

oriGIn

Organization for an International
Geographical Indications Network

Volume No 4.

Date: February 2005

President's Message



Pedro Echeverría

Since its launch in Geneva on 11 June 2003, OriGIn - the Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network - has continued growing.

It now represents more than one million producers of traditional products from more than 30 countries and most continents: Africa, North and Latin America, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe.

During the last months, OriGIn has been extremely active and present on the international scene. OriGIn has continued promoting GIs as a development tool at conferences, seminars and workshops. OriGIn's has also established contact with Slow Food at the *Terra Madre* event, the World Meeting of Food Communities that took place in Turin (Italy) in November 2004.

OriGIn has been advocating the role played by Geographical Indications (GIs) in the preservation of quality products and in the promotion of sustainable methods of production.

OriGIn has also called for better protection of GIs. We are therefore pleased that the decision taken by WTO Members on 1st August regarding the Doha Round includes several references to the enhancement of geographical indications' protection. We will continue to push for it at all levels as the role of GIs towards the development relies on an adequate protection.

The fact that OriGIn has been granted the status of permanent observer to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) makes me very proud. We are looking forward to working closely with WIPO on the promotion and protection of geographical indications.

OriGIn is a young and small organisation but it has already achieved great things. Our success derives from the fact that we are united in our philosophy and objectives: we are proud of our unique products, territories and traditions; we want to protect them so that local communities now and in the future can continue to benefit from these fantastic products.

Finally, let me thank OriGIn members for their enthusiasm and determination in making OriGIn a success. There is lot to be done to ensure an adequate protection of GIs but I am convinced that together we will achieve great things!

Pedro Echeverría

Update on WTO Negotiations on GI Protection

The August 2004 Package

On 1st August 2004, WTO Members adopted a decision that puts back on track the negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda. The decision sets the framework of future negotiations as well as new target dates for reaching further agreements.

ORIGIN spent a lot of time and efforts in the preceding months to ensure that the enhancement of the protection granted to GIs would remain on the agenda of the Doha Round.

We are therefore extremely happy that the adopted text includes several references to the improvement of GIs' protection. This is a very important signal for all GI producers who consider that progress on this file will show WTO Members' ability to deliver on their promises towards development related issues.

On the extension of TRIPs Article 23 protection to all products

The August 2004 WTO package does not provide with a final answer to the GI producers' claim that concrete negotiations on the extension of TRIPs Article 23 protection to all products should be

launched without delay. The decision only provides with a timetable and a commitment that the Director General of the WTO or a person appointed by him will continue to consult WTO Members on this issue. These consultations will continue at least until May 2005 when a report will be made to the General Council of the WTO, which will have to take a decision by the end of July 2005.

OriGIn members will therefore continue to call for the launch of real negotiations on the extension of TRIPs Article 23 protection to all products in order to get the extension by the end of the Doha Round. GI producers will in particular recall the benefits brought by GI protection on the development of local communities.

On the establishment of a multilateral register for wines and spirits

In their August decision, WTO Members reaffirmed their commitment to give effect to the decisions that they took at Doha. One of them was the establishment of a multilateral register for GIs for wines and spirits. It is therefore important that the establishment of such a register is part of the final Doha Round.

OriGIn will continue to support the creation of a legally-binding register, but will call for the register to be open to all GI products in a non-discriminatory manner.

GI protection and agriculture negotiations

Finally, WTO Members also included a reference to geographical indications in the annex on agriculture of the August decision. OriGIn members note that WTO Members referred to GIs as "matters of interest but not agreed".

Geographical indications are important development tools that need to be adequately protected. The Doha Development Round offers a unique opportunity to recognize that local and traditional products can enjoy the benefits of trade globalization. OriGIn members will therefore continue to urge decision-makers to deliver on the enhancement of GI protection.



WTO Building in Geneva

oriGIn
becomes
**permanent observer
at the WIPO!**

OriGIn has been granted the status of permanent observer to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Established by the Treaty of Stockholm in 1967, WIPO is

the UN specialized agency in charge of promotion of intellectual property. WIPO's main missions are to facilitate the protection of intellectual property throughout the world, to harmonize national legislations and encourage the conclusion of international agreements in this field.

WIPO is in charge of the administration of a number of international agreements, which deal with the protection of GIs, notably the Lisbon agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin. In addition, through the work of its Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications, WIPO explores ways of enhancing the international protection of GIs. Finally, WIPO carries out many technical assistance programs on GIs in developing countries.

OriGIn members welcome this news and are looking forward to working with WIPO on the promotion of GIs as well as on the enhancement of their protection throughout the world.

More details on WIPO at: www.wipo.org



WIPO Building in Geneva

oriGIn participates to Terra Madre

Slow Food Meeting

From 20 to 23 October 2004, OriGIn participated to Terra Madre, the World Meeting of Food Communities organized in Turin (Italy) by the organization Slow Food. Founded in 1986, the Piedmont-based (Northern Italy) Slow Food is an international movement whose main aim consists of the preservation of regional food and small producers against the standardization of taste. The organization, run by its founder Carlo Petrini, gathers more than 80,000 members in more than 100 countries around the world. More information on Slow Food at: www.slowfood.com

Terra Madre gave the opportunity to more than 1,000 food communities from 120 countries to gather and to exchange their experience on the sustainable food culture. 5,000 participants were involved in a range of activities covering not only the production but also the distribution and promotion of quality food.

As national boundaries become more and more blurred, food is becoming a growing source of identity. OriGIn members consider that there is a need for local

product to be well protected at the international level so that they can benefit from the globalization of trade. This is our motto: localization within globalization.

The presence of OriGIn at Terra Madre reinforced the view that GIs are key tools in the preservation of quality food and in the promotion of sustainable methods of production, which reward the ingenuity of local communities.

On October 21, D.Thual, Secretary General of OriGIn, participated in a workshop entitled "Designation of Origin and Local Trademarks as Means of Increasing Local Value". He highlighted the positive contribution of GIs on local communities from an economic, social, cultural and environmental point of view. Studies carried out by OriGIn show that GIs create added value and are important development tools. Contrary to trademarks, GI production cannot be re-localized. The product is rooted to its traditional region of origin. This ensures that local communities can rely on the benefits of their traditional and quality products. OriGIn called on the need for better protection of GIs to help producers to fight against abuses of their GI name and to protect consumers against misleading labelling.

OriGIn engaged into a cooperation with Slow Food to defend what we strongly believe in: the future of traditional and quality products!

OriGIn reports on abuses of GI names in the Mexican market

On September 2004, OriGIn presented a briefing memo to the Mexican body in charge of consumer protection (PROFECO). OriGIn members expressed their concerns regarding the abuses of GI names in the Mexican market. These have devastating effects on the reputation of GI products and costly consequences for OriGIn members when fighting against these usurpations.

OriGIn participates at Seminars

OriGIn representatives took part in many seminars around the world in the past months. We have decided to mention just two.

On July 2004, OriGIn participated in Beijing at the Geographical Indications Joint EU-China Seminar. This conference showed the increasing interest for GIs in China. China already protects over 300 geographical indications.

On December 2004, D.Thual, Secretary General of OriGIn, took part in the Africa Regional Seminar on Intellectual Property - Protection for Geographical Indications –

organized in Mombassa (Kenya). He highlighted the positive contribution of GIs on the promotion of rural development. The participation to the seminar showed the great interest of OriGIn for GIs in the African countries. OriGIn will continue to support the development of GIs in Africa and their better protection at all levels, in particular thanks to the excellent work of its Vice-President for Africa, Ms. Agnes Nyaga.

OriGIn takes action to seek better GI Protection in MERCOSUR

On 14 September 2004, OriGIn wrote a letter to the European Commission to express concerns about the June 2002 Mercosur regulation on the labelling of pre-packaged products [Mercosur/CMC/Res. N°21/02].

OriGIn considers that this regulation violates Article 22 of the TRIPs Agreement, which requires WTO Members to protect consumers against deception and to prevent acts of unfair competition.

oriGIn

calendar

A few events on GIs where ORIGIN will be present in the coming months...

➤ 24 - 25 January. Workshop organized by the FAO on « Designing Training

Programs for the Development of Quality Mountain Products », in Rome (Italy).

- 7 – 8 April. Workshop organized by the WIPO, on geographical indications in Casablanca (Morocco)
- 20 - 22 April. WTO Annual Public Symposium 2005 - "WTO after 10 years: global problems and multilateral solutions", Geneva (Switzerland)
- 16 - 18 May. Seminar organized by the University of Missouri on « GIs and Sustainable Rural Development: Exploring Connections », in St-Louis, Missouri (USA)
- 13 - 16 June. 3rd EPO Regional Forum for Africa and the Middle East on Industrial and Intellectual Property: "Valorization of IP systems for the promotion of innovation and for a sustainable development". Dakar (Senegal)
- 26 September – 5 October. WIPO Assembly meetings.
- November. OriGIn General Assembly in – venue and date to be determined soon
- 13-18 December. Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, Hong Kong (China)