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Italy Ratifies Geneva Act to Expand Protection for Its Geographical Indications

The move automatically extends coverage to 166 registered Italian names, giving wine and food producers stronger tools against counterfeiting abroad.

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Italy has deposited its ratification of the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement with the World Intellectual Property Organization, a move the government says will strengthen international protection for the country’s geographical indications, including many products tied to wine and other beverages.

The document was delivered by Patrizio La Pietra, undersecretary at Italy’s Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests, to WIPO Director General Darren Tang. The step brings Italy into the updated Lisbon system created by the Geneva Act, a 2015 revision of the international treaty designed to reinforce legal protection for geographical indications and appellations of origin.

According to the ministry, the ratification automatically extends protection to 166 Italian geographical indications that are already registered. That broader coverage is meant to give producers stronger legal tools against imitation, counterfeiting and improper use of protected names in foreign markets.

Italy was among the founding members of the original Lisbon Agreement in 1958 and played a central role in the negotiations that led to the 2015 diplomatic conference where the Geneva Act was adopted. With Italy’s ratification, the number of contracting parties to the Geneva Act rises to 73.

La Pietra called geographical indications a strategic priority for Italy. In a statement reported by Terra e Vita, he said that protecting a GI means defending producers’ integrity, consumer safety, rural economies and cultural identity. He said the ratification confirms Italy’s view that tradition and innovation can advance together while helping local communities connect with international markets.

For Italy’s food and drink industries, the measure could carry practical weight beyond legal symbolism. The country has one of the world’s largest portfolios of protected DOP and IGP products, and that includes wines whose commercial value depends heavily on name recognition and origin claims. A wider multilateral framework may improve enforcement against fake or misleading references to Italian denominations abroad, including forms of “Italian sounding” marketing that can divert sales from authentic producers.

The ministry said the new framework offers several operational advantages for Italian agriculture and food production: stronger international governance, broader geographic reach for protection, more effective anti-counterfeiting tools and a single registration and protection system for geographical indications. Officials also see potential benefits in relations with third countries as more WIPO members join the system.

That matters especially in export markets where protected names often face uneven treatment or lengthy disputes. For beverage producers, particularly in wine, stronger recognition under an international registration system could help support claims over denomination use in jurisdictions where local enforcement has been difficult or fragmented.

The ratification fits into a broader Italian policy aimed at defending and promoting certified national products overseas. The government argues that stronger international safeguards are essential not only for preserving reputation but also for giving consumers clearer assurances of authenticity in a global market increasingly exposed to imitation and misuse of origin-linked names.