

Case Study: The legal protection of the *Imbarcazioni di Legno Tipiche e Tradizionali della Laguna di Venezia* (Typical and Traditional Wooden Boats of the Laguna of Venice)

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The case

This case is aimed at illustrating how a famous and yet extremely niche product like the traditional Venetian wooden boats is protected as a special Collective Mark under the relevant regional and national Italian laws. The case is important as it shows a possible approach that cities and local communities in general can adopt to protect and preserve rare, tradition-based products deeply rooted in the local history and heritage.

The law

The Laguna of Venice is specifically protected by the Law 336/1963. On this legal basis, the *Regione Veneto* has adopted a system of protection of the traditional Venetian wooden boats that – also introduced for other goods, such as Murano glass – mixes a private IP right, i.e. a Collective Mark, and public intervention to create a protection system capable of simulating a sui generis GI model in an area, the European Union, where this IP right is still not available for goods other than agri-food products, wines and spirits.

In particular, the Regione Veneto passed Regional Law 1/1996 to provide a specific set of rules for the protection of this heritage product. More specifically, this Law established a Collective Mark for the protection of the latter, together with its regulation of use. This is owned by the Region itself, registered as an EU Mark and managed by the local Chamber of Commerce.

This is an interesting example of a creative use of IP Law to protect valuable heritage goods that need protection in order not to go extinct due to the disappearance of the traditional know-how involved in the manufacturing process as well as to the high cost involved in the making. This Venetian model, that mixes public authorities, private IP rights and producers' involvement is original and indeed worth exploring.