strike deal \(press release, 24 October 2023\)](#)
- [Geographical indications for foods and drinks \(background information\)](#)