10/17/2017 Events

On 17 October this year, the third meeting of the Geographical Indications Sub-Committee took place in Chisinau, established in accordance with Article 306 of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union.

The meeting was hosted by the State Agency on Intellectual Property of the Republic of Moldova (AGEPI), the body responsible for the implementation in the Republic of Moldova of the provisions of the Association Agreement on Intellectual Property, including in the field of geographical indications.

The European Union attended the event with a delegation led by Susana Marazuela Azpiroz, Head of Unit A4 Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission. The EU delegation also included Małgorzata Śliwinska-Klenner, EU secretary of the RM-EU Geographical Indications Sub-Committee, and Speranta Olaru, Project Manager at the European Union Delegation to Chisinau.

The Moldovan delegation was composed of representatives of the institutions responsible for the protection and enforcement of rights on geographical indications, namely: the State Agency on Intellectual Property, Customs Service, National Investigation Inspectorate of the GPI, Agency for Consumer Protection, National Food Safety Agency, National Vine and Wine Office and State Inspectorate for Alcohol Production Supervision.

The meeting was also attended by the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, national coordinator of the RM-EU Association Agreement.

The Sub-Committee was chaired by Lilia Bolocan, Director General of AGEPI and Head of Republic of Moldova's Delegation to the current meeting of the Sub-Committee. The Republic of Moldova is to hold the chairmanship of the GI Sub-Committee until 31 December 2017. In accordance with the Sub-Committee's Rules of Procedure adopted at its first meeting in December 2015, the chairmanship of the Sub-Committee is held alternately for periods of 12 months, by the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. Under its mandate, the Geographical Indications Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement on Geographical Indications and serves as a forum for cooperation and dialogue on geographical indications between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova.

Thus, the participants in the third meeting reviewed the latest developments in the geographical indication system in the European Union and the Republic of Moldova after the second meeting held in October 2016 in Brussels, the discussions focusing on the legislative- normative and institutional developments. The Parties also exchanged views and information on enforcement of rights in geographical indications, *ex-officio* procedures for ensuring protection, border and internal market control and protection mechanisms, and also the means of communication between the parties in case of violations of rights in geographical indications.

The parties took note of the progress of the examination in the Moldovan court of the infringement of the right in the protected geographical indication Prosecco, registered in the European Union and protected on the territory of our country under the Association Agreement.

According to the agenda of the meeting, the parties agreed the draft Decision No. 1/2017 of the GI Sub-Committee on the Completion of Annexes XXX-C and XXX-D to the RM-EU Association Agreement on Mutual Recognition of New Geographical Indications, the decision being supposed to be signed by the Sub-Committee Chairman as soon as the internal procedures for the approval of the signing of the decision according to the requirements of the normative acts in force will be completed.

We should mention that at present, two appellations of origin ("Romanesti" and "Ciumai") and four geographical indications from the Republic of Moldova ("Divin", "Codru", "Valul lui Traian" and

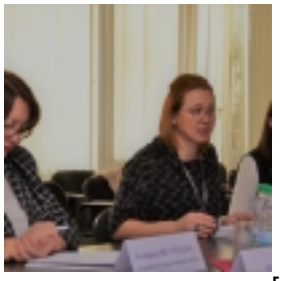
“Stefan Voda”) are protected throughout the European Union on the basis of the Association Agreement. Two other geographical indications protected in the Republic of Moldova have been notified in order to be granted EU protection (“Apricot Brandy of Nimoreni” and “Rose Petal Jam of Calarasi”), which have been published in the Official Bulletin of the EU, have passed the opposition period and will benefit from protection in the EU with the aforementioned signing.

At present, are in the process of preparing for the transmission to the European Union, for the purpose of granting protection, the protected appellation of origin “Popeasca Cheese” and the protected geographical indication “Zabriceni”.

On 31 December 2016, 3,517 geographical indications and appellations of origin from different EU Member States were protected on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

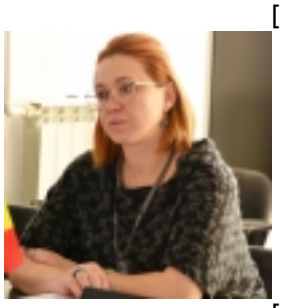
Also, 949 appellations of origin from 21 countries are protected under the Lisbon Agreement on the Protection of AO and their International Registration. 7 geographical indications and 3 appellations of origin from the Republic of Moldova and 7 foreign appellations of origin obtained protection by national route.

In 2018, the Chairmanship of the Geographical Indications Sub-Committee will be performed by the European Union. Thus, the next meeting of the EU-RM Geographical Indications Sub-Committee will take place next year in Brussels.

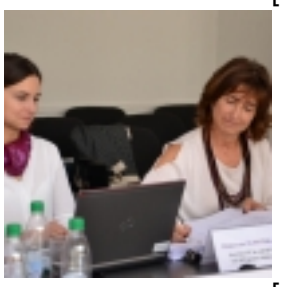

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