

oriGIn contribution to the Green Paper on the promotion policy

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (oriGIn) is an international network of geographical indications (GIs), representing 250 organizations and over two-million producers from some 40 countries (www.origin-gi.com).

oriGIn advocates for a more effective legal protection and enforcement of GIs at the national, regional and international level and promotes the recognition of the fundamental role of origin products in the sustainable development of local communities.

Question 3: What are the specific needs in relation to information on and promotion of European products and what should the aims be in the internal market?

In the Green Paper, the Commission notes that information and promotion should be focused on the EU quality systems. oriGIn fully supports this initiative. The internal market remains the 1st market for European quality products. In particular, campaigns aiming at increasing consumers awareness on the existing schemes (PDO and PGI) and at disseminating “healthy diet” messages (such as more fruit and vegetables in the schools) should be the aim in the internal market.

Question 4: What measures should be developed to achieve the aims set and thus optimise the European Union’s intervention in the internal market?

oriGIn believes that quality schemes should be better explained to the consumers and that a large communication campaign should be launched to build visibility for the EU logos, so that consumers can link the logos to the respective concepts and products.

Question 5: What are the specific needs in terms of information on and promotion of European products and what should the aims be in the external market?

The EU should keep on focusing its action on the promotion of the quality (in particular with regard to EU products with PDO, PGI and TSG). Information and promotion of European quality products should focus on the concepts of PDO, PGI and TSG. The quality, the tradition and the method of production should also be explained to consumers in external markets.

Question 6: What measures should be developed to achieve the aims set and thus optimise the European Union’s intervention in the external market?

More coherence between the European trade policy and the promotion policy should be ensured. The EU negotiates trade agreements with other countries to gain market access. Meanwhile, the EU must invest in promotion campaigns in such markets to make consumers there are aware of the EU products exported as a result of such agreements. So promotion campaigns should be focused on key markets.

oriGIn also thinks that the Commission should consider authorising the use of the name of the country of origin of the product in order to help to local consumer to understand where the product is coming from.

Question 7: Who should benefit? Should priority be given to certain beneficiaries?
Maintain the principle of several beneficiaries?
What about the idea to include enterprises or chambers of commerce?

oriGIn thinks that the beneficiaries of such programs should remain professional or inter-professional organisations representing the sector or sectors concerned in one or more Member States or at European level. Enterprises should not become direct beneficiaries because it would undermine the key concept of the promotion European campaigns, which is based on a “collective” approach (covering several beneficiaries with common characteristics and interests). Enterprises are able to set up private promotion campaigns which put at the forefront their respective trademarks.

Question 8: In order to develop more effective and more ambitious strategies for accessing local, European and global markets, are there any conceivable synergies between the various promotion and information tools available to the EU?

Question 9: Which agricultural and agri-food products should be eligible and what criteria should be used to decide?

oriGIn thinks that the current coverage is fine, as it includes PDO, PGI and TSG products.

Question 10: To be more incisive, which means of promotion should be used? Should the focus be on promoting key messages, such as ‘5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day’ or ‘the taste of Europe’, or on product ranges (such as cheese, wine, etc.)?

Promotion campaigns on product ranges should be authorised. Indeed the products of the same range often collaborate at the national and European level and should be allowed to get promotion funds at the EU level. This strategy would also allow the promotion of key messages (e.g. the ‘5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day’).

Question 11: Would it be appropriate to provide more space for the indication of origin of the product and what criteria should be used to decide?

Currently the origin of the product may be displayed only when it is a designation provided for under European rules, such as PDO or PGI. The Commission wonders if indications of origin should be used “to open up markets”. oriGIn thinks that the Commission should not propose a strategy of communication which has the potential to weaken the concepts of PDO and PGI. oriGIn believes that the current rules should be kept and that the indication of the origin of the product should only be used when they are protected by a PDO or a PGI. If the indication of the origin for products others than PDO, PGI and TSG will be allowed, this would confuse consumers and weaken existing quality systems.

Question 12: Would it be appropriate to use brands as a promotion tool in the external market and what criteria should be used to decide?

Commercial brands should not be directly promoted through EU campaigns. Indeed this would favour specific producers or companies or only some products of the selected beneficiaries. The European promotion system should keep its global aim to promote the EU

agriculture. Authorising the direct use of commercial brands as promotion tools would lead to the transformation of this policy into a mere commercial campaign.

However, the use of the official brands used by producers groups in connection with PDOs/PGIs (such as collective marks registered by groups) should be authorised.

Question 13: What is stopping the presentation and implementation of Multi-country programmes? What would need to be done to encourage these programmes with a greater European dimension?

Some organisations may not be willing to set up a program because the rules impose that the program must cover several products and not a product range. Some organisations find it difficult to find the right partner to cooperate with; a system should be developed at the European level for organisations to exchange needs and proposals and make it easier to find a partner for such campaigns.

Moreover, there is no coordination among Ministries of Member States, which may lead to interpret the rules at issue in different ways.

Question 15: How can the selection and implementation of programmes be simplified and improved?

The current multi-countries programs lead to important costs of translation and management. Currently, groups have to write several reports which are sent to the Commission. The participation of the Commission to board meeting will cut this redtape because it would be able to do the reporting on its own. It would allow more flexibility.

A specific requirement of Multi-country programs proved to be cumbersome for GI groups: the obligation to launch an invitation to tender for the selection of the agency which will carry out the promotion campaign before the request's presentation. If such obligation is to be maintained, it should be rather placed after the request's presentation (and require GI groups to provide in the first phase only a list of agencies that would be consulted).