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Revision of the Geographical Indication Policy: oriGIn EU regrets a lack of ambition and coherence as well as the contradictions in the proposal of the European Commission

The European Commission (EC) released today its legislative proposal for the revision of the EU Geographical Indication (GI) system.

The proposed Regulation provides some encouraging elements with respect to a more robust protection and controls of GIs, in particular in the domain names environment. However, the attempt to define the concepts of evocation and the generic status of terms might result in limiting GI protection. Likewise, other provisions do not go in the right direction recently set forth by the reform of the Common Market Organization and of Regulation 1151/2012.

First of all, we would have expected stronger proposals to support the strategic role of GIs and more ambition in the recognition of powers and prerogatives of groups, which are the core of the EU system.

Moreover, oriGIn EU regrets the complexity of the procedures which might result from the proposal, as the simplification of the system is one of its main priorities. While remaining responsible for decision-making on GI registrations, amendments and cancellations, the EC proposes to carry out the management of the system in collaboration with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), without explaining the powers and responsibilities given to it. This might lead to further delays in the process and the loss of centrality of the EC.

Finally, oriGIn EU notes that the proposal lacks a clear vision on the future of GIs. The EC is calling for several delegated powers, which would bypass the two EU co-legislators, the European Parliament, and the Council, to decide, at a later stage, on strategic issues such as sustainability.

“In light of this, oriGIn EU looks forward to working with the Members of the European Parliaments and the Member States, as well as the EC, for a very much needed and clear improvement of the legislative proposal, which is crucial for the future of the sector. We need an ambitious European Geographical Indication system to ensure that producers can continue contributing to the sustainable and economic development of rural areas across the EU.”, said the president of oriGIn EU, Charles Deparis.

oriGIn EU is the European branch of the Geographical Indications (GIs) global alliance (<https://www.origin-gi.com>) and represents GIs individual groups as well as GIs national associations before the European institutions. The GIs sector makes a tremendous contribution to the European economy, representing a sales value of more than €75 billion a year and some 15.5% of total EU food and drink exports.