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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

on geographical indications and traditional specialities guaranteed protected in the EU

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The document sets out the results of the Commission's evaluation of the European Union (EU) quality policy on Geographical Indications (GIs) and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSGs) protected in the EU. This covers almost 3 400 GIs and 64 TSGs originating from EU Member States. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the GI and TSG policy has achieved its objectives. The evaluation examines the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the GI and TSG framework.

Overall, the objectives of GIs and TSGs have been achieved **effectively**. The schemes offer a wide range of possible benefits for stakeholders, such as securing fair return and competition for farmers and producers. However, they are not applied systematically in all Member States. The main limits are the low consumer awareness and understanding in some Member States and certain weaknesses in controls at the downstream stages of the value chain. The other core policy objectives - ensuring the respect of GIs as intellectual property and the integrity of the internal market and helping the producers of TSG to safeguard traditional methods of production and recipes- are in general achieved. During the period 2010 to 2020, the number of registered GI names increased by 27%, while the number of registered TSG names doubled.

However, as regards TSGs, the specific objective of the regulation is not fully achieved. The main element, which hinders the success of TSGs, is the perceived low added value for producers to register a TSG. This is due to a combination of different factors: a low consumer awareness of TSG; a complex registration process; no Intellectual Property Right protection, so TSG does not prevent operators from other geographical regions from using the name as long as they respect the product specifications.

GIs/TSGs are assessed to be **efficient**. They provide several benefits for producers despite of the complex and lengthy procedures for registration, while the costs for public bodies (at EU and national levels) are low, at an estimate 0.12% of the total sales value.

The schemes are assessed to be **relevant** for both private stakeholders and public authorities. Although environmental protection and animal welfare are not the main objectives for GI/TSG production, the producer groups that were surveyed said that some product specifications take account of environmental and animal welfare issues.

In terms of **coherence**, no major incompatibility was identified, regarding GIs and EU trade marks, GIs/TSGs and national/regional schemes, and GIs/TSGs and other EU policies.

There is a clear **EU added value**, because GIs and TSGs contribute both to the integrity of the internal market and common standards for trade with non-EU countries.

As regards **lessons learned**, besides the above-mentioned weaknesses in control and enforcement (downstream market), and low awareness and understanding of the schemes by consumers, the following points can be highlighted:

- Differences in implementation cause difficulties for enforcing producers' Intellectual Property Right outside the Member State of production. In addition, GIs cover a wide

range of products and are sold through various outlets (including online), which further hampers their effective enforcement.

- Another issue is closely linked to the Commission's new political objectives, in particular the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy. Despite the sharper focus on sustainability concerns in recent years, GI and TSG production does not or not systematically take them into consideration.
- Producer groups play a pivotal role in the implementation of GIs and TSGs. However, the evaluation found that the tasks they are entitled to conduct highly differ among the various sectors and between the Member States as they are laid down at EU level only for the agri-food sector and not for wines, aromatised wine products and spirit drinks.
- Lengthy and complex registration and amendments procedures, both at national and EU level, are considered the main irritant and source of administrative burden.
- The limited number of products registered as TSGs, not constituting an Intellectual Property Right, points to a lack of interest in this scheme and the difficulty to protect traditional production methods across the EU.
- There is abundant information on GIs/TSGs, but the level of detail varies and the available data is not structured in a database, so not easily searchable.