

oriGIn

Organization for an International
Geographical Indications Network

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President's message



Pedro
Echeverría

Dear members, dear GIs friends, 2006 is being a year full of new challenges for OriGIn, a young organization that has however achieved major things since its creation in 2003.

During the past months, we have remained strongly committed at international level to call on the better protection for Geographical Indications (GIs) in the context of the WTO negotiations of the Doha Round. In November 2005, all OriGIn members signed the Hangzhou Declaration, calling on WTO negotiators to agree on the enhancement of the protection granted to GIs at the Ministerial meeting that took place in Hong Kong in December 2005. As you may see on the present edition of our Newsletter, we continue urging WTO Members to achieve positive results on GIs' protection, calling for the enhancement of geographical indications to be part of the possible deal on the series Doha Development Round, to be adopted in the coming months.

At European level, we followed closely the proposal of a new Regulation on the European GIs protection system, lobbying the European Commission to establish a more transparent and efficient European GI system. As a result, OriGIn members welcomed the

adoption of the new Regulation 510/2006 on the European protection system of GIs, which opens the GI system to third countries' producers. At present, we follow closely the preparation of the application rules of the Regulation 510/2006, as well as the upcoming review of the European quality policy.

Overall, OriGIn stands as a key actor on the GI debate, thank to the efforts undertaken by our members in the promotion and protection of GIs.

Proof of our strong commitment to OriGIn's goals, you will find in this edition of OriGIn's Newsletter the outcome of the successful Second General Assembly of OriGIn, which took place in Hangzhou (China) by the end of last year. GI producers coming from over 26 countries around the world met in what will be remembered as a major historical step for OriGIn.

We have witnessed a strong development of our organization and an increasing worldwide mobilization in favour of GIs. Up to 2005, OriGIn represented more than one million producers of traditional products within more than 30 countries around the world. During the General Assembly, 30 Chinese GI bodies agreed to join OriGIn. We have also received membership applications by producers from Brazil, Colombia, France, Germany, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger and Thailand.

I am extremely happy to count on over two million producers represented within OriGIn at present time.

Regarding OriGIn's structure, our presence in all regions has been reinforced, by the election of a New Management Committee, consisting in one President and 10 Vicepresidents around the world. Furthermore a new Secretary General of OriGIn was appointed to assume the management of OriGIn Secretariat, representing OriGIn's interests worldwide.

Among OriGIn achievements during the last months, I would personally stress the fact that OriGIn has strongly increased its presence within the international scenario, denouncing cases of abuses against GI names of our products and taking part in the most important events regarding GIs.

As you can see, OriGIn has achieved great things but there is still a lot to do! I am confident that together we may succeed on our goal: to ensure an adequate protection of GIs, so that local communities now and in the future can continue to benefit from these unique products.

Pedro Echeverría

Update on WTO Negotiations on GI Protection

The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration

On 18 December 2005, WTO Members adopted a Ministerial Declaration that would allow them to conclude the Doha Development Round negotiations in 2006. In reality, no real progress was made and important decisions on the scope and the content of the Doha round were left out for a decision to be adopted by the end of July 2006. This deadline has been now suspended.

OriGIn welcomed the fact that the Hong Kong Declaration included a commitment to intensify the consultative process on the extension of the protection of geographical indications provided for in Article 23 of the TRIPS Agreement to products other than wines and spirits. As a result, more efforts have been made in the past months in the WTO to try to move forward on the enhancement of GI protection.

OriGIn has been lobbying continuously towards key decision-makers to call for concrete results on the extension of TRIP Article 23 protection to all GI products. We also requested the establishment of a legally binding multilateral register open to all GI products. On 19 and 20 June 2006, a high level delegation of OriGIn met WTO members in Geneva to urge them to ensure prompt results on the negotiations on geographical Indications.

OriGIn welcomes the strong commitment of a large group of WTO members, which have joined forces to obtain progress on the improvement of GI protection. The so-called GI Friends group which includes countries such as Switzerland, Kenya, India, the EU 25; Thailand, Turkey and China, has been more active and vocal in the past weeks. This is a very important

and positive sign for all GI producers. However, a lot remains to be done if we are to obtain that better GI protection is part of the Doha deal.

On the extension of TRIPs Article 23 protection to all products

In the Hong Kong Declaration, there was a commitment that the Director General of the WTO will intensify the consultations on this issue with the WTO members. The negotiators set themselves a new date to complete the negotiations on the so-called modalities of the Doha Round, but no results were achieved by 30 April 2006. A possible deal on the series Doha Development Round has now to be adopted but the deadline is suspended.

OriGIn continues to lobby strongly 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 Round.

On the establishment of a multilateral register for wines and spirits

There has been no progress on the multilateral register for wines and spirits in Hong Kong, nor in the recent months. Negotiations are still deadlocked over the issue of the scope of the register and its legal effects. Many anti-GI countries refuse to go further than agreeing to establish a database for those WTO members who are willing to do so!

OriGIn will continue to call for the creation of a legally-binding register open to all GI products in a non-discriminatory manner. This would further enhance the protection of our famous GI products throughout the world.

GI protection and agriculture negotiations

In the Hong Kong Declaration, WTO members referred once more to GIs among the issues that remain of interest but not agreed in the context of the Agriculture negotiations.

Crucial negotiations ahead

The next few weeks of negotiations in Geneva will be crucial for the future of the Doha Round. If WTO members do not find an agreement on the scope and content of the negotiations, the round will not be concluded by the end of 2006. In turn, this means that it would be impossible for the US Administration to submit a possible deal to the US Congress under the so-called "fast track procedure" (procedure which does not allow the US Congress to challenge or reject parts of the deal; it must say yes or no to the final package). Under such scenario, before concluding the Doha Round, the US Administration would have to ask for the renewal of the "fast track procedure" to the Congress. This could take a long time...

WTO Members have a unique chance to show that the WTO is capable of helping local communities by delivering on the improvement of GI protection. Progress made on this issue in the coming months will determine WTO members' ability to meet their Doha commitments to provide for a genuine Development agenda. OriGIn hopes that there will be positive news before the end of the summer!



OriGIn delegation meets Deputy Director General of the WTO, Mr. Rufus Yerxa

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Second General Assembly

Growing family calls for the promotion and protection of GIs

OriGIn hosted its Second General Assembly in Hangzhou (China), on November 14 and 15, 2005.

GI producers from all over the world got together in Hangzhou, in order to discuss the role of GIs as rural development tools and the protection of GIs around the world. During this meeting, 30 Chinese GI bodies agreed to join OriGIn, in particular the famous Longjing Tea and Shaoxing Yellow wine, two of the first GIs to be registered in China. We also received applications for membership from producers from Brazil, Colombia, France, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritius Island, Morocco, Niger and Thailand. This was an excellent opportunity to reflect on recent developments regarding GIs and, more importantly, to explore how we can better promote and protect GIs in the future, in particular in the WTO context a month ahead of the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting.

Among the main achievements of the General Assembly, OriGIn...

- Welcomed new members, with the adhesion to OriGIn of 40 associations
- Prepared an agreement with the China National Institute of Standardization (CNIS) to represent OriGIn in China
- Signed the Hangzhou Declaration calling on WTO negotiators to agree on the enhancement of GI protection at the Ministerial meeting that was taking place in Hong Kong in December 2005.
- Created new partnerships between OriGIn members from developed and developing countries.
- Strengthened the exchange of experience and expertise between all OriGIn members
- Developed press campaigns around the event.
- Appointed a new Management Committee for 2006-2007.



Exposure GI products at the General Assembly of OriGIn

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Partnerships Producers' Solidarity in Motion

After two years since created, the partnerships launched between OriGIn members have developed an enriching exchange of experience to promote the GI concept among producers.

- Café de Antigua (Guatemala) and Pruneau d'Agen (France) have built a strong cooperation based on technical assistance between the two GIs.
- Argan oil producers from Morocco have profited from the experience of its partner, the Comté cheese from France, to learn how to build up their GI and gather the Argan oil producers in cooperatives. The Argan Oil GI is progressing to a hopefully soon Moroccan recognition.
- Guinean pineapples and Etivaz cheese will have their first exchanges as partners along 2006.

As a result of the meeting in Hangzhou (China), several organizations of GI producers decided to join new partnerships, which will start their cooperation along this year. The proposed partnerships are:

- Viande séchée du Valais (Suiza) & Violet du Malbi (Níger)
- Aquitaine region (France) & horticultural products from Mauritius Island
- Plateau de Phurua (wine from Thailand) & Roquefort cheese (France)
- Parmigiano Reggiano (Italy) & Longjing Tea (China)

OriGIn will continue encouraging its members to create partnerships of GI producers to exchange experience and expertise on the development of their GIs.

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A new Management Committee

OriGIn counts this year with a new Management Committee for 2006-2007.

Since its launch in Geneva on 11 June 2003, OriGIn has continued growing. It now represents more than two million producers of traditional products from more than 30 countries and most continents: Africa, North and Latin America, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe.

In order to fulfil the needs of the geographical development of the organization, OriGIn members have elected a New Management Committee for 2006-2007:

- President: *Mr. Pedro Echeverria* (Café Antigua – Guatemala)
- Vice-President world: *Mr. Adargelio Garrido de la Grana* (Habanos - Cuba)
- Vice-President for North Africa and Middle East: *Mrs. Zoubida Charrouf* (Argane oil – Morocco)
- Vice-President for Sub-Saharan Africa: *Mrs. Agnes Nyaga* (Tea – Kenya)
- Vice-President for North America: *Mr. Ramón Gonzalez Figueroa* (Tequila de Jalisco - Mexico)
- Vice-President for Latin America: *Mr. Francisco José Pareja Padro* (Pisco - Peru)
- Vice-Presidents for Asia: *Brig. Anil Adlakha* (Basmati rice- India) and *Mr. Zheng Weihua* (National Institute of Standardization - China)
- Vice-President for Eastern Europe: *Mr. Tomislav Galovic* (Slavonski Domaci Kulin - Croatia)
- Vice-Presidents for Western Europe: *Mr. José Enrique Garrigós* (Jijona y Turrón de Alicante - Spain) and *Mr. Stefano Tedeschi* (Parma ham - Italy)
- Secretary General of OriGIn: *Ms. Ester Olivas Cáceres* (Spain)
- Treasurer of OriGIn: *Mr. Louis Fleury* (Viande Sechée du Valais – Switzerland)

The willingness of many members to play a more active role will ensure a more efficient service to all OriGIn members as well as to all interested GI producers around the world.



Elected Management Committee for 2006-2007

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In Action

OriGIn welcomes the new European Regulation on GIs

On 31 of March, the European Community published the Regulation 510/2006, on the protection of Geographical Indications (GIs) and Designations of Origin (DOs) for agricultural products, Regulation welcomed by OriGIn, as it opens the European system for protection of geographical indications to third country producers.

During the past months, European members of OriGIn have called on the European institutions to establish a framework that provides for legal certainty for stakeholders as well as good means of communication towards consumers. But unfortunately not all relevant issues to achieve this goal have been dealt with by the new regulation.

At present, OriGIn continues strongly committed to defend the interests of European GI producers, following closely the preparation of the application rules of the new Regulation as well as the upcoming review of the European quality policy.

OriGIn takes action to seek better GI Protection in Argentina and Chili

On 10 of May, OriGIn met the European Commission to express concerns about the abuses that GI producers face in the Latin American market, in particular in Argentina and Chili. These usurpations have devastating effects on the reputation of famous GI products, such as Manchego cheese, Pruneau d'Agen or nougat Jijona and Turrón of Alicante, among others.

OriGIn considers that the abusive use of these names in Argentinean and Chilean markets violate Article 22 of the TRIPs Agreement, which requires WTO Members to protect consumers against deception and to prevent acts of unfair competition.

OriGIn opens cooperation relations on GIs with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture

On 29 May 2006, OriGIn met Mrs. Bivanilda Tapias, representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in Brasilia, in charge of the promotion of Brazilian GIs, such as Café do Cerrado or Vale dos vinhedos Wines. Other GIs are already applying for recognition.

OriGIn had the opportunity to present the organization to the Brazilian representative, who showed a great interest for OriGIn's goals and actions and stressed the willingness of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture to work closely with OriGIn on the promotion and protection of GIs.

OriGIn urges WTO negotiators to deliver on Geographical Indications protection in the Doha deal

On 19 and 20 June 2006, a high level delegation of OriGIn, representing GI producers from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, travelled to Geneva, to call for the enhancement of geographical indications to be part of the decision expected for the coming months (see Update on WTO negotiations on GI protection).

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Calendar

- Seminar on the New Rules for Registering Geographical Indications, organized by O'Connor and Company - European Lawyers. *Brussels (Belgium), May 16, 2006*
- Presentation of OriGIn to Mrs. Bivanilda Almeida Tapias, representative of the Ministry of Agriculture in Brasilia, in charge of the creation of an office to manage Brazilian GIs. *Paris (France), 29 of May, 2006.*
- Seminar on designations of origin and collective trademarks, entitled: "Encuentro Internacional de Denominaciones de Origen y marcas colectivas". Organized by the government of the State of Michoacán and the IMPI (Mexican Institute of Intellectual Property). *Michoacán (Mexico), 7 June, 2006.*
- Seminar on "Geographical Indications", organised by the Asia - Europe Meeting (ASEM Working Group on Intellectual Property). *Bangkok (Thailand), June 30, 2006.*
- Regional Seminar on the promotion of the use of Intellectual Property for agro-food SME. Organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). *Montevideo (Uruguay), 3 - 5 July, 2006.*
- Open public conference entitled: "Are Geographical Indications in favour of the Development?". Organized by the SINERGI project (Strengthening International Research on Geographical Indications). *Montpellier, 6-7 September 2006.*
- Presentation of OriGIn within the context of the days organized by Terroir et Culture, association in defense of the terroir in the world. *Laguiole (France), 22 - 23 September 2006.*
- Terra Madre - World Meeting of Food Communities, organized by the Slow Food Foundation. *Turin (Italy) October 26-30, 2006.*

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