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oriGIn contributes to the debate on non agricultural GIs in the EU

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (oriGIn) welcomes the publication by the European Commission of a Study on Geographical Indications (GIs) for non-agricultural products in the European Union (EU). oriGIn believes this is a significant step forward in the development of a policy for non-agricultural GIs in the EU.

In July 2012, the European Commission had published a call for tenders with the aim to study the economic value and the existing legal frameworks to protect non-agricultural GIs in the EU. oriGIn, in cooperation with Insight Consulting and REDD, was awarded the contract and participated in the elaboration of the study.

Based on the economic value of non-agricultural GIs in the EU, the research had the purpose to assess the possibility to establish a specific and harmonized legal system at the EU level. In this respect, at present, only GIs for agricultural products and foodstuff, wine and spirits enjoy harmonized protection in the EU. Non-agricultural GIs are not covered by a specific EU regulation and their protection is based on different national legislations and/or the trademark system.

The Study highlights the huge potential of non-agricultural GIs in the EU, with nearly 834 products which could benefit from a specific EU system. In addition, a large majority of stakeholders consulted in the framework of the study are in favor of the establishment of an EU legal framework that would provide to the product names at issue effective protection against misappropriations and counterfeiting.

"We welcome this Study on the enhancement, promotion and protection of non-agricultural GIs in the internal market. Providing producers with effective legal means to protect and enhance the specificities of non-agricultural GIs is a strategic objective. We look forward to the future initiatives that the European Commission will take following the publication of the Study ", said Massimo Vittori, Managing Director of oriGIn.

The Study is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/indprop/geo-indications/index_en.htm

