

WTO Public Symposium Newsletter Special Edition

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President's Message



Pedro Echeverria coming from 25 countries launched

On 11 June 2003, in Geneva, more than a hundred producers of Geographical Indications (GIs)

an appeal for a better GI protection at the international level.

Since then, our movement has turned itself into a Swiss-based NGO called ORIGIN, the Organization for an International Geographical Indication Network. Our organization now includes producers coming from more than 30 countries and most continents: Africa, North and Latin America, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe.

ORIGIN wants to promote GIs as a development tool, in particular through partnerships between producers. Argan oil from Morocco and French Comte cheese have decided to team up, as well as Antigua coffee from Guatemala and French Pruneaux d'Agen and Swiss cheese Etivaz and Guinean pineapples. This is the beginning of a movement

that is spreading across the world.

At the same time, ORIGIN lobbies for a better protection of GIs at the international level, in particular in the WTO framework.

Commissioner for Trade, P.Lamy, explains in this newsletter that better GI protection is a key element of the Doha Round and essential for its successful outcome. On behalf of ORIGIN members, I thank him for his contribution to our cause.

ORIGIN is hosting a round table on GIs in Geneva on May 27 in the context of the 2004 WTO Public Symposium on the Doha Round entitled "Multilateralism at a Crossroads". This event will allow us to highlight the fact that producers from all over the world are interested in geographical indications. It is particularly true for developing countries, which see in GIs a key instrument to ensure sustainable development. We will also remind WTO negotiators that better GI protection is an integral part of the Doha Development Round.

This newsletter contains a short overview of the status of the WTO negotiations on the

two aspects that are of interests to ORIGIN members: the extension of the protection granted by Article 23 of the TRIPS Agreement to all Geographical Indications' products and the establishment of a legally-binding multilateral register for GIs.

Better protecting GIs is not just another issue. It's about defending a fair trade concept, which allows for the localisation of productions in the framework of trade globalisation. Concrete progress made on this file will determine WTO members' ability to meet their Doha commitments to provide for a genuine Development Agenda.

P.Lamy

GIs an integral part of the DDA

On the eve of the Cancun Ministerial Conference, we underlined, on a number of occasions, the importance of geographical indications for developing countries as (i) instruments enabling local communities to better organize

themselves, (ii) vectors to improve quality in agricultural and artisanal production, (iii) mechanisms that facilitate a better distribution of added value throughout the supply chain – from the small producer to the end distributor – and (iv) as wealth multipliers. We continue to stand firm by these principles and this is why geographical indications continue to form integral part of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) and, in our view, will be essential for its successful outcome.



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Cancùn was a serious setback for international trade and all WTO members stood to lose from it. This is why we have chosen to proceed carefully so we do ensure the success of this Round of multilateral negotiations. As a consequence, the WTO membership has agreed to concentrate its efforts in tackling the larger and more thorny issues of this round: namely agriculture, non-agricultural market access (NAMA), Singapore issues, services and development issues.

It goes without saying that our ambitions in other areas are

not lowered in any way. On geographical indications specifically, we continue to believe that this matter is crucial to obtain a balanced overall DDA agreement. However, the priority today remains to ensure that negotiations get back on track. For that, we must tackle those matters that for many members remain a precondition to sit in all negotiating tables with a positive spirit.

GI protection is crucial to obtain a balanced overall DDA agreement.

In closing, let us assure you our continuous support in this area of geographical indications and wish you well in the upcoming Symposium on Geographical Indications that you will be holding at the WTO premises. We are convinced that bringing the voice of producers of all over the world to the WTO will be instrumental in making the Geneva community of trade negotiators understand the very concerns that have brought hundreds of producers from both developing and developed countries together under this single shelter that ORIGIN is meant to be.



WTO Building in Geneva

Update on WTO Negotiations on GI Protection

Extension: a Priority in the Doha Mandate

Since the failed negotiations at the last WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancùn, Mexico, in September 2003, the issue of the extension of the protection granted by Article 23 TRIPS to products other than wines and spirits has been the subject of very few debates within the WTO. Instead, WTO Member States, concerned about reopening negotiations from the Doha Round, have chosen to concentrate on four principle issues: agriculture, market access for industrial products, the Singapore issues and cotton.

However, on April 21st this year, at the first meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee since Cancùn, Kenya drew attention to the fact that extension is still a priority for a large number of WTO Member States and they are demanding a solution to this issue as well without further delay. Kenya made that statement in the name of over 50 countries belonging to the "Friends of Geographical Indications" group (which includes developing and industrialized countries).

At a time when it seemed that future progress on the Doha work program was about to be made, Kenya delivered a very strong message to WTO Member States such as Argentina, Australia, Canada

and the USA, who still refuse to help advance work on this issue despite the fact that the extension of GI protection has been mentioned in the Doha Declaration.

It is essential that extension is properly included in decisions which could be made this summer. In a liberalized economy, extension offers equal opportunities to producers of all products with GIs so that they can position their traditional and quality products on the global market place, as the 'Friends of GIs' emphasized in their last WTO communication. The resulting benefits of extension would permit development of rural communities and encourage developmental policies geared towards quality in the agricultural products sector as well as in the industrial one.

The next meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee is set for June 30, 2004; in the meantime, consultations are planned to finalize the project for reaching a decision in accordance with the plans to be submitted to the Ministers in July 2004.

Re-launch of the Work on the Multilateral Register for GIs for Wines and Spirits

Under the presidency of Pakistan Ambassador, Mr. Manzoor Ahmad, work on the establishment of a multilateral register for wines and spirits resumed at the WTO on April 7, 2004. The first special session of the TRIPS Council since Cancun focused on working out the two main items which had been left undecided, namely the participation of

WTO Member States and the legal effects of the register.

In the absence of any truly new input, no progress was made on these issues. Each of the two main camps continued to defend their own proposals. Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, Equator, the United States and New Zealand repeated that their aim is to create a simple voluntary database operated only at the national level. In response, Bulgaria, Bolivia, the European Union, Hungary, Switzerland and Turkey asserted that the proposal does not meet the mandate given to WTO Members in Article 23.4 TRIPS and the Doha Declaration. For them, what is required is a register that offers legal effects and which is applicable in all WTO Members. The next special session of the TRIPS Council is planned for mid-June.

ORIGIN's Partnership Producers' Solidarity in Motion

Last November, 3 partnerships were concluded in Alicante (Spain).

➤ *Comté cheese (France) – Argan oil (Morocco)*

In Morocco, Zoubida Charrouf is trying hard to set up an organization which would regroup the Argan bean producers and the oil makers. The women who collect the Argan beans are organised in small cooperatives. The problem lies with the creation of the organization and in

defining how to work with companies that are only interested in buying beans.

At the same time the Moroccan legislation on Geographical Indications is evolving.

The partnership between the Comté cheese organization and the Argan oil members helps the latter to understand how to structure their GI approach. A delegation of Comté cheese producers is expected to visit Morocco in the coming months.

➤ *Pruneaux d'Agen (France) – Coffee de Antigua (Guatemala)*

A first meeting between the representatives of the twinned products was held in La Antigua Guatemala in February, 2004. Christian Amblard, general manager of the Agen Prunes association met Pedro Echeverria, President of the association of Antigua Coffee producers. Pedro Echeverria is also the President of ORIGIN.

The 1800 producers of Agen Prunes obtained their registration as Protected Geographical Indication by the European Union in November, 2002. Their name and reputation is often abused by other prunes producers from third countries, such as Chile and Argentina.

The 34 pioneers of Antigua Coffee, out of a total of about 2000 producers, have set up a certification system with SGS, a well known Swiss company, but they have not yet obtained

the protection of their geographical indication.

As a first step in their collaboration, the partners have launched a study about the legal system that exists in Guatemala to protect GIs. The aim is to obtain that the Antigua Coffee is recognised and protected as a GI. To that end, a clear product specification has to be defined.

The main needs that have been identified are training and help to national civil service officers who will have to approve and certify the geographical indication, and finding trade outputs that would guarantee the traceability of the product from growers to consumers.

➤ ***Etivaz (Switzerland) – Pineapples (Guinea)***

Guinea producers have just contacted the representative of Etivaz. They have the same problem as the Argan oil producers: how to organize the producers to create an efficient organisation around the Guinea pineapples. Jacques Henchoz, Etivaz President, has announced that the Swiss producers are very motivated to help them.

2 new partnerships established. More to come

- Roquefort cheese (France) – Thailand Silk
- Parmigiano Reggiano cheese (Italy) – Cidre de Glace (Canada)

Others are taking initial contacts to set up new partnerships.

**How can you
become involved
with
oriGIn**

ORIGIN brings together producers from both developed and developing countries that want to enjoy an efficient GI protection worldwide. Our members come from more than 30 countries and 4 continents (Africa, South and North America, Asia, Eastern and Western Europe); they produce food and non-food products.

To be a full member of ORIGIN, you must be either a producer or an association of GI producers, a producer or an association of producers who would like to benefit from a GI protection. You can also join as an associate member of ORIGIN, if you are interested professionally or personally in defending ORIGIN objectives. Finally, you can also support ORIGIN as a friend of GIs.

If you would like to know more about us or how to become an ORIGIN member, please visit our website at www.origin-gi.com

You can also contact us by e-mail at: info@origin-gi.com

oriGIn

in Action

A few events on GIs where ORIGIN will be present in 2004...

- 17-21 May

“International Week on Tequila” celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Tequila Regulatory Council (CRT)’s foundation.

International Congress of GIs on «Sustainable Development of Productive Chains and Satisfaction of Consumers».

- 27 May

WTO Public Symposium on “Multilateralism at a Crossroads”. ORIGIN Round Table on GIs

- 13-18 June

UNCTAD XI Meeting in Brazil (Sao Paolo)

- 20-23 October

Slow Food Terra Madre event, Torino (Italy)

- October-November

Seminars on GIs in Portugal, Spain and France.

- 26 November 2004

Symposium Montanea on GIs, Chambéry (France)