

Act no. 469/2003 Coll.

on designations of origin for products and geographical indications for products and on amendment of some acts

**Amended by: Act No 84/2007 Coll.
Act No 279/2007 Coll.**

The National Council of the Slovak Republic has adopted the following Act:

Title I

PART ONE BASIC PROVISIONS

Article 1

Subject-matter of a regulation

This Act shall govern legal conditions to acquire right for protection of designation of origin for product or geographical indication for product and legal conditions for protection of that right and process of acquiring this right for territory of member states of the European Union.

Article 2

Definition of terms

For purposes of this Act

- a) designation of origin for product shall mean name of a specific place, region or, in exceptional cases, country, used to sign a product originating from that place, region, or country, if a quality or characteristics of such product are exclusively or essentially given by a geographical surrounding with its characteristic natural and human factors, and production, processing and preparation of such product take place exclusively within defined place, region, or country,
- b) geographical indication for product shall mean name of a specific place, region or, in exceptional cases, country, used to sign a product originating from that place, region, or country, if such product is of a specific quality, reputation or characteristics which could be ascribed to such place, region or country and production, processing or preparation of such product take place within defined geographical place, region, or country,
- c) product shall mean any movable product produced, mined out or otherwise obtained, irrespective of its processing stage that is destined for a consumer,
- d) generic name shall mean general name of a product which has become common name of a product despite that it refers to specific place, region or country where such product was originally produced or placed on the market,
- e) holder of a certificate on registration of a designation of origin for product or on registration of a geographical indication for product shall be a person for which a designation of origin or geographical indication for product is entered into the Register of designations of origin and geographical indications,
- f) user of registered designation of origin for product or registered geographical indication for product shall be a member of corporation or association of producers or processors which uses registered designation of origin for product or registered geographical indication for products to which registration is related,

g) delocalisation clause shall mean a geographical data, specifying territory where a product originates from.

Article 3

A designation of origin for product (hereinafter referred to as "designation of origin") and geographical indication for product (hereinafter referred to as "geographical indication"), which complies with conditions of protection pursuant to this Act, shall be entered into the Register of designations of origin and geographical indications (hereinafter referred to as "Register") kept by the Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "the Office").

Article 4

Exclusions from entry into the Register

Following shall not be entered as a designation of origin or geographical indication into the Register:

a) indication though exact wording of which truly indicates name of place, region or country (hereinafter referred to as "territory") from which the product originates, despite it indication is capable to evoke a misconception about real origin of a product for public,

b) indication which is a generic name of a product although a product originates from a defined territory,

c) indication identical with a plant variety or animal breed which could in consequence of registration evoke a misconception about real origin of a product for public,

d) indication for identical or similar product which is identical or interchangeable with registered designation of origin, geographical indication, trademark, or unregistered well-known trademark,

e) indication identical or interchangeable with registered well-known trademark if using of such indication for any products would indicate connection between thus marked products and a registered well-known mark owner, and interests of a registered well-known mark owner could be harmed by such using.

Article 5

Registration of identical names of territories for wines or spirits

Two or more designations of origin or geographical indications for wine or spirits, which contain names of territories written or sounding in a same way, could be entered into the Register with preserving principles of fair commercial intercourse, if a person, who has, pursuant to Article 14, filed an application for designation of origin or geographical indication, by using a delocalisation clause secures such way of using of these signs, which prevents evoking a misconception about real origin of a product for public.

PART TWO DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN

Rights and obligations conferred by registration

Article 6

- (1) Only a holder of a certificate on registration of a designation of origin for product (hereinafter referred to as "registration certificate holder") and user of registered designation of origin for product (hereinafter referred to as "user") shall be entitled to use registered designation of origin.
- (2) Registration certificate holder shall be entitled to prevent a user from using designation of origin if a user signs a product with registered designation of origin and such product shall lack characteristics or qualitative signs given by relevant geographical surrounding [Article 15(1)(d)] or shall not comply with requirements determined by specification of agricultural product or foodstuff.
- (3) Registration certificate holder or user shall be entitled to indicate on a product that it is a registered designation of origin.
- (4) No approval for using registered designation shall be granted by license agreement.
- (5) Right of lien on registered designation of origin shall not be established.
- (6) Registered designation of origin shall not be a subject of an assignment.

Article 7

- (1) Registered designation of origin shall be protected against:
 - (a) any direct or indirect commercial use on products to which such sign is not related, if such products are identical or similar with a product which is registered under such designation of origin, or such using takes an advantage from good reputation of registered designation of origin,
 - (b) any misuse, imitation or evocation of misconception about a product origin, even if real origin of a product is indicated or even if registered designation of origin is indicated in translation or is supplied with an expression such as "kind", "type", "style", "method", "as produced in", "imitation", "similar"; or with other similar expression,
 - (c) any other false or misleading indication about origin, nature or essential qualities of a product on its inner or outer wrappings, advertising materials or documents relating to such product, and using of transportation wrappings capable to evoke misconception about real origin of a product,
 - (d) any other practice capable to evoke misconception about real origin of a product to public.
- (2) Registered designation of origin shall not be considered to be a generic name of a product. If a general name of a product, which is a generic name, is a part of a registered designation of origin, using of such name shall not be contrary to paragraph 1a) or b).

Article 8

- (1) Right to protection of designation of origin shall arise on day of its entry into the Register.
- (2) Term of protection of registered designation of origin shall not be limited.

Article 9
Infringement of rights

(1) Any person shall be entitled to claim prohibition of using a registered designation of origin for identical or similar products, which do not meet conditions for its utilisation and withdrawal of such products from market.

(2) In case of unauthorised infringement of rights protected by this Act or jeopardising these rights, registration certificate holder whose rights have been infringed or jeopardised is entitled to claim infringement or jeopardising his rights and to eliminate consequences of infringement. Right to compensation of actual damage shall not be affected. If a non-pecuniary injury has been caused by infringement or jeopardising of rights protected by this Act, the aggrieved party shall have right to adequate satisfaction, which can in form of pecuniary compensation. 1a)

Article 9a
Right to information

(1) Registration certificate holder may request in infringement or jeopardizing of his rights protected by this Act that a person placing or intending to place identical or similar product provided him information related to origin of a product infringing rights pursuant to this Act and to circumstances of its placing on the market.

(2) Information pursuant to paragraph 1 shall contain particularly:

- a) name and surname or business name or name and place of permanent residence or place of business, or place of business of a producer, processor, storekeeper, distributor, provider, dealer and other previous holders of a product;
- b) indications on produced, processed, provided or ordered quantity and price of relevant products.

(3) Also a person who

- a) has in possession products infringing rights pursuant to this Act;
- b) exploits services infringing rights pursuant to this Act;
- c) provides services exploited in activities related to infringement of rights pursuant to this Act;
or
- d) was indicated by a person mentioned in sub-paragraphs a) to c) as a person participating in production, processing or distribution of products or providing services infringing rights pursuant to this Act,

shall be obliged to provide information pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2.

Disputes hearing

Article 10

(1) Disputes on rights pursuant to this Act shall be heard and ruled by courts, unless this Act states otherwise.

(2) Registration certificate holder shall be entitled to request the court to order that products, by means of which rights protected by this Act are infringed or jeopardised, were

- a) withdrawn from a trade network,
- b) definitely removed from a trade network
- c) secured in other way by preventing further infringement or jeopardising of right;

d) destroyed in a suitable way; court shall not order destroying, if products by means of which rights protected by this Act are directly infringed or jeopardised, are not in possession of a person against which a proposal is being submitted.

(3) Provisions pursuant to paragraph 2 shall be executed at expense of a person infringing or jeopardising rights protected by this Act, unless special circumstances give reason for other process.

(4) The court shall not confer right to provide information pursuant to Article 9a, if seriousness of jeopardising or infringement of right was inadequate to seriousness of consequences resulting from the fulfilment of obligation imposed in such way.

Article 11

(1) Registration certificate holder shall be entitled to propose so that court, in protection of rights pursuant to this Act, could impose by precaution¹ same duties as in decision on the merit if any delay could cause to entitled person a hardly reclaimable pecuniary or non-pecuniary injury.

(2) Within a decision on precaution the court may impose a duty to a plaintiff to pay a deposit of an adequate amount or to implicate that decision comes into force by execution of an imposed duty. The court shall take into account, within its deciding on the amount of a warranty deposit, the seriousness of a pecuniary or non-pecuniary injury which can occur to the adverse party as well as assets of a plaintiff therewith that imposing a duty to pay a deposit shall not be the substantial impediment of efficient application of right.

(3) The court may on request decide on giving warranty deposit over to the adverse party as a compensation of pecuniary or non-pecuniary injury in finance caused directly by execution of precaution issued without adequate reason.

(4) If within the period of six months from detection of injury occurrence pursuant to paragraph 3, compensation or satisfaction is not applied at the court or an agreement on using the warranty deposit between parties is not concluded, the court shall refund the warranty deposit.

PART THREE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Article 12

Geographical indication

Provisions related to indication of origin shall apply accordingly to rights and duties arising from registration, to dispute hearing and to proceedings before the Office.

¹ Articles 74 to 77 and Article 102 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

PART FOUR PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE OFFICE

Article 13

(1) General rules on administrative proceedings³ shall be applied to proceedings before the Office pursuant to this Act unless this Act states otherwise.

(2) Provisions on proceedings suspension, statutory declaration, time limits for decision and on measurements against inactivity pursuant to general rules on administrative proceedings³ shall not apply to proceedings before the Office pursuant to this Act.

Article 14

Application for designation of origin

(1) An application for designation of origin (hereinafter referred to as an “application”) may be filed by a corporation or association of producers or processors with legal personality regardless of legal form or composition (hereinafter referred to as “association”)⁴ for product produced, processed and prepared within a specified territory. Any natural person or legal entity shall be entitled to file an application provided that at time of filing an application it is the only person that produces, processes and prepares the product within a specified territory (hereinafter referred to as an “applicant”).

(2) Another subject shall have right to be accepted as a member of a corporation which shall be, pursuant to this Act, a natural person or a legal entity, which filed an application pursuant to paragraph 1 separately, if it produces, processes and prepares, within a specified territory, product with quality or characteristics related to circumstances stated for registered designation of origin and meets conditions for membership of a corporation, which shall not be discriminative nor contrary to rules of economic competition. A corporation shall be obliged to issue a certificate of membership to members on request.

(3) An application shall contain:

a) request for entry of designation of origin into the Register express act of volition of an applicant that he requests registration of a designation of origin,

b) surname, name, address of permanent residence and nationality of an applicant; and if an applicant is a legal entity, name or trade name and place of business,

c) determination of a product,

d) surname, name and address of place of business of authorised representative of an applicant, if an address is not identical with an address of permanent residence, or address of permanent residence, or trade name or name and seat of authorised representative of an applicant, as well as letter of attorney, if an applicant has been represented or has to be represented⁵ (Article 37(2)),

e) signature of an applicant or a person authorised to act by his name.

4) An application shall be assigned with a file number, day of delivery of an application shall be marked and a receipt on filing an application shall be issued to an applicant.

Article 15

(1) Determination of a product shall contain:

- a) name of a product, including wording of designation of origin,
- b) geographical definition of territory where production, processing and preparation of a product is being realised,
- c) document confirming that a product originates from a defined territory,
- d) description of characteristics or qualitative signs of a product, which are given by a particular geographical surrounding
- e) description of a process of obtaining a product, eventually description of original and unchangeable local processes of its obtaining.

(2) An applicant without permanent residence or seat in the Slovak Republic and having a designation of origin protected pursuant to right effective in a country of origin of a product may substitute data pursuant to paragraph 1(c) with protection certificate for designation of origin pursuant to right effective in a country of origin.

Article 16

Cancelled from July 1, 2007.

Article 17

Proceedings on application

(1) The Office shall examine whether

- a) designation of origin stated in an application meets requirements for entry into the Register,
- b) an application contains formalities pursuant to Articles 14 and 15,
- c) an applicant is represented by an authorised representative⁵ (Article 37(2)).

(2) The Office shall invite an applicant to correct irregularities ascertained pursuant to paragraph 1(b) and (c) within a specified time limit, which shall not be shorter than two months. If an applicant fails to correct irregularities, the Office shall suspend proceeding on an application. An applicant shall be notified in an invitation of this consequence.

(3) The Office shall refuse an application if a designation is excluded from registration pursuant to paragraph 4 or it fails to meet conditions for entry into the Register. Before an application is refused, the Office shall enable an applicant to respond to ascertained reasons for refusal of an application.

(4) The Office shall be entitled to invite an applicant to submit a document of a relevant inspection authority^{5a} that a product meets requirements stated in Article 15(1)(d). The Office shall determine adequate time limit for submitting such proof and an applicant shall be notified that the Office refuses an application if he shall not submit such document.

Article 18

Registration of designation of origin

The Office shall enter a designation of origin into the Register if an application meets conditions for entry into the Register and an application meets requirements pursuant to this Act. The Office shall issue a certificate on entry of a designation of origin into the Register to an owner and registration shall be published in the Official Journal of the Industrial Property Office of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Journal").

Article 19

Registration of amendments of product determination

Registration certificate applicant or holder shall be entitled to request amendment of a product determination, particularly in taking into account development in the area of scientific and technical knowledge or for reasons of new geographical specification of territory.

Article 20

(1) Any person shall be entitled to request issuing a document or other legal instrument important for application or protection of his right from relevant inspection authorities^{5a}).

(2) Results of a control or assessment performed by a foreign authority shall be taken into account by the Office in proceedings on the base of international treaty or on the base of reciprocity.

Cancellation of designation of origin registration

Article 21

(1) The Office shall cancel registration of designation of origin if it ascertains in the proceedings started on request of a third party (hereinafter referred to as "plaintiff"), inspection authority or ex-officio that

a) designation of origin has been registered contrary to conditions for registration,

b) conditions given by particular geographical surrounding set for registration of designation of origin have ceased to exist;

c) product for which a designation of origin has been registered, misses characteristics or qualitative signs given by particular geographical surrounding (Article 15(1)(d)).

(2) Registration of designation of origin shall not be cancelled pursuant to paragraph 1(c), if a product, which has characteristics or qualitative signs given by particular geographical surrounding (Article 15(1)(d)), is placed on a market or if such product is not placed on a market but natural conditions have not ceased.

Article 22

- (1) Where a registered designation of origin is cancelled pursuant to Article 21(1)(a), it shall be deemed not to have been registered.
- (2) Where a registered designation of origin is cancelled pursuant to Article 21(1)(b) and (c) it shall be deemed cancelled on a date of filing a proposal for cancellation.
- (3) The Office shall enter a decision on cancellation into the Register and publish in the Journal.

Article 23

- (1) If a proposal for cancellation of designation of origin (hereinafter referred to as "proposal for cancellation") fails to contain reasons for cancellation of registration of designation of origin pursuant to Article 21(1), the Office shall invite the plaintiff to supplement the proposal or to correct irregularities within a specified time limit. If a plaintiff fails to supplement the proposal or correct irregularities within a specified time limit, the Office shall suspend proceedings on proposal for cancellation.
- (2) The Office shall deliver proposal for cancellation to a registration certificate holder and concurrently invites him to respond to the proposal within a specified time limit.
- (3) If a registration holder certificate fails to respond within a time limit specified in a notice, the Office shall decide on a basis of a file contents.
- (4) If an owner is not being represented by an authorised representative and fails to comply with a notice to submit a letter of attorney within a specified time limit, he shall be deemed not to have responded to proposal for cancellation.
- (5) If a nature of a matter so requires, the Office shall order an oral proceedings. The Office shall set a date for oral proceedings and shall concurrently deliver a statement of a registration certificate holder on a proposal for cancellation to a plaintiff.
- (6) The Office shall continue in proceedings and decide in a matter also when a duly summoned party fails to participate in oral proceedings.
- (7) Extending or supplementing proposal for cancellation shall be inadmissible and shall not be taken into consideration by the Office within proceedings and making a decision on a matter.

Article 24

Further proceedings

- (1) On request of a party to proceedings on extension of a time limit specified by the Office for performing an act, filed before the expiry of this time limit, the Office shall be entitled to extend a time limit.
- (2) A party to proceedings who failed to comply with a time limit specified by the Office for performing an act, shall be is entitled, after expiry of such time limit, to ask the Office for further proceedings and at the same time to perform an omitted action no later than two months from delivery of a decision of the Office issued as a consequence of failure to comply with a time limit.
- (3) The Office shall refuse a request pursuant to paragraph 2 in case of failure to comply with a time limit for responding of registration certificate holder on proposal to cancellation (Article 23(1)) and time limit for responding of a requester to oppositions against request for protection of a designation of origin or geographical indication for agricultural products or foodstuffs pursuant to special regulation7) (Article 33(3)).

(4) The Office shall refuse a request for time limit extension or a request for further proceedings, which fails to meet conditions pursuant to paragraph 1 or paragraph 2 or it shall be refused pursuant to paragraph 3; before taking a decision on refusing a request the Office shall enable requester to respond to ascertained facts on basis of which a request shall be refused.

(5) If the Office accords a request for further proceedings, legal effects of a decision issued in consequence of failure to comply with time limit shall cease or shall not arise.

(6) If the Office fails to decide on refusing a request pursuant to paragraph 1 or paragraph 2 within two months from its delivery, a request shall be deemed to be accorded.

Article 25

Restitutio in integrum

(1) If a party to proceedings before the Office unintentionally fails to comply with legal time limit or time limit for performing an act set by the Office whereas the consequence of failure to perform this act is proceedings suspension or forfeiture of other right, he is entitled to ask the Office for *restitutio in integrum* and at same time to perform the omitted act within two months from elimination of the impediment causing failure of performing the act at the latest within 12 months from expiry of non-complied time limit.

(2) Party to proceedings shall be obliged to sustain request pursuant to paragraph 1 and to state facts preventing performing the act. The Office shall not take into consideration statements submitted after time limits pursuant to paragraph 1 expired in deciding about request.

(3) In case of reasonable doubts about veracity of a statement pursuant to paragraph 2, the Office is entitled to invite the requester to prove his statements other way.

(4) Request for *restitutio in integrum* shall not be satisfied in case of failure to comply with time limits for:

a) performing acts pursuant to paragraph 1,

b) performing acts pursuant to Article 24(2) or (3),

c) filing an appeal pursuant to Article 27(1),

d) filing oppositions pursuant to Article 33(1) and Article 34(2).

(5) The Office shall refuse request for *restitutio in integrum* which fails to comply with conditions pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2, or it is not possible to be satisfied pursuant to paragraph 4, or the requester fails to prove his statements pursuant to paragraph 3; before the request is refused the Office shall enable the requester to respond to ascertained reasons on basis of which request is to be refused.

(6) If the Office satisfies the request for *restitutio in integrum*, legal effects of the decision issued as a consequence of failure to comply with the time limit shall be retracted or shall not ensue.

(7) The rights of the third parties acquired within the territory of the Slovak Republic in a good faith from the validity date of the decision issued as a consequence of failure to comply the time limit of the legal effects of this decision pursuant to paragraph 6, shall be retained.

Article 26
Grounds for decision

- (1) Party to proceedings shall be obliged to submit or propose an evidence to support his statements.
- (2) The Office shall decide on the basis of facts ascertained from performed evidences submitted or proposed by parties to proceedings.

Article 27
Remedies

- (1) An appeal against a decision of the Office may be lodged within one month from delivery of a decision; an appeal filed in due time shall have deferring effect.
- (2) The Office shall be bound by scope of an appeal in deciding on it; this shall not apply
 - a) for matters in which proceedings can be started *ex officio*,
 - b) for matters of joint rights or obligations concerning several parties to proceedings on one side.
- (3) Filing an appeal shall not be admissible against a decision by which a request for further processing or request for *restitutio in integrum* has been satisfied.

Article 28
File inspection and data accessibility

- (1) Parties to proceedings shall have right to inspect files, to make records and writing-offs.
- (2) After entry of a designation of origin into the Register or after publication of a request pursuant to Article 32(6) the Office shall enable third party on request to inspect a file concerning an application, registered designation of origin or request (Article 32(1)).
- (3) Right to a file inspection shall include right for making photocopies for payment of material costs concerning making copies and their sending.
- (4) From right to file inspection shall be excluded:
 - a) parts of file containing information of confidential character, publication of which is not necessary to secure right to information of third parties including parties to proceedings,
 - b) parts of file containing trade secret on a written request of a certificate on registration applicant or holder, and
 - c) records of voting and parts of file containing helping notes or proposals of decisions, scopes or view-points.

Article 29
Register and Official Journal

- (1) Following shall be entered into the Register:
 - a) number of an application,
 - b) filing date of an application,
 - c) number of registration of designation of origin,

- d) date of registration of designation of origin,
- e) wording of designation of origin,
- f) name of a product to which designation of origin is related,
- g) geographical definition of a territory, within which a production, processing and preparation of a product take place,
- h) surname, name, address of permanent residence and nationality of an applicant; if an applicant is a legal entity, trade name or name and seat,
- i) surname, name and address of a place of business of authorised representative of an applicant, if it is not identical with address of permanent residence, or permanent residence, or trade name of name and seat of authorised representative or entitled person,
- j) description of characteristics or qualitative signs given by related geographical surrounding and description of its basic physical, chemical, microbiological or sensible ,
- k) description of process of obtaining a product, eventually description of original and unchangeable local processes of its obtaining,
- l) cancellation of designation of origin, and
- m) other decisive indications.

(2) The Office shall enter into the Register changes, which arose after entry of a designation of origin into the Register, on request and after verification of submitted data.

(3) Data entered into the Register shall be considered valid unless a decision of a relevant authority states otherwise.

(4) Change in data entered into the Register ensuing from valid and enforceable decision of a relevant authority shall be entered without delay into the Register by the Office after delivery of decision with a validity clause.

(5) Entry of data and facts ensuing from law or from decision of a relevant authority pursuant to paragraph 4 shall not be considered a decision issued in proceedings pursuant to provisions of the Administrative Procedure Code³).

(6) Any person shall be entitled to inspect the Register.

(7) The Office shall issue an abstract of record on request. An abstract of record shall contain data valid on day of making a record.

(8) The Office shall issue the Official Journal, in which it publishes entry of a designation of origin into the Register, its cancellation and other decisive data concerning designation of origin.

PART FIVE

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

International registration of designation of origin

Article 30

(1) Persons with permanent residence or seat within the territory of the Slovak Republic shall have right to request international registration of designation of origin pursuant to international agreement 6) through the Office.

(2) A person requesting international registration of designation of origin shall be obliged to pay for acts pursuant to paragraph 1 fees set pursuant to international agreement. 6) Amounts of fees set by this agreement shall be published by the Office in the Official Journal.

Article 31

(1) International registration of designation of origin shall have same effects as registration of designation of origin by the Office.

(2) Designation of origin registered internationally, for which protection in the Slovak Republic has been refused, shall be deemed to have never been registered in the Slovak Republic.

Protection of designations of origin and geographical indications pursuant to law of the European Union

Article 32

(1) Persons pursuant to Article 14 having their permanent residence or seat within the territory of the Slovak Republic shall be entitled to file a request for protection of designation of origin or geographical indication for agricultural products or foodstuffs pursuant special regulation 7) (hereinafter referred to as "request"), which are being produced, processed or prepared within the territory of the Slovak Republic.

(2) An application shall be filed in three copies.

(3) The Office shall examine whether the application is reasoned, meets set requirements and whether designation is not a part of exclusions. 7a)

(4) The Office within the examination pursuant to paragraph 3 shall require from the Ministry of Agriculture (hereinafter referred to as "Ministry") or from competent person authorised by the Ministry 7b) a statement, whether specification of an agricultural product or a foodstuff 7c) (hereinafter referred to as "specification") meets set requirements; a committee established by the Ministry shall be competent to discuss specification.

(5) The Office shall invite requester to correct irregularities found pursuant to paragraph 3 within the time limit prescribed by the Office. If a requester fails to correct irregularities, the Office shall refuse the request. A requester shall be notified of this consequence in an invitation to correct irregularities.

(6) If a request is reasoned, meets set requirements and designation is not a part of exclusions, 7a) the Office shall publish essential requirements of request in the Official Journal.

Article 33

(1) After publication of essential requirements of request in the Official Journal any person, who proves legal interest, having permanent residence or seat within the territory of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as “opponent”), shall be entitled to file objections against request within time limit of three months from such publication of the Office. The objections shall be reasonable and proves, that requested designation of origin or geographical indication fails to meet conditions pursuant to a special regulation for entry into the Register of protected designations of origin and geographical indications issued by the European Commission 8), shall be indicated in these objections.

(2) If the Office ascertains that objections have not been filed by an opponent in due time, have not been regularly reasoned and the proves, that requested designation of origin or geographical indication fails to meet conditions pursuant to a special regulation 7) for entry into the Register of protected designations of origin and geographical indications issued by the European Commission, 8), have not been indicated in these objections, the Office shall suspend proceedings on objections. Decision on suspension of proceedings on objections shall be delivered by the Office to requester and to opponent.

(3) The Office shall deliver objections on which proceedings has not been suspended pursuant to paragraph 2 to requester; at the same time the Office shall invite requester and opponent to remove any contradiction by a mediation within two month time limit. If a contradiction has not been removed, requester and opponent shall deliver to the Office their opinions within one month from vain elapsing of a time limit to end proceedings by mediation.

(4) If a contradiction between requester and opponent has not been removed by mediation proceedings pursuant to paragraph 3, the Office shall decide on objections. If objections refer to specification of a product or to definition of particularities of geographical background, 7c) the Office shall request, before deciding on objections, from the Ministry a statement whether the objections are rightful.

(5) If the Office ascertains in proceedings on objections that applied sign fails to meet conditions pursuant to a special provision, 7) it shall refuse the request; otherwise it shall refuse objections.

Article 33a

(1) If a request is reasonable and meets prescribed requirements and a sign is not a part of exclusions 7a) and it has not been refused pursuant to Article 33(5), the Office shall issue decision and shall inform requester about this fact.

(2) The Office shall deliver decision pursuant to paragraph 1 to the requester and shall announce decision by which the request has been accorded in the Journal, and electronic access to the specification.

(3) The Office shall deliver requirements pursuant to a special provision 7) for further proceedings after issuing decision on request according, and shall inform requester about this fact.

Article 33b

Transitional protection and time limit for adaptation

(1) Transitional protection for sign and two years time limit for adaptation under conditions pursuant to a special provision 8a) shall arise by decision on request according.

(2) Transitional protection shall lapse from the day of issuing a decision on entry into the Register or from the day of refusing a request.

Objections against request for entry of a designation of origin or geographical indication of other member state into the Register of the European Union

Article 34

(1) Person filing objections shall be entitled to file objections duly substantiated against entry of a designation of origin or geographical indication of other member state into the Register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications conducted by the European Commission or objections against amendment of specification of an agricultural product or foodstuff to a designation of origin or to a geographical indication of other member state (hereinafter referred to as "objections") with the Office, or the Office shall be entitled to file objections *ex officio*.

(2) Objections shall be filed not later than within five months from the day on which the Commission published substantial requirements of a request or amendment of specification of an agricultural product or foodstuff.

(3) Objections shall be filed in the official language of the Slovak Republic.

(4) The Office shall submit reasonable objections to the European Commission for further proceedings within the time limit pursuant to a special provision. 8b)

(5) The Office shall refuse to submit objections to the European Commission if they have not been filed by a person entitled to file objections, if they have not been duly substantiated and if they have been filed after the time limit pursuant to paragraph (2); a person filing objections shall be informed about this fact.

Article 35

(1) If the European Commission invites concerned parties to conclude an agreement on objections, the Office shall be competent for such hearing for the Slovak Republic.

(2) If an agreement is concluded within six months, the Office shall deliver the agreement to the European Commission together with documents proving conclusion of the agreement including standpoint of a requester and a person filing objections. If an agreement is not concluded, the Office shall communicate negative standpoint to the European Commission.

Article 36

Amendment and completion of a specification

(1) If an amendment and completion of a specification occurs, provisions of Articles 32 to 37 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

(2) If an amendment and completion of a specification is not related to any amendment of a unitary document, or if an amendment and completion is related to temporary amendment of a specification resulting from imposing obligatory sanitary or plant-medical provisions by a public authority, the Office shall consider the amendment and completion and after issuing decision on a request according, it shall announce amendment of a specification, electronic access to the specification in a Journal and shall communicate this fact to the European Commission.

Article 36a
Cancellation of entry

Natural person or legal entity, who proves legal interest and with permanent residence or seat within the territory of the Slovak Republic, shall be entitled to file a request for cancellation of entry of designation of origin or geographical indication in the Register of protected designations of origin and geographical indications conducted by the European Commission with the Office for the reason, that agricultural product or foodstuff fails to meet conditions of specification. Provisions of Articles 33 and 33a shall apply to the proceedings on request for cancellation of entry before the Office.

PART SIX
COMMON, TRANSITIONAL AND REPEALING PROVISIONS

Article 37

(1) Parties with permanent residence or seat within a territory of a member state to an international convention 9) or within a territory of a Member State to the World Trade Organization 9), shall have same rights and obligations as national applicants or entitled persons; if a state, in which parties have permanent residence or seat, is not a member state to an international convention or a member to the World Trade Organization, rights and obligations pursuant to this Act shall be granted only under the condition of reciprocity.

(2) Parties without permanent residence or seat within the territory of the Slovak Republic shall have to be represented in proceedings on designations of origin or geographical indications by an authorised representative⁵.

(3) Provision of the paragraph 2 shall not apply to parties to proceedings, who are residents of a member state to the European Union or to a state, who is a contracting party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, and are seated within the territory of the Slovak Republic or provides services within the territory of the Slovak Republic, and legal entities, which have their administration or seat of their business activity within the territory of a member state to the European Union or of the state, which is a contracting party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, and are seated within the territory of the Slovak Republic or provides services within the territory of the Slovak Republic. Such party to the proceedings shall be obliged to communicate delivery address within the territory of the Slovak Republic to the Office. If a party to the proceedings fails to communicate delivery address to the Office, official reports related to the proceedings shall be deposited with the Office; they shall be deemed to be delivered after 30 day from the day of deposit. A party to proceedings shall be noticed about this fact.

(4) Filing with the Office shall be made in the official language of the Slovak Republic only. 11)

Article 38
Transitional provisions

(1) Proceedings on applications of designations of origin, which have not been legally concluded before this Act comes into effect, shall be concluded pursuant to this Act, therewith that an applicant shall be obliged to harmonise his application with requirements required for designation of origin application pursuant to this Act within the time limit specified by the Office and on invitation of the Office.

(2) Relations from designations of origin for products entered into the Register before this Act comes into effect shall be governed by provisions of this Act. Arising of these relations as well as claims

arising from them before this Act comes into effect shall be assessed in accordance with provisions effective in time of their arising.

(3) Protection of designations of origin pursuant to this Act shall be related to such designation of origin, by which the protection of designations of origin was granted pursuant to present Act before this Act comes into effect, if a registered user or registered users meet requirements of registration pursuant to this Act within two years from the day when this Act came into effect. The Office shall cancel such designation of origin from the Register after inefficient lapse of this time limit.

Article 39

Repealing provision

The following shall be repealed

1. Act No. 159/1973 Coll. on protection of appellations of origin of products in wording of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 90/1993 Coll.
2. Decree of the Office of Inventions and Discoveries No. 160/1973 Coll. on procedure in respect of designations of origin of products.

Title II

The Act no. 634/1992 Coll. on consumer protection in wording of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 220/1996 Coll., Act No. 137/1998 Coll., Act No. 310/1999 Coll., Act no. 128/2002 Coll., Act No. 414/2002 Coll. and Act No. 529/2002 Coll. is thus amended:

Article 8 shall be completed with paragraph (6) wording of which shall be as follows:

“(6) Also offer or sale of products infringing rights conferred by designations of origin for products and geographical indications for products pursuant to special regulation^{9e} as well as storing such products for purposes of offer or sale shall be considered as misleading a consumer”.

Footnote no. 9e reads as follows:

“^{9e)} Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 152/1995 Coll. on Foodstuffs as amended”.

Title III

The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 145/1995 Coll. on administrative fees in wording of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 123/1996 Coll., the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 224/1996 Coll., the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 70/1997 Coll., the Act No. 1/1998 Coll., the Act No. 232/1999 Coll., the Act No. 3/2000 Coll., the Act No. 142/2000 Coll., the Act No. 211/2000 Coll., the Act No. 468/2000 Coll., the Act No. 553/2001 Coll., the Act No. 96/2002 Coll., the Act No. 118/2002 Coll., the Act No. 215/2002 Coll., the Act No. 237/2002 Coll., the Act No. 418/2002 Coll., the Act No. 457/2002 Coll., the Act No. 465/2002 Coll., the Act No. 477/2002 Coll., the Act No. 480/2002 Coll. and the Act No. 245/2003 Coll. shall be amended and completed as follows:

The Items 233 – 235 in the Tariff of administrative fees shall be as follows:

”Item 233

- a) Filing an application for a designation of origin for products or geographical indication for product
2000 SKK
- b) Filing a request for
1. registration of an amendment of specification of agricultural product or foodstuff or
definition of a product 500 SKK

Item 234

Filing a request for cancellation of a designation of origin for products or geographical indication for
product 2000 SKK

Item 235

Filing a request for international registration of a designation of origin for products or geographical
indication for product 1000 SKK”

Title IV
Entry into force

This Act shall come into effect on 1 December 2003, except Articles 32 to 36, which shall come into effect on the day when the Convention on accession of the Slovak Republic to the European Union enters into force.

Rudolf Schuster s. m.

Pavol Hrušovský s. m.

Mikuláš Dzurinda s. m.

² Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration of 31. October 1958, revised in Stockholm on 14 July 1967, published under No. 67/1975 Coll. as amended by the decree No. 79/1985 Coll.

³ Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2081/92 of 14 July 1992, on the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs

⁴ Articles 211 to 219 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.