



## Frequently asked questions on: Rules of Origin

1. [Do all products have an origin?](#)
2. [Can all products benefit from preferential origin?](#)
3. [What if I'm not sure what the origin is?](#)
4. [Where can I find general background information on trade and development issues?](#)
5. [Are there any user guides available on rules of origin?](#)
6. [Is it true that significant changes have taken place recently regarding origin?](#)
7. [Does the Commission operate any online databases where further useful information can be found?](#)
8. [What are the legal obligations concerning marking and labelling of products imported into the EU? a\) Is there a rule at EU level laying down that imported products have to be marked or labelled with the name of their country of origin?](#)
9. [What are the legal obligations concerning marking and labelling of products imported into the EU? b\) I have heard that there is EU legislation concerning marking and labelling for some products \(textiles, food products,...\). Is this related to origin?](#)
10. [What if a country is eligible for more than one arrangement?](#)

### 1. Do all products have an origin?

The simple answer is yes. All products have a non-preferential origin but only certain products from particular countries can have preferential origin. The criteria for obtaining non-preferential origin are set out in Article 24 of the Customs Code. The terms for obtaining preferential origin are set out in the origin protocols to the agreements between the EU and the countries concerned or in the origin rules of the autonomous arrangements.

### 2. Can all products benefit from preferential origin?

No. A country will not grant preferences to goods, which it considers to be sensitive for its industries. Certain goods will therefore be excluded from the terms of the preferences offered. Where there is a bilateral agreement, this is a matter for negotiation between the parties. It is always necessary to confirm that your goods are amongst those that are covered in the arrangements between your country and that of your trading partner.

### **3. What if I'm not sure what the origin is?**

If having consulted the relevant legal texts and any relevant guidance (e.g. public notices published by Member States, or the Commission guide on GSP rules of origin) you are still unsure about the origin of your goods, or if you simply want legal certainty, you may apply for a Binding Origin Information decision ([BOI](#)). You should contact the competent customs authorities in one of the Member States where it will be used, or where you are established. Note that the existence of a BOI does not exempt you from the requirement to provide proof of origin.

### **4. Where can I find general background information on trade and development issues?**

See [DG Trade](#) or [DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid](#) website.

### **5. Are there any user guides available on rules of origin?**

Yes, two guides are available, one on [GSP](#) and another on the [Pan European System](#) .

### **6. Is it true that significant changes have taken place recently regarding origin?**

Yes, they are outlined on the '[New developments](#)' page of this website.

### **7. Does the Commission operate any online databases where further useful information can be found?**

Yes, the Commission runs several [databases](#) in conjunction with Member States' Customs and Taxation Services. These databases are part of the Data Dissemination System (DDS). In addition, DG TRADE operates an [Export Helpdesk for Developing Countries](#) containing advice for developing countries exporting to the EU. At present this database covers the GSP regime, the preferential regime with ACP countries, including the EPA with the CARIFORUM States, the Free Trade Agreements under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as well as with Mexico, Chile and South Africa. It will be extended to the individual EPAs as they are implemented as well as to new FTAs.

### **8. What are the legal obligations concerning marking and labelling of products imported into the EU? a) Is there a rule at EU level laying down that imported products have to be marked or labelled with the name of their country of origin?**

There is no EU legislation regarding marking or labelling on a product imported into EU of the country where it originates. The national legislation of the Member State concerned - as far as any such legislation exists - is therefore applicable. The best solution is thus to contact the competent administration in this Member State. However, it should be pointed out that, according to EU customs legislation, the country of origin must always be indicated in a specific box of the customs import declaration.

**9. What are the legal obligations concerning marking and labelling of products imported into the EU? a) Is there a rule at EU level providing that imported products have to be marked or labelled with the name of their country of origin?**

As regards textile products, there is a Directive concerning marking and labelling of the composition of the fibres of the product and other information for the consumer on the quality of the product. The said Directive does not contain any provision concerning the origin of the product.

As regards food products, legislation exists concerning geographical indications and specific provisions also exist for meat (indications such as the country where the animal was born, raised, slaughtered and the country where the meat was cut are compulsory on the packaging). It is therefore advisable to check the relevant agricultural legislation.

**10. What if a country is eligible for more than one arrangement?**

The operator may choose whichever arrangement may be more beneficial to him. However, while the rules of origin of the different preferential arrangements are broadly similar, there can be significant differences. Operators must therefore always refer to the correct rules for the arrangements they intend to use.