



PRESS RELEASE

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Global origin-based producers urge GI extension to be part of the Single Undertaking

The international organisation of origin-based producers – OriGIn – is concerned with the refusal of a few WTO delegations to negotiate the fundamental issue of extending the higher level of protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits by virtue of article 23 of TRIPs Agreement to all GI products (commonly referred to as “GI extension”).

OriGIn welcomes the draft modalities for TRIPs-related issues sponsored by a large majority of WTO Member States (TN/CW/52/Add.2). *“We are of the opinion that those draft modalities represent an equilibrated compromise among different positions and interests. We have today a historical chance to reach a milestone agreement on GIs within the WTO. At this stage, after months of negotiations and the formation of such an overwhelming coalition of WTO Members supporting GI extension, it would be difficult to justify any deal not containing meaningful reference to this key issue”*, says Massimo Vittori, Secretary General of OriGIn.

“Current WTO rules on GIs are unbalanced and do not offer producers of GIs other than wines and spirits effective legal remedies to prevent and stop abuse. Free-riding has been increasing over the years and, as a result, producers are losing market share”, insists Mr. Vittori.

The protection conferred to GI products other than wines and spirits by article 22 of the TRIPs Agreement is limited to cases where the public is misled as to the true geographical origin of a product or when the use of a GI constitutes an act of unfair competition. National jurisdictions are influenced by different traditions and might differ on whether the public is misled or not. This reduces legal certainty and predictability, which are basic requirements in international trade transactions. Moreover, article 22 does not prevent the use of GIs in translation or accompanied by expressions such as “style”, “like”, etc. Additional protection is provided by the TRIPs Agreement for wines and spirits, which makes misappropriations and free-riding more difficult.

“Millions of GI products from all over the world would not understand nor support any regime de facto consolidating first class and second class producers enjoying different standards of protection (which is the case today). With a few exceptions, developing economies are not wines producers. Ensuring that all products benefit from the protection currently enjoyed by wines and spirits as well as setting-up a meaningful register opened to all products, would contribute to establishing a more development-friendly global trading system”, concludes Mr. Vittori.

For more information:

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About OriGIn:

The Organisation for an International Geographical Indications Network – OriGIn – is the first international organisation of geographical indications’ producers. OriGIn represents some 80 organisations and more than two-million producers.