vinetur

EU Council Enhances Protection for Gastronomic Heritage with New GI Regulation

Empowering Producer Groups and Safeguarding Culinary Traditions Across the Digital and Physical Realms

Monday, April 1, 2024



In the ever-evolving landscape of the food and beverage industry, geographical indications (GIs) serve as a beacon of authenticity, quality, and tradition. These special designations, which protect the names of products originating from specific places and possessing qualities or a reputation due to that origin, are crucial in maintaining the

integrity and heritage of gastronomic delights across the globe. In a significant move to bolster this protection, the European Union's Council has recently adopted a regulation that not only strengthens the safeguarding of GIs across both digital and physical realms but also streamlines the process for their registration.

This new regulation marks a pivotal shift in how GIs are managed, offering substantial benefits not just to producers but to the entire rural economy. By enhancing the role of producer groups, granting them the power and responsibilities to manage their GIs and represent their members in intellectual property enforcement networks, the EU is empowering those at the heart of gastronomic innovation and tradition. This empowerment is further extended through the possibility for member states to designate these producer groups as 'recognized producer groups', providing them with exclusive rights on behalf of all producers of the product designated by a GI.

One of the regulation's key features is its comprehensive approach to protection, encompassing both online and offline realms. In an age where digital presence is as significant as physical, the threat of domain names infringing on GIs has been a growing concern. Addressing this, the regulation mandates greater protection of geographical indications in domain names, even employing geo-blocking to prevent misuse. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) is set to play a crucial role in this digital safeguarding by establishing a domain name information and alert system.

Furthermore, the regulation enhances the protection of a GI name when used to designate an ingredient in a related processed food product. In such cases, recognized producer groups must be notified, and the percentage of the GI ingredient must be clearly indicated, ensuring transparency and maintaining the integrity of the GI designation.

This legislative advancement is a testament to the EU's commitment to protecting its rich gastronomic heritage and supporting its rural economies. By simplifying the registration procedure for GIs and providing robust mechanisms for their protection, the EU is not only safeguarding its culinary traditions but also fostering innovation and authenticity in the global food and beverage industry. This regulation is a step forward in the journey to preserve the uniqueness and quality of products that hold a special

place in the cultural and gastronomic landscapes of their regions of origin, ensuring that the legacy of these products is preserved for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.