

Media Release

Better international protection for Swiss quality products

Bern, 2 September 2019. The agreement between Georgia and Switzerland on the protection of geographical indications and use of the indication of source “Switzerland” comes into force on 1 September 2019. It protects well-known Swiss indications and contributes to maintaining the long-term reputation of Swiss quality products.

Key points at a glance:

- **The agreement lists protected designations. This means that, in future, the indication of source “Switzerland”, the Swiss cross, the names of the Swiss cantons, as well as geographical indications of Swiss specialities will also be protected in Georgia.**
- **The agreement negotiated provides for a very high level of protection making it an international model.**
- **Georgia is the tenth country with which Switzerland has been able to conclude an international treaty on the protection of Swiss quality products.**

The agreement protects important geographical indications and indications of source of both countries. For Switzerland, this concerns specific indications such as *Tête de Moine*, *Gruyère*, *Swiss chocolate* and *Swiss watches*. Also protected are the indication “Switzerland”, the Swiss cross, as well as the names of the Swiss cantons. For Georgia, the agreement contains denominations for specialities such as *Kakheti* (wine), *Sulguni* (cheese) and *Borjomi* (mineral water).

“Geographical indications and indications of source are an important marketing tool for Swiss quality products, also in the export sector,” says Patric Franzen, the Swiss ambassador in Georgia. “The agreement between Georgia and Switzerland protects such indications better than applicable international rules, and hence contributes to maintaining the reputation of Swiss quality products over the long term.”

Alain Farine, manager of the Swiss association AOP-IGP, which unites Swiss producers of products protected by geographical indications, welcomes the agreement. “Producers of Swiss specialities are reliant on their geographical indications being effectively protected abroad in order to put a stop to plagiarists who ride on the coat tails of the reputation of Swiss quality products. The agreement with Georgia serves as a model with its high level of protection and comprehensive lists of protected Swiss denominations.”

Switzerland is committed to improving protection for geographical indications and indications of source in international forums – in particular in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Parallel to this, it also negotiates bilateral protection agreements with like-minded partner countries. The conclusion of the agreement between Switzerland and Georgia pursues this strategy and follows the agreements concluded with Jamaica and Russia in 2013 and 2010 respectively.

The agreement with Georgia is in answer to the business community's desire to protect 'Swissness' abroad and corresponds to Parliament's wish to regulate the use of geographical indications in international treaties (Motion 12.3642 of 19 June 2012 of the Council of States' Commission for Legal Affairs). The treaty supplements the free trade agreement that came into force for Georgia and Switzerland on 1 May 2018.

You can find further information at <https://www.ige.ch/en/protecting-your-ip/overview-of-indications-of-source.html>.

For further questions:

Mathias Schaeli, Head of International Trade Relations

T +41 31 377 72 25

E-mail mathias.schaeli@ipi.ch

About the IPI

The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) is the federal centre of competence for patents, trade marks, geographical indications, design and copyright. Individuals and companies can register their inventions and creations with the IPI to protect them from plagiarism. In addition to this, the IPI informs the public about the IP rights system of protection.

It also fulfils a political mandate in all areas of intellectual property in that it prepares legislation, advises the federal authorities, and represents Switzerland within international organisations and vis-à-vis other countries.