

oriGIn

The Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network
rue de Varembé 1, 1202 Geneva – CH
EU Transparency Register ID Number: 2292357633-53

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Phil Hogan
Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

Cecilia Malmström
Commissioner for Trade

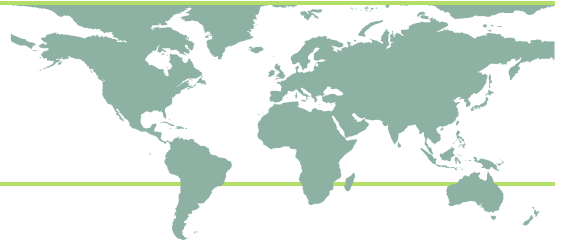
Geneva, 21 June 2017

Re: harmonized EU system for the recognition and protection of non-agricultural GIs

Dear President, Dear Commissioners,

oriGIn is the global alliance of Geographical Indications, which counts among its members 500 associations from 40 countries, including some of the most famous European Protected Designations of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and Geographical Indications (GIs). oriGIn advocates for the effective legal protection of Geographical Indications at the national, regional and international level.

Since 2012, under the lead of the DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, the European Commission has been analysing the issue of harmonizing the protection for non-agricultural GIs in the EU.



oriGIn – which represents a growing number of GIs groups of non-agricultural products – thinks that the absence of a unitary title of protection for non-agricultural GIs in the EU is detrimental to legal certainty and does not facilitate the recognition of their value and uniqueness. We are therefore in favor of the establishment of a harmonized system for the recognition and protection of non-agricultural GIs at the EU level.

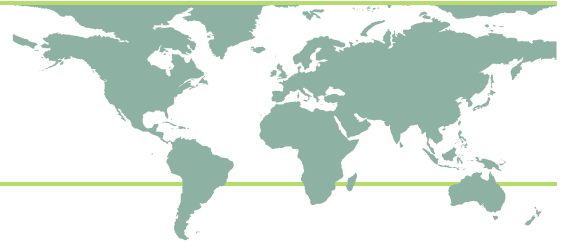
From an economic perspective, we believe that such a system would strengthen the local anchorage of production and offer fresh economic opportunities to traditional sectors in the EU economy (ceramics, fabrics, leather,...) that have been undermined by the economic crisis as well as by imitations and counterfeiting. In a time where the creation of long-term jobs represents a main challenge for our economies, non-agricultural GIs (for which no delocalization is possible) preserve and promote stable employments in their respective regions, with significant spill-over effects for the local economies. To capture that value, though, the establishment of a specific system is needed, as it is proved by the experience of existing EU GIs schemes.

From a legal perspective, a harmonized EU system for the recognition and protection of non-agricultural GIs would enable producers to pursue a meaningful protection strategy, saving costs and getting effective mechanisms to protect and enforce their rights.

Finally, from the perspective of international negotiations on GIs (and in particular free trade agreements), such an EU system would help the EU efforts to conclude such negotiations. Most of the countries across the world already recognize non-agricultural GIs in their legislations, including several which are negotiating bilateral agreements with the EU: India, for instance, where 2/3 of national GIs cover non-agricultural products, or China, which has already asked the EU to have some language in the bilateral GIs Agreement under negotiation, which will allow in the future the protection of non-agricultural GIs of both parties.

In light of the above, oriGIn encourages the European Commission to pursue its efforts to establish a harmonised system for the recognition and protection of non-agricultural GIs. We believe that such a system should be simple and transparent, should recognize the link between the products and their respective areas of production as an essential element, and should not create confusion with the existing European GIs systems.





We remain at your complete disposal should you require any further information, and look forward from hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Massimo Vittori".

Mr Massimo Vittori
Managing Director
oriGIn

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Manuel Santiago Rodríguez".

Mr Manuel Santiago Rodríguez
President
Association "La Piel de Ubrique" (BYPIEL) and
Vice-president of oriGIn for Europe