

Towards an extended protection of craft know-how within the European Union

Indications of origin and quality are valuable tools for local producers to promote the unique characteristics of their products as well as their traditional know-how. Therefore, a “geographical indication” can be granted whenever the product in question has a specific link to the place where it is made.

The European Union has been in favor of these indications since the early 1990's with a triple objective: Fair competition between producers, development of rural areas and quality production and informed choice for consumers. Time has come to expand the range of products covered.

These labels include PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) and GI (Geographical Indication).

The first two categories concern exclusively foodstuffs and wines, the grant of a PDO or PGI being conditioned upon the quantity of the product's raw materials that come from the relevant area.

Spirit drinks and aromatized wine products have their own label, the GI. However, this category of specific products is being extended. On April 13, 2022, the European Commission made official its plan to extend GIs throughout the European Union to traditional craft and industrial products^[1]. This intellectual property right could thus cover many products with an exceptional local history, such as Porcelaine de Limoges or Irish Donegal tweed.

As early as 2015, producers and the European Parliament wanted to extend the European geographical indication system to non-food products. In France, such products can benefit since 2014 from a GI in the same way as agricultural products. These labels are grouped at the national level within the *Association Française des Indications Géographiques Industrielles et Artisanales* (French Association of Industrial and Craft Geographical Indications, also known by its acronym AFIGIA).

In addition, the procedure for obtaining this geographical indication should be harmonized within the European Union and, therefore, streamlined.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_2406

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