

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Washington DC, 20 May 2014

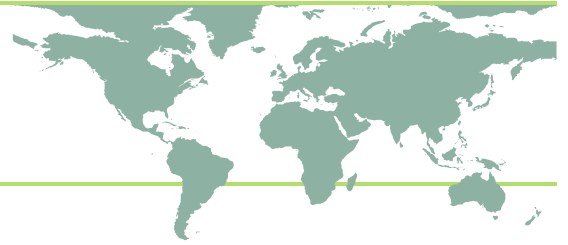
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From Washington DC, oriGIn sends a strong message in favor of GIs in the T-TIP

Washington DC, May 20, 2014 - As negotiations between United States and European Union officials takes place in Arlington, Virginia for the fifth round of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) talks, a few miles away in Washington DC, oriGIn sends a strong message in favor of Geographical Indications (GIs).

At a meeting organized to discuss the GI scheme as well as the T-TIP expectations of its members from both sides of the Atlantic, oriGIn – the global coalition of GI groups – invited food journalists and bloggers, government agencies, trade and intellectual property specialists, staffers from the House of Representatives and members of Congress, diplomats and interests groups. *“In challenging times, where creating stable jobs and rethinking business models in light of sustainability concerns are crucial for the future of our economies and societies, GIs have a key role to play,”* said Mr. Massimo Vittori, Managing Director of oriGIn. *“Through GIs, producers differentiate their goods leveraging their geographical origin and associated qualities. As intellectual property rights, though, recognized internationally by the 159 Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), GIs must be adequately protected, primarily in the interest of consumers,”* said Mr. Giorgio Bocedi, Legal Advisor of the Consorzio Tutela Aceto Balsamico di Modena and of the Consorzio Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano.

While the system in place in the United States to protect GIs presents some flaws, the T-TIP represents a tremendous opportunity to address such problems, in a pragmatic and creative way, having as primary focus the benefits for the rural economy as well as the protection of consumers. *“All regions of the world, including the United States, have specific agricultural products connected to their local communities that contribute to their culture and economic sustainability. This is true in Vermont as well as in other regions. The T-TIP negotiation process provides an opportunity for reasonable compromise that will not disenfranchise producers or their region in any country,”* stated



Mr. Roger Allbee, former Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. *“The time has come for a resolution of the Intellectual Property Rights of agricultural producers in a fair, transparent and reasonable manner. It’s time for compromise and recognition that there is a reasonable middle ground to be found,”* said Mr. Patrick J. Kole, Vice President of the Idaho Potato Commission. *“America’s GIs, and their rural regions, stand to benefit as much as those from the EU by a solid protection of GIs in their respective markets through the T-TIP. Their potential is astounding”*, concluded Ms. Elisabeth Barham, Executive Director of the American Origin Products Research Foundation.

The meeting was followed by a networking lunch, where a Washington-based Chef – Luigi Diotiauti – creatively combined European and American GIs.

See the menu: “GI Lunch: a combination of US and EU cuisine” <http://www.origin-gi.com/images/stories/PDFs/English/Event/Washington/MenuGILunch20mayDC.jpg>

About oriGIn:

The Organisation for an International Geographical Indications Network – oriGIn – is the global alliance of Geographical Indications, representing 350 associations and some 2 million producers from 40 countries. For more information: <http://www.origin-gi.com>