



Press release

ASIAGO PDO and EBAY: in just a few hours the new memorandum for the protection and enhancement of PDO and PGI agri-food productions blocked the sale of a counterfeit product on the e-commerce platform.

The memorandum signed by the ICQRF (Central Inspectorate for the Protection of Quality and Repression of Fraudulent Agro-Food Products), the online platform eBay and AICIG (the Italian Association of Geographical Indication Consortia) was applied at the same time as the Consortium reported two attempted frauds at the SIAL exhibition in Paris.

Vicenza, 23rd October 2014 - After being reported by the Consortium for the Protection, a listing by an American producer of counterfeit ASIAGO PDO, ready to be shipped to Europe and on sale on eBay, was withdrawn through application of the memorandum of understanding for the protection and enhancement of PDO and PGI agri-food products, signed last May by the ICQRF (Central Inspectorate for the protection of Quality and Repression of Fraudulent Agro-Food Products), the online platform eBay and AICIG (the Italian Association of Geographical Indication Consortia), which also the Consortium for the Protection of Asiago PDO Cheese adheres to. At the same time, the Consortium for the Protection also had two counterfeit products seized, one from Latvia and the other from America, at the Sial Exhibition in Paris.

Only a few hours after the Consortium for the Protection reported the infringement to the ICQRF, the listing was withdrawn by eBay. The memorandum, signed last May, assigns a central role to the Verified Rights Owner (VeRO) programme; this systems allows the owners of intellectual property rights (like copyrights, registered trademarks or patents) to report any infringements. Through the VeRO programme, the ICQRF Department sent eBay a "notice of infringement of intellectual property rights relating to PDO and PGI productions" and the marketplace removed the listing. At the same time, the Inspectorate activated the ex officio protective procedures throughout EU territory to block marketing of the products detected.

The growing use of e-commerce for agri-food products requires an unprecedented commitment to protect the consumer, to promote and enhance Italian PDO and PGI productions and to combat fraud, in the interest of producers of genuine Made in Italy products. "On this occasion, we are delighted to bear witness to the efficacy of the joint action of the Consortium, ICQRF and eBay. A result that accompanies the protective measures carried out by us every day in all EU countries and that, at the recent Sial International Food Exhibition in Paris, also led to the seizure of two counterfeit products" states Roberto Gasparini, President of the Consortium.

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In fact, during the five-day exhibition, thanks to the rapid action of the ICQRF and of the French authorities, two cases of counterfeit Asiago were reported and seized, one American and the other Latvian (even more serious because implemented by an EU producer). In both these cases, the timely action of the Consortium and the prompt response of the competent authorities, who swiftly applied the community obligation of "ex officio" protection, the commitment undertaken by EU member states to monitor and enforce the protected names of each country within their own territories, were proof of the efficacy of the international monitoring network that has been operating for some time now.

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