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Geographical Indications Go Beyond Feta and Ouzo: Greece' s New Framework for Craft and Industrial Products

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Introduction

As of 28th of April 2026, Greece has taken a major step towards the protection of craft and industrial products with the introduction of a dedicated legal framework for geographical indications (**GI**). The new **Law 5297/2026** (GG A 64/2026), published under the title "*Simplification of the framework for exercising economic activities of Law 4442/2016 – Definition of the principles for the implementation of the framework concerning the supervision of economic activities and the product market of Law 4512/2018 –* ***Provisions for the protection of geographical indications regarding craft and industrial products and the adoption of necessary measures for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2023/2411*** *– Strengthening the development activity and strategic investments – Simplification of the institutional framework for outdoor trade and other provisions*" (the "**Law**") complements EU Regulation 2023/2411 on the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products (the "**Regulation**")[1], applicable from December 1st, 2025, onwards.

The Law seeks to safeguard Greece's unique regional products of the secondary sector, ranging from the world-renowned marble of the island Thasos to the traditional Cretan Lyra, whose qualities and reputation are inextricably linked to their place of origin. It provides a coherent legal framework which aims to enhance their reputation, strengthen their market position and prevent them from misuse or imitation.

What is changing in Greece?

Until now, Greece has offered GI protection only for agricultural products, wines, and spirit drinks, in accordance with existing EU rules. Craft and industrial products could rely solely on trademark law provisions and/or unfair competition rules, neither of which are designed to protect the unique link between product characteristics and geographical origin. The new Law fills this long-standing regulatory gap. **For the first time**, a formal national and European system for GI recognition for non-agricultural products is introduced. Competent authorities are designated and a structured pathway for producers to secure protection for eligible goods is established.

Defining Eligibility: What Constitutes a Protected Product?

The Regulation for GIs introduces a structured set of eligibility criteria that must be satisfied for a product to qualify for GI protection focused on its quality. More specifically, the Regulation requires: (**i**) *the existence of a clear and substantiated link between the product and a specific geographical area*; (**ii**) *the link to be based on the product's inherent characteristics, its established reputation or quality attributable*

[1] European Commission (2022). *Regulation on geographical indications for craft and industrial products.* Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_22_2407

to its place of origin; and (**iii**) *for at least one step in the production process to occur within the specified geographical area associated with the product.*

The Regulation and Law emphasize the importance of authenticity and traceability of the product shaped by its origin, and if demonstrated as such, it will ultimately qualify for GI protection. In other words, the integrity of the GI system is reinforced excluding generic or loosely associated products. From a business perspective, eligibility entails a substantive evaluation, while emphasizing alignment between production practices and the product's claimed geographical identity.

The Registration Pathway: A Two-Tier System Explained

The procedure for the registration of GI for craft and industrial products consists of two phases: a **National** and a **European**.

National phase: The application is filed before the Hellenic Industrial Property Organization ("**OBI**") accompanied by the required documentation. Upon its formal and substantive examination and provided that it is accepted, it is published and becomes subject to a two-month national opposition period, during which interested parties may challenge the registration. Following the opposition proceedings, OBI issues a final decision, with which it either rejects the application or accepts it and forwards it to the European Union Intellectual Property Office ("**EUIPO**").

Temporary national protection may be granted from the date of filing of the application until a final decision is issued.

European phase: EUIPO carries out a formal examination of the application within six months from its receipt and may request clarification or additional information. If the application is deemed admissible, it is published in the EU register, and a three-month EU-wide opposition period begins. In the absence of successful opposition, the GI is registered.

Importantly, this system does not create a separate national GI right. Instead, the registration of a GI confers protection directly across all EU Member States.

What this Means for Businesses

The new regime establishes specific legal parameters that small-medium sized businesses must carefully consider while engaging with the GI system. As a starting point, the right to apply is primarily granted to groups of producers or associations with a legitimate interest in the product, although individual producers may, in limited circumstances, also qualify in line with the Law and the Regulation.

Moreover, the scope of protection goes beyond direct misuse, covering any form of misleading use and imitation, in this way ensuring that the commercial value of GI is not diluted. For instance, this may include the use of specific terms alongside the protected name (*e.g., "style", "type" and "method"*), suggesting a connection to the protected origin without meeting the relevant requirements.

From an enforcement perspective, the new framework introduces administrative monitoring systems, inspection procedures and sanctions in case of non-compliance according to the Law.

Preparing for the New GI Framework - Origin as a Strategic Asset

In light of the new regime, businesses shall begin to assess whether existing products meet the eligibility criteria, in terms of their link to a specific geographical area. In cases where potential exists, companies should carefully assess the development of product specifications as well as gathering supporting evidence.

Early engagement with other producers in the same region could be critical to ensure

alignment of product standards and to facilitate the submission of joint applications. More broadly, GIs have the potential to enhance product differentiation and strengthen market recognition – particularly in markets where businesses intend to export their products to unlock value.

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