

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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General Council

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PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Involvement of WIPO in the Management of the Multilateral System of Notification and Registration Provided for under Article 23:4 of the Agreement on TRIPS

Communication from Hungary

The following communication, dated 28 July 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Hungary.

Issue

1. Paragraph 4 of Article 23 states that "In order to facilitate the protection of geographical indications for wines, negotiations shall be undertaken in the Council for TRIPS concerning the establishment of a multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications for wines eligible for protection in those Members participating in the system."
2. Hungary, like many other WTO Members, attaches great importance to the earliest possible establishment of a multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications. Hungary believes that in the absence of such a system, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Article 23 are very difficult to apply in a reliable and consistent manner.
3. In the course of the discussions in the Council for TRIPS several delegations observed that the multilateral registration system must not impose undue administrative burdens and costs on the WTO Secretariat. Hungary finds this argument reasonable and therefore believes that consideration should be given to involving the International Bureau of WIPO in the management of the new system. A precedent for such involvement – although in another area of activities – already exists. Under Article 3 of the 1995 Agreement between the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization, the procedures relating to communication of emblems and transmittal of objections under the Agreement on TRIPS is administered by the International Bureau of WIPO. The different membership of WIPO and WTO did not prove to be an obstacle to the establishment and operation of that implementation scheme, which led to a considerable saving of resources.

Proposal

4. The Ministerial Conference should consider to invite the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization to take part in the management of the multilateral system of notification and registration of geographical indications to be established pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article 23 of the Agreement on TRIPS.