

Are geographical indications heading towards more environment-friendly Product Specifications? An analysis of PDO-PGI amendments in the fruit and vegetable sector

Xiomara F. Quiñones-Ruiz^a, Hanna Forster^a, Andrea Marescotti^b, Marianne Penker^a, Giovanni Belletti^b, Silvia Scaramuzzi^b, Kristina Broscha^a, Christine Altenbuchner^a

^aUniversity of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria

^bUniversity of Florence, Italy

Abstract: *Despite the extensive GI literature, there are few studies providing insights into the modifications to product specifications (PSs) of PDO-PGI products after their legal recognition. The aim of this paper is to understand where and when the amendments to PSs occurred, what was amended, the direction of the phenomenon (more flexible vs more restrictive PSs), and justifications given by producers for amendments, to check whether PDO-PGI products are heading towards more environmentally-friendly rules. The paper is focused on the EU and analyses all PDO-PGI PSs amendments approved for the product class 1.6 Fruit, vegetables, and cereals fresh or processed (thereafter fruit and vegetables). According to the EU DOOR Database, there are 357 PDO-PGI products registered in the class 1.6 and 60 approved amendments. We designed a database to manage all the information, using coding guidelines to assess the changes on geographical area, farm and processing level and final product characteristics. The most important and frequent amendments in the PSs dealt with variations at farm level (e.g., number of plant varieties, admitted density and yield) and final product characteristics (e.g., weight, chemical composition). Regarding direction, overall amendments brought to higher flexibility, both at farm level and final product characteristics, particularly in Italy and Spain, while France showed a more diversified situation. Changes affected land-use/biodiversity and the use of chemical inputs. In general, amendments aim at improving the competitive position of producers allowing for higher flexibility in production, and the environment seems to be instrumentally mobilized to justify flexibility rather than being an objective per se.*

Keywords: *geographical indications, product specification, sustainability, environment-friendly, PDO-PGI, quality policy, origin products*