

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

WTO and bilateral agreements

Michel PETIT

(Professeur, IAM Montpellier)

Food Quality Certification Conference

Brussels, 5/6 February 2007

INTRODUCTION

- REFLECTION ON THE NATURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AFFECTING FOOD QUALITY CERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY THOSE RESULTING FROM INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
- PERSPECTIVE OF AN ECONOMIST DEALING WITH THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS
- OUTLINE: BACKGROUND, WTO, BILATERALS

BACKGROUND

- WHY QUALITY CONCERNS ARE OF GROWING IMPORTANCE (food safety standards, tastes, tradition, environment, traceability and risk management, monopolistic competition)
- IMPLICATION: TRADE IN DIFFERENTIATED PRODUCTS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TRADE IN COMMODITIES
- => MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTION (WTO, BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS)

LOGIC OF WTO OBLIGATIONS

- PROMOTING TRADE LIBERALIZATION
- RECOGNIZING THE LEGITIMACY OF
SANITARY PROTECTION WHILE
MINIMIZING NTBs
=> SPS AGREEMENT
- RECOGNIZING THE LEGITIMACY OF IPRs
=> TRIPS: PATENTS & '*sui generis*' for GEN.
RES.

NATURE OF WTO OBLIGATIONS

- PUBLIC RULES
- ENHANCE INTERGOVERNMENTAL STANDARDS (e.g. Codex Alimentarius)
- THEY ARE THE RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS (e.g. No other logic in rules on GIs)

WHAT ABOUT BILATERAL AGREEMENTS?

- GENERAL FEATURES:
 - DIVERSITY
 - ABILITY TO INCLUDE ‘SPECIAL CONCERNS’ (e.g. better recognition of IGs)
- IMPLICATIONS OF PARTNERSHIP DIMENSION:
 - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ‘MISE A NIVEAU’
 - FDI_s AND ACCESS TO NICHE MARKETS (?)
- LIMITATIONS:
 - EURO-MED
 - EPAs