



IP ITeaser 056:

Tradition topples Toblerone

Since 1908, Toblerone has been made in the Swiss capital, Berne. However, from 2024, some of the production will move to Slovakia. Such a move means that the packaging will no longer be permitted to use Swiss iconography as insufficient of the production will then occur within Switzerland. This means that the image of Matterhorn will have to be replaced by some generic Alpine peak. A further loss will be that the snowy parts of the mountain face will no longer contain a hidden outline of a bear, which is the heraldic animal for the canton of Berne. This copyright aspect of the package has already been changed apparently.

Interestingly, products branded as “made in Switzerland” command about a 20% premium over similar, non-Swiss, products. It is an open question if the reduction in manufacturing costs (which is presumably the reason for the move) will sufficiently offset the loss of that premium. That is one of the benefits of using geographical indications of origin – they allow a product to sell at a higher price due to the cachet of the association with certain local history and culture. That is why there is momentum within the EU to expand the concept of GIs to non-agricultural products.

Toblerone has had a chequered history since Mondelēz acquired the brand in 2012. In 2016, the number of triangular segments was reduced from 15 to 11, but this was reversed in 2018. In 2017, there was a dispute with Poundland’s Twin Peaks, where the defence was predicated upon whether consumers could count to “two” in order to distinguish between the single peak of Toblerone and the double peaks of Twin Peaks. This latest twist marks yet another event in its long history, but one that might herald a break with its past glories.