



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 07/07/2009  
C/2009/5487

Mr. Secretary General,

The Commission would like to thank you for your contribution to the consultation on the Green Paper on agricultural product quality. We appreciate your support for this Commission's initiative to improve the European agricultural quality policy.

The Commission noticed that you insisted on the importance of quality being an asset for EU producers in facing global competition and the need for a global quality policy. In this respect, it took note of your demand for deepening the EU quality policy in a comprehensive way.

The Commission shares your views and is committed to improve its agricultural product quality policy in the next years. The Commission's strategic orientations are laid down in a Communication adopted on 28 May this year.

You underlined the growing interest of consumers towards agricultural products characteristics and the increasing demand for products linked to local history or identities. The Commission in the Communication addresses the question how to better communicate farming attributes as well as the place of farming for agricultural products.

You pointed out your interest in increasing the efficiency of the Geographical Indications (GIs) schemes and in spreading information on the impact of such schemes on the EU and International markets. The Commission also took note that you consider the negotiations in the WTO as strategic, as the GIs are the only form of Intellectual Property Rights that local communities worldwide can own.

While the GIs schemes are very much supported by stakeholders and will stay one of the core instruments of the EU agricultural product policy, the Commission agrees that better information, simplification and improvements are possible.

---

Dott. Antonio Malaschini  
Segretario Generale  
Senato della Repubblica  
Piazza Madama  
00186 Roma

As regards international relations, the GI issue will stay on top of the Commission agenda in the negotiations in the WTO. In addition, the Commission will take the opportunity of bilateral agreements to get EU GIs recognised by its trade partners.

The Commission adopted on 28 May the Communication, which takes into account the contributions received to the Green Paper consultation as well as the conclusions of the Quality Policy conference organised by the Czech Presidency on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of March in Prague.

This Communication is another opportunity to advance the debate before any legislative proposals.

The Commission is looking forward to continued input from you.

Yours sincerely

Margot WALLSTRÖM  
Vice-President of the European Commission