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The EU institutions provisionally agree on promotion measures for agricultural products

Under the Hellenic Presidency, the Council and the European Parliament reached today a tentative agreement *ad referendum* on the draft regulation on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries ([16591/13](#)), at an informal trilogue meeting which took place this afternoon.

Tomorrow, the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) will be fully debriefed on this agreement and will be invited to endorse the final compromise text. Ultimately, the draft regulation will be presented to the European Parliament for a first reading plenary vote, and then to Council for adoption.

This draft regulation renews the legal framework for the promotion of European agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries in the context of the very competitive environment the EU faces today.

It provides that measures should follow a strategy of identifying priorities on markets and products or messages to be highlighted. As the CAP reform encourages farmers to organise themselves, the scheme will be opened up to new beneficiaries, such as producer organisations. Strict guidelines will be established as regards the possibilities for mentioning the origin of products or brand names.

P R E S S

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The draft Regulation provides also the development of new technical support services for stakeholders, favouring the exchange of information on information provision and promotion measures or good practices and allowing their expertise to be developed. It also aims to simplify the management of the information and promotion policy. Direct management of multi-country programmes will make it easier for them to be set up and implemented.

Compared to the present situation, there will be a gradual but significant increase in the budget allocated to information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products (from EUR 61.5 million in the 2013 budget to EUR 200 million in 2020).

The Council, the European Parliament and the Commission agreed ad referendum on the following points:

Eligible products

Information and promotion measures can cover:

- the products listed in Annex I to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE);
- food products listed in an Annex to the draft regulation based on the model of Annex I to Regulation EU No 1151/2012¹ on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs to which cotton and sweetcorn has been added;
- The spirit drinks and wine with a protected geographical indication and also beer under certain conditions;
- In the context of multiproducts promotion, the fishery and aquaculture products listed in Annex 1 to Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013² on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products.

National quality schemes

National quality schemes referred to under the new legal framework for rural development (Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013³) can be promoted in this framework.

¹ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p.1

² OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1

³ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 487

Indications of brands

Information provision and promotion measures must not be brand-oriented, however, indication of brand in promotion programme is now possible under certain conditions defined further in an implementing act in respect of internal market. This provision is expected open further the possibilities to improve the promotion of agricultural products.

Proposing organisations

In order to increase the number of programmes and improve their quality, the range of beneficiaries has been extended. In addition to trade or inter-trade organisations and producer organisations in the EU, the proposing organisations now include, under certain conditions, some other bodies of the agrifood sector.

Involvement of the member states in the promotion programmes

Member states will play an active role in assisting the proposing organisations in the preparation of their proposals at a national level; however, once submitted to the Commission, those proposals will have to be assessed at EU level, in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012¹ and its implementing rules. However, the Commission will provide appropriate information of the Member States on all programmes proposed and selected.

Financing of the measures

The EU financial contribution to the promotion programmes will be:

- 70% of the eligible expenditure in the case of simple programmes on the internal market;
- 80% of the eligible expenditure in the case of multi programmes on the internal market and all programmes in foreign countries;
- 85% of the eligible expenditure in the case of crises with no distinction between simple and multi programmes.

In the absence of a national co-financing, this will give SMEs and producer organisations the financial capability to engage in such actions. The EU financial contribution will be increased respectively to 75%, 85% and 90% of the eligible expenditure for the proposing organisations established in Member States receiving financial assistance in accordance with Articles 136 and 143 TFUE on 1 January 2014 or thereafter.

¹ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1