

oriGIn

Organization for an International
Geographical Indications Network

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President's message



Luis F. Samper
President of OriGIn

Dear members of OriGIn and GI friends:

As some of you may know, the meeting of the Extraordinary General Assembly

of OriGIn (EGA), which took place in Geneva at the beginning of November 2006 gave the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia the honour and responsibility to hold OriGIn's Presidency for the forthcoming year.

It is therefore in my capacity as President of OriGIn for 2007 that I have the pleasure to address the GI family on this new edition of our newsletter.

First of all I would like to thank once again the outstanding work undertaken by Pedro Echeverría as our President for 2003-2006 and that of David Thual, as Secretary General of OriGIn for 2003-2005. I would also like to thank Ester Olivas for her commitment to OriGIn as Secretary General since January 2006 and welcome a very professional and dedicated Technical Committee, which has been instrumental in supporting OriGIn's structure and activities during 2006. We hope to continue counting with our Secretary General, as well as with the support of the Technical Committee: Stefano Fanti (Prosciutto de Parma - Italy), Luis Berenguer (Jijona y Turrón de

Alicante - Spain), Louis Fleury (Viande Séchée du Valais – Switzerland) and Anne Richard (CNAOL - France) over this new year 2007.

As you will find in this edition of OriGIn's Newsletter, a number of important decisions were taken during our Assembly. I would also encourage all our members and non members to visit our website (www.origin-gi.com) to acquaint themselves with all the discussed topics and achieved goals. Furthermore, the Technical Committee was entrusted by the General Assembly with the difficult task of finding a suitable location for the future activities of OriGIn. The decision to move OriGIn's Secretariat from Brussels to Alicante in 2007 and to Geneva in 2008 was made during last December. We find Alicante not only more efficient in terms of cost for 2007 but also in terms of allowing us to achieve our strategic objectives with the required staff. OriGIn's Secretariat shall move to Geneva in 2008.

We all carry the immense responsibility of keeping the interest in GI's as well as the GI spirit alive. In this respect, OriGIn has been actively present on the GI scenario during 2006, participating in multiple seminars and conferences on GIs, promoting the GI concept and calling for better protection of GIs at national, regional and international levels across the globe. In spite of all efforts made by OriGIn members, there is still a lot of work to be done. I

encourage all of you to keep explaining to your government officials and fellow industries how important Geographical Indications are to help us recognize our traditions, sustain our competitiveness and preserve our reputation. This is not a small task in a globalized world where flows of commerce are based mainly on cost without considering the effort made by generations to create and maintain unique reputations for individual products.

One of the consequences of the lack of progress in the WTO's Doha Round is the increasing interest of many countries to sign Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The European Union has announced the launch of negotiations with a number of countries and trading blocks, together with other countries' negotiations which are taking place at present or have recently finalized. There are several examples of negotiations between China and Chile, or the Andean Community and the United States, just to name a couple. In OriGIn, we believe that the future of local communities of producers around the world shall be ensured by achieving positive results on the negotiations on Geographical Indications' protection to be undertaken by our national governments during the coming months and years. I therefore encourage all of you to follow up closely the upcoming negotiations on GIs by our governments, being proactive to ensure that our GI products will have the opportunity to access

and compete on the international market in the future. OriGIn remains at your disposal to confer any needed support and advice on this regard.

In closing, allow me to thank you in advance for your help and support during the forthcoming months. We need an engaged community that knows what is at stake in the GI debate and is proactive in defending our right to maintain the livelihood of millions of people. We are counting on you!!



Luis Fernando Samper
President of OriGIn

oriGIn

Extraordinary General Assembly

GI producers from all over the world strengthen OriGIn's structure

On 9 and 10 November 2006, OriGIn celebrated its Extraordinary General Assembly in Geneva (Switzerland).

After six months of dedicated preparation of the event, OriGIn welcomed in Switzerland producers of Geographical Indications from all over the world, gathered to discuss and adopt the most convenient measures to settle a permanent structure of OriGIn for future years. The main priority of this meeting was adapting the organization to the increasing number of GI producers willing to join the GI network.

During this meeting, producers coming from Africa, Asia, Latin and North America, Eastern and Western Europe reviewed the activities undertaken by OriGIn during the past months. They exchanged views on the importance of explaining the GI concept worldwide and ensuring a

better GI protection at all levels, learning from outstanding examples such as the Shanxi Apples from China, the Argan Oil from Morocco or the Colombian Coffee, among others.



Tasting session of GI products during the Extraordinary General Assembly of OriGIn

The main achievements of the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting were the following:

- Joint definition of OriGIn's strategy for 2007
- Modification of OriGIn Statutes and Internal Regulation
- Adoption of a new voting system for the organization
- Agreement on membership fees for 2007
- Renewal of the Technical Committee of OriGIn for 2007
- Reinforcement of the exchange of experience and expertise between all OriGIn members through the adoption of a long term program for the organization based on a coordinated initiative for 2007
- Election of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia as holder of the new Presidency of OriGIn for 2007.

Defining together the strategy for 2007, OriGIn members agreed on a coordinated regional strategy between Presidency and Vice-presidencies around the world, ensuring closer approach to GI producers, better visibility of OriGIn towards stakeholders and the successful development of OriGIn's network.

The Extraordinary General Assembly allowed OriGIn members to thank Mr. Pedro

Echeverría, President of OriGIn for 2003-2006 for three years of strong commitment and support to OriGIn goals and activities. In his farewell speech, he encouraged all OriGIn members to maintain such great level of commitment to the organization, wishing all the best to the new President of OriGIn for 2007, Mr. Luis Fernando Samper, Director General of Intellectual Property for the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia.

For OriGIn members, it was a privilege to hold its Extraordinary General Assembly in Geneva, where three years before a hundred producers gathered in this same city to launch OriGIn, with the hope that it would become a key actor on the GI debate, a platform for GI producers around the world to raise their voices on the promotion of the GI concept and call for a better protection of GIs at all levels. After three years of compromised work by all members, OriGIn has been placed on a very important position within the GI scenario, passing from a hundred producers in 2003 to over two million producers represented by November 2006.



Luis Berenguer (Technical Committee), Stefano Fanti (Technical Committee), Pedro Echeverría (President of OriGIn 2003-2006), Luis Fernando Samper (President of OriGIn for 2007), Ester Olivás (Secretary General of OriGIn), Louis Fleury (Technical Committee), & Anne Richard (Technical Committee).

Thanks to the Swiss Association of PDOs and PGIs, the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG), the Special Office for Farming Products from Geneva and the AGRIDEA Association, the Extraordinary General Assembly was a very successful meeting,

allowing for the reinforcement of OriGIn's structure and opening the path to continue working on the worldwide defense of Geographical Indications in 2007.

Update on WTO Negotiations on GI Protection

Relaunch of the negotiations

Since the suspension of the Doha Round negotiations in July 2006, Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO, has been in contact with several decision-makers who stated their desire to come back to the table of negotiations. For this reason, Lamy convened an informal meeting on the TNC on 16 November where it became clear that the number and frequency of informal contacts among WTO members, which had been going on since the summer, had increased, being a clear sign of a widely-shared desire to make the most of every opportunity to lay the foundations for further progress. In this meeting, Lamy made clear that he was encouraging the Negotiating Group Chairs to carry out contacts and consultations as they judged most appropriate, being crucial as well the bilateral contacts among members to continue testing numbers and explore flexibilities. This gave the green light to relaunch the current process of Doha Round negotiations.

On the extension of TRIPS Article 23 protection to all products

Since its creation, OriGIn has been continuously lobbying towards key decision-makers to call for concrete results on the extension of TRIPS Article 23 protection to all GI products. In this new phase of the negotiations, OriGIn remains strongly committed to call for the launch of real negotiations to extend the protection conferred by Article 23 to all GI products by the end of the Round.

On the establishment of a multilateral register for wines and spirits

The establishment of a register for wines and spirits remains on the pipeline, with deep disagreements as regards to the scope of the register and its legal effects.

OriGIn believes on the creation of a legally-binding register open to all GI products in a non discriminatory manner and will strongly continue calling for the establishment of such register, convinced that it will further enhance the protection of our famous GI products throughout the world.

Crucial negotiations ahead

WTO members have their last chance now to show that the WTO is capable to help local communities by delivering on the improvement of GI protection.

OriGIn will remain strongly committed on the call for better protection of GIs in the future, relying on all GI producers around the world as well as on the committed WTO members of the so-called "GI Friends group" to obtain progress on the improvement of GI protection



WTO Building in Geneva

oriGIn

participates to Terra Madre 2006

Slow Food Meeting

From 26 to 30 October 2006, OriGIn participated to Terra Madre 2006 meeting, the World Meeting of Food Communities organized in Turin (Italy) by the organization Slow Food.

Slow Food is an international movement whose mission consists of the preservation of

regional food and small producers against standardization of taste. It gathers more than 80.000 members in more than 130 countries around the world, aiming at the creation of a robust and active movement that protects taste, culture and environment as universal social values.

Constituted as its network, Terra Madre gathers food communities committed to producing quality food in a responsible and sustainable way. Within Terra Madre network, communities can share experiences and join together to address their governments about their concerns and important issues.

This year, Terra Madre 2006 gathered 1600 food communities from 5 continents and 150 countries, 5000 farmers, breeders, fishermen and traditional food producers, 1000 cooks and 200 universities, all involved in a range of activities covering not only the production but also the distribution and promotion of quality food.

Ester Olivas, Secretary General of OriGIn, participated in two workshops within the event, delivering key messages on: "Geographical Indication: an ideal tool to bring the local savoir faire into the market". She explained the importance of choosing the GI route to promote origin, highlighting the positive impact for producers, consumers and local communities when a name of a traditional product obtains protection as a GI.

She also outlined why the GI route is an ideal way to protect local value. GI protection prevents from the relocation of production, whereas the product is by essence rooted in a region and cannot be produced anywhere else. This ensures that local communities can rely on the benefits of their unique quality products.

OriGIn insisted on the need for local products to be well protected at all levels so that they can have a

promising place in the market, with the appropriate intellectual property rights to protect them from abuses in a more and more globalized world. The benefits of GI protection are often undermined by firms that abuse and free-ride on the reputation of famous local products. This conduct not only has devastating effects over producers who work very hard to maintain a high level of quality while preserving the local savoir-faire, but also misleads the consumers as to the origin of the goods. OriGIn believes that an improvement of geographical indications' protection will ensure an adequate protection of quality and traditional products that is to the benefit of both consumers and local communities; otherwise, without strong GI protection, the future of geographical indications is in jeopardy!



Terra Madre 2006, Turin (Italy)

oriGIn In Action

OriGIn actively continues taking actions to seek better GI protection in Argentina and Chile

In May 2006, OriGIn met the European Commission to stress its concerns about the abuses that GI producers face in Argentina and Chile (see Newsletter No. 5).

During the following months, the European Commission exchanged views with the Chilean authorities regarding a future bilateral agreement on agriculture, including the GI file as a key issue to be tackled. Talks will continue between both parties in 2007.

The increasing number of abuses of well-known GI names among Latin American countries confirms the

importance to take an active role towards national authorities of countries such as Argentina and Chile among others, to secure the protection on the reputation of famous GI products.

OriGIn remains convinced that progress must be made at national and international levels to secure better GI protection, and therefore will reinforce its compromise for the promotion and protection of GIs towards Latin American countries.

OriGIn participates at seminars

OriGIn representatives took part in many seminars around the world in the past months. To mention some of them:

- In June 2006, The Vice-president of OriGIn for Western Europe, J.Enrique Garrigós, participated on a seminar 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) in Michoacán (Mexico).
- In September 2006, OriGIn took part in Geneva in the Conference "Le potentiel des AOC au Liban, en Macédonie et en Serbie", where OriGIn welcomed the increasing interest on GIs in Eastern European countries, learning about interesting GI cases from Lebanon and Serbia, among others.
- In October 2006, the Secretary General of OriGIn, Ester Olivas, participated as guest of honour at the Congress of European Farmers in Strasbourg, organized by COPA (Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union) and COGECA (General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union), together with the German Farmers' Union (DBV) and the German Raiffeisen Association (DRV). The meeting presented the multifunctional role of agriculture. The Secretary General of OriGIn exchanged of views on the importance and indispensability of a competitive and sustainable agricultural sector in Europe, where quality and therefore GIs become a key issue.
- In November 2006, OriGIn participated on the Technical Seminar on "El papel y la incidencia que los productos con Denominación de Origen pueden tener en el mercado actual", within

the framework of the IX Forum of the Olive and Olive Oil in Baena (Córdoba – Spain).

- Also in November 2006, OriGIn attended the III European Forum on Food Quality organised by the Fondazione Qualivita. From 2002 the Qualivita Foundation deals with the protection and the promotion of the Italian and European agricultural and food products of high quality and, in particular, of the PDO, PGI and TSG certified products. OriGIn exchanged views with the Qualivita Foundation for future cooperation to defend what we strongly believe in: the future of traditional and quality products!

oriGIn Calendar

- Seminar entitled: "Assises des produits de terroir et d'origine", organized by the region of Souss Massa Drâa, in cooperation with the French region of Aquitaine. *Agadir (Marruecos), 8 of December 2006.*
- Conference on "Produtos Tradicionais - Políticas de Protecção Internacional", in the II Festival de Sabores do Azeite Novo, within the framework of the Project TERRA OLEA for the promotion and valorization of the olive oil. *Mirandela (Portugal), from 29 of January to 2 of February 2006.*
- Conference on "Food Quality Certification – adding value to farm produce", organized by the European Commission. *Brussels (Belgium), 5 and 6 February 2007.*
- Convegno on "Olive Oil European Style 2007" within the framework of the promotion campaign and information on European agricultural products. *Parma (Italy), 8 and 9 February 2007.*
- Third Session of the Provisional Committee of Proposals Related to a WIPO Development Agenda (PCDA). *Geneva (Switzerland), from February 19 to 23.*
- International Training Module on "Geographical Indications (GIs): a way forward for local development", organized by the Association AGRIDEA, which works for the development of agriculture and rural areas. *Château de Prangins (near Geneva) Switzerland, from 14 to 25 of May 2007.* For more information, please visit: <http://www.srva.ch/scripts/ig.php>

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