



## PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION IN TTIP NEGOTIATION

### POSITION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN REGIONS FOR PRODUCTS OF ORIGIN (AREPO)

- Whereas 1.300 Geographical Indication (GI) for foodstuffs –PDO and PGI registered by the European Commission (EC)- are collective intellectual property rights,
- Whereas several hundred GIs are still undergoing the registration procedure in the Member States or by the EC, and other are likely to follow,
- Whereas GIs recognize and protect products whose specificities are at least in part due to their territories of origin, with their inherent natural and human factors. Moreover these GIs represents a whole section of European agricultural and food culture,
- Whereas the European GIs represent an annual turnover of at least 60 billion euros of which 15 billion represent food GIs,
- Whereas the total value of GIs products exported outside EU is estimated at €15 billion of which €1,5 billion represent food GIs,
- Whereas US represent 30% of the total value of exported European GIs products,
- Whereas 15% of GIs are no longer linked to an existing production,
- Considering the TTIP negotiating documents published by the EC on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, regarding especially food GIs,
- Considering the list of 202 food GIs, other than wine and spirits, presented by the EC among these documents

#### **1/ AREPO opposes the principle of an *a priori* restricted list of GIs**

**AREPO reaffirms that all GIs (PGI and PDO) registered by the EC have the right to be protected in all bilateral, multilateral and international trade agreements signed by the EU.**

All GIs have gone through a strict and lengthy process of technical definition and administrative validation.

The 1.300 food GIs –PGI and PDO registered by the EC- **are inalienable rights** of collective intellectual property recognized by the European regulatory framework.

**Therefore, AREPO opposes the European negotiators proposal of an *a priori* restricted list of European GIs in the TTIP negotiations.**

#### **2/ AREPO calls for an exhaustive consultation of the European GIs**

AREPO questions the modalities of the democratic process that led to the drafting of the restricted list published by the EC. AREPO members argue that a significant number of GIs with commercial interests in the US are not included in the list published by the EC.



We are aware that around 15% of registered GIs is no longer linked to an existing production and that such GIs could be phased out with an internal EU revision.

In any case, if the conclusion of TTIP negotiations between the EU and US authorities should lead to the definition of an *a posteriori* restricted list of GIs, **the number of selected GIs should not be the result of a random process and the included names should not be selected without a concerted decision.**

**The EC should therefore urgently starts a comprehensive consultation of the European GIs assessing their willingness to be protected or not under the TTIP.**

### **3/ AREPO highlights the importance to keep the inscription to the eventual bilateral register open to future GIs**

Taking into consideration the EU enlargement process, new GIs will be registered in the coming years.

In addition, European food and agricultural potential is in constant development and new GIs will be registered as long as new products are assimilated in the tradition and heritage of the European regions in the time of one or more generations.

**Therefore, AREPO considers extremely important that the registration process in the eventual bilateral register remains open to future GIs. This is valid for the TTIP as well as all bilateral, multilateral and international trade agreements signed by the EU.**

### **4/ Regarding GIs guaranteeing the protection of non-food products, AREPO demands that US stops using the names of 17 European GIs for wine wrongly considered semi-generic.**

The following 17 European GIs considered semi-generic by US -*Burgundy, Chablis, Champagne, Chianti, Claret, Haut-Sauterne, Hock, Madeira, Malaga, Marsala, Moselle, Port, Retsina, Rhine, Sauterne, Jérez-Xérès-Sherry and Tokaj* – should receive full protection including the prohibition of using expression such as “like”, “type” etc.

### **5/ Finally, whatever the negotiated outcome, in the next few months AREPO will consider the possibility to present a proposal for new financial instruments to support the European GIs in their protection actions in foreign markets.**