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NATIONAL CONVENTION ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Session 4, Working Group III (Agriculture and Consumer Protection)

Topic: Quality Schemes of protecting and promoting the products - Geographical Indication and Denomination of Origin

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Recent developments and Recommendations

- EU quality policy aims to protecting the names of specific products to promote their unique characteristics, linked to their geographical origin as well as traditional know-how.
- Product names can be granted with a 'geographical indication' (GI) if they have a specific link to the place where they are made. Recognised as intellectual property, geographical indications - important role in trade negotiations between the EU and other countries.
- This may help consumers to trust and distinguish quality products and assist producers to market their products better.
- Products included in these schemes may be: wines, cheeses, hams, sausage, olives, beer + regional breads, fruits, and vegetables.
- For these quality schemes, even non-EU countries are eligible to apply, by sending their applications directly, or via their national authorities, to the European Commission..

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- Albania, in this regard has adopted in 2019 the Law No 8/2019 of 26.02.2019 “On quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs”. This law creates the quality schemes and defines the responsible bodies for the recognition and protection of denominations of origin, geographical indications and traditional specialties guaranteed for agricultural products and foodstuff.

- Following legal acts have been approved based on the Law No. 8/2019 including:
 - Decision of Council of Ministers No. 677 of 16.10.2019 “On the approval of national logo with “Traditional Speciality Guarantee” for agricultural products and foodstuffs”;
 - Decision of Council of Ministers No. 860 of 24.12.2019 “On functioning, duration, organisation and tasks of Quality Schemes Commission for agricultural products and foodstuffs”;
 - Guideline of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development No. 7 of 21.04.2020 “On the form and content of the register of quality products”;
 - Order of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development No. 424 of 16.10.2020 “On the form and content of the quality certificate” confirming the compliance of the agricultural and food products with the specifications;
 - Order of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development No. 425 of 16.10.2020 “On the format of application and opposition”.

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- The Organic Production Commission (CPC) is responsible for approving and supervising the control bodies for the certification of organic products. This institution is a newly established one with the Law no. 8/2019 and there should be a detailed focus on consolidating its role and position.
- Main functions of CPC are carried out by the Food Safety Policy Unit and include: drafting of the legislation; registering organic operators; and collecting and preparing statistical information on organic production. It is assessed as important for further training and increasing of capacities and skills for the staff of this institution in order to implement their functions and duties properly and efficiently.
- Financial support for organic farming through direct schemes has continued and has been increased, including certified biological farms and in conversion farms. Yet it is assessed that more work should be done especially in providing information in order to reach a wider group of beneficiaries;
- Secondly there should be on focus offering of trainings and workshops to inform the potential beneficiaries on their opportunities of funding, about the procedures and legislative and technical issues linked with the application.
- Even though the Law “On quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs” has been adopted only recently, in 2019, still there is a need for the completion of the legal framework for three quality schemes of EU including: 1) protected designations of origin (PDO), 2) protected geographical indications (PGI) and 3) traditional specialties guaranteed (TSG);