

Question for written answer E-015952/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Mara Bizzotto (ENF)

Subject: Illegal use of the names of famous cities in the Veneto region (Vicenza, Bassano, Asiago) as brand names for commercial purposes, both within the EU and internationally

Illegal use of the Made in Italy brand is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, both within the EU and internationally. Most recently, it has emerged that the names of cities in the Veneto region, renowned for their historical and cultural heritage, are being unlawfully used as brand names to mislead consumers about the origin and quality of goods.

The name of the city of Vicenza, famous among other things for its leather industry, is being illegally used by a Scottish leather goods manufacturer, who have applied to OHIM (the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market) to register it as a trade mark to promote a range of jackets. This is just one of the numerous cases of companies from all over the world using the names of Venetian and Italian cities to mislead consumers: in Korea, a Danish cheese is sold under the name 'Asiago', and 'Bassano' has been registered as a trade mark by a Canadian company which produces vodka, by an American carpet manufacturer and by a Swiss firm which has also registered it for use in the Czech Republic and in Poland.

Considering that such practices cause incalculable damage to the economic and social fabric of this region and of Italy as whole, can the Commission indicate what action it intends to take to stop these abuses of the Made in Italy brand, which are clearly fraud as far as consumers are concerned and are damaging the reputation of the entire Veneto region?