

Mrs. Mariann Fisher Boel
European Commissioner for Agriculture
Mr. Peter Mandelson
European Commissioner for Trade

European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Geneva, 05 April 2008

Re: Geographical Indications and the Doha Development Agenda

Dear Commissioner Mrs. Fisher Boel and Dear Commissioner Mr. Mandelson,

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications network – OriGIn – is closely following the ongoing trade negotiations within the World Trade Organisation and would like to express its appreciation to the European Commission for its efforts to move the agenda forward as well as secure an adequate international protection for GIs.

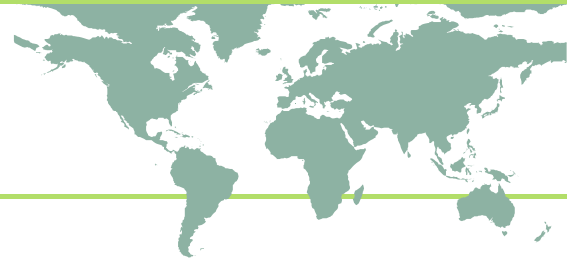
OriGIn – a worldwide network of GIs producers representing some 80 organisations and more than two-million producers – does believe geographical indications have a tremendous potential to promote sustainable development for local producers and communities – as the experience of our members, several of which are based in Europe, clearly shows.

However, current WTO rules on GIs are unbalanced and do not offer GI producers effective legal remedies to prevent and stop abuses. Abuses have been increasing over the years and, in this context, millions of jobs, as well as the reputation of traditional products in both developed and developing countries, are at stake.

OriGIn urges negotiators to agree on the extension of the protection conferred to wines and spirits by Article 23 of the TRIPs Agreement to all GI products. With regard to the multilateral register for GIs, OriGIn considers that a register should be opened to all products, be legally binding and truly multilateral, therefore compulsory for all WTO Members.

We are watching with concern the continuous efforts by some WTO members to block any deal on GIs. We are of the opinion that the spirit of the Doha Round - as set forth in the **Doha Development Agenda** – would be betrayed should this position prevail.

The Doha Declaration stresses “the need for all our people to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gain that the multilateral trading system generates”. Ensuring that all products benefit from the protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits and establishing a register with legal value open to all products, would contribute to meet the high expectations raised around the world by the Doha Development Agenda. Any regime *de facto* consolidating “first class” and “second class” producers enjoying different standards of protection would constitute a discrimination that runs against



the Doha spirit. Millions of GI products in Europe, as well as in developing and least developed countries, would not understand nor support such a decision.

We take this opportunity to reiterate OriGIn's availability to strengthen the cooperation with the European Commission to promote and secure better protection of GIs worldwide.

We remain at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Luis Fernando Samper in blue ink.

Mr. Luis Fernando Samper
President of OriGIn

Handwritten signature of José Enrique Garrigós in black ink.

Mr. José Enrique Garrigós,
Vice-President of OriGIn for
Western Europe

Handwritten signature of Stefano Tedeschi in black ink.

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Mr. Stefano Tedeschi,
Vice-President of OriGIn for
Western Europe

On behalf of OriGIn's members