

**For the courteous attention of Commissioner Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Trade  
and Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture**

In copy:

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Brussels, 7th May 2020

**Re: Call for better protection of Geographical Indications online through bilateral agreements**

Dear Commissioners,

EFOW, the **European Federation of Origin Wines** ([www.efow.eu](http://www.efow.eu)), the Brussels based organisation representing Geographical Indication (GI) wines towards European and international institutions, and oriGIn EU, **the European antenna of the global alliance of geographical Indications** (GIs) groups (<https://www.origin-gi.com>), would like the European Commission to secure better protection of EU GIs online.

As you know, Geographical Indications do not benefit from ICANN's (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) dispute resolution mechanism to resolve conflicting issues on top-level domain names (TLDs) of the internet (.int, .com, .food) as this tool is only available to trade mark owners. As a result, GI producers face many difficulties in fighting against practices such as cyber-squatting (i.e. bad-faith and abusive registration and use of their GI name through domain names).

In order to better protect Geographical Indications, our organisations would like to propose the introduction of a specific clause in bilateral agreements that the EU negotiates with third countries. This clause would focus on gTLDs ensuring appropriate remedies will be available in cases where a person registers, in bad faith, a domain name that is similar or liable to cause confusion with a registered Geographical Indication. To that end, our organisations have drafted the following wording:

*« In connection with each Party's system for the management of its country-code top level domain (ccTLD), appropriate remedies, such as revocation, cancellation, transfer, damages, or injunctive relief, shall be available, in cases where a person - not being the recognized holder of a geographical indication - registers or holds a second-level domain name that is identical or confusingly similar to the said geographical indication ».*

We believe if the European Union were to include such a clause, it would provide an incentive to other countries to offer that type of option in country-code top-level domains. The more country-code top-level domains would recognize GIs, the more chances we would have to obtain the same in generic top-level domains.

Our organisation's Secretariat remain at your complete disposal for any further information.

Yours faithfully,



Bernard Farges  
EFOW's President



Claude Vermot-Desroches  
EU oriGIn's President