



PRESS RELEASE

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oriGIn explores the US potential in the GI business and proposes pragmatic solutions to improve the relevant American legal system

On 23 March, oriGIn – the international organisation of Geographical Indications (GIs) – launched in Geneva its latest handbook on *American Origin Products (AOP): Protecting a Legacy*. The manual focuses on the socio-economic implications of GIs in the US as well as on the adjustments the current legal framework would require for the American GI business to fully deploy its potential.

Mr. Stanton J. Lovenworth, an American lawyer who represents various owners of certification marks in the US and is one of the main authors of the handbook, explained the main shortfalls of the current system, focusing in particular on the high costs incurred by American and foreign GI producers to register, monitor and enforce rights over geographical names. “To address some of these problems – said Mr. Lovenworth – we came up with specific proposals, such as a more active role to be played by the US Patent and Trademark Office in denying registrations of marks that include registered certification marks as well as the creation of a new class of certification marks specifically intended for GIs”.

oriGIn asked two eminent international experts to comment on the handbook at the occasion of its launching in Geneva. Prof. Dr. Jürg Simon, a leading Swiss IP lawyer who is also President of “Emmentaler AOC”, commended the pragmatic approach adopted by the manual and stressed the negative impact for GI producers of the high costs generated by the US legal system. Mr. Federico Desimoni, Legal Advisor at the “Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma”, focused his comments on the problems encountered by the Consorzio in protecting the GI “Prosciutto di Parma” in jurisdictions where trademarks are the only instrument available for geographical names and suggested that oriGIn’s proposals would certainly make it easier to achieve a more adequate level of protection.

In closing the launching ceremony, Mr. Massimo Vittori, Secretary General of oriGIn, explained the goal of such an initiative. “The handbook is intended to promote a thorough debate on GIs in the US, with the contribution of relevant public and private stakeholders”, said Mr. Vittori. “We do hope that our manual will contribute to nurture an open debate on American Origin Products as well as to facilitate a productive cross-cultural dialogue in the international negotiations on GIs”, concluded Mr. Vittori.