



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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New framework for quality schemes in agriculture adopted today

The Council adopted a regulation on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([41/12](#)). This regulation should achieve a simplified regime for the quality schemes under one single legal instrument and a more robust framework for the protection and promotion of quality agricultural products.

The main elements of the regulation include the reinforcement of the existing scheme for protected designations of origin and geographical indications (PDOs and PGIs); overhauling the traditional specialities guaranteed scheme (TSGs), and laying down a new framework for the development of optional quality terms to provide consumers with further information.

As regards the PDOs and PGIs (excluding wines, aromatised wines and spirits), the main elements designed to strengthen and simplify the scheme are the following:

- the recognition of the roles and responsibilities of groups applying for registration of names with regard to monitoring, promotion and communication;
- the reinforcement and clarification of the level of protection of registered names and the common EU symbols;
- the shortening of procedure to register names;

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The time period for a product to be considered traditional in the definition of TSGs is set to 30 years as some Member States had difficulties justifying 50 years of use (as originally proposed by the Commission). The renewed EU scheme for TSGs is simplified (registration process streamlined by shortening delays, procedures aligned on PDO-PGI ones) and targeted in several respects to reinforce the credibility of the scheme.

Optional quality terms aim to communicate value added characteristics of the products. A new optional quality term has been introduced in the regulation: "mountain product". Also, the Commission will have to assess whether to create one on "product of island farming" and "local farming and direct sales".

According to the agreement between the Council and the Parliament, once all procedural steps are completed, including a vote by the Parliament at the plenary session, the regulation on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs will be adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in the first reading.
