

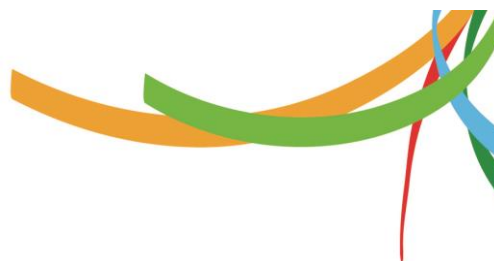


ASSOCIATION DES
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PRESSE RELEASE

Bordeaux, 12 October 2017

AREPO elects as new President Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki (Region of Crete)

On October 5th 2017, AREPO General Assembly met in Heraklion (Crete) in order to elect a new President for 2017-2020. Protection of PDO and PGI quality products under the free trade agreements, GIs recognition and support under the new CAP post 2020, and small GIs producers among the priorities of the next mandate.

After a three years Presidency, Occitanie Region handed over the baton to the Greek Region of Crete, in the person of Mrs **Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki**, Vice-Governor of Social Policy. Region of Crete is a member of AREPO since 2011 and the valorisation and promotion of Geographical Indications is one of its main objectives for the development of rural areas.

Mrs Vrentzou-Skordalaki will be AREPO 5th President and the first woman to chair the EU Regional and Producers Network. The new President referred: "It is a great honour for the Region of Crete and for me personally to take over the Presidency of AREPO, whose work at European level is fundamental to ensuring the protection and exploitation of the EU's gastronomic heritage".

Moreover, she highlighted the principal challenges that lie ahead in the coming months and years, namely assuring the protection of PDO and PGI quality products under the free trade agreements and achieving the right recognition and support under the new CAP post 2020. Finally, Cretan Presidency will pay particular attention to strengthen the support of small GIs producers and family farms.

Occitanie Region concluded its mandate after three years of intense activity in the field of quality and origin products. In its final report, the outgoing President, Mr **Vincent Labarthe**, outlined some of the achievements over the past years concerning the implementation of rural development measure on quality schemes, the promotion policy and the priorities of EU research and innovation in agriculture.

"Our participation in AREPO brings significant benefits to our producers, since through the network we can strengthen the identity as well as the reputation of our local products" said **Regional Governor of Crete, Mr Stavros Arnaoutakis**, welcoming the participants.

During the General Assembly, AREPO members discussed the principal issues in the political agenda: the future of CAP post 2020, regional best practices on economic added value of GI products, and follow-ups of the first edition of Origo Global Forum on GIs (11-12th April - Parma).

Several political representatives of AREPO Regions took part in the AG bringing important contributions to the discussion. Among the participants the **Director General for Quality and Food Industries of Catalunya, Carmel Mòdol**, the **Regional Ministers of Agriculture, Marco Remaschi (Toscana)** and **Simona Caselli (Emilia-Romagna)**, the **Vice-President in charge of Agriculture of Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, Jean-Pierre Raynaud**, and the **President of Euromontana, Juan Andres Gutierrez**.

In addition to the historical members, the General Assembly was an occasion to welcome the representatives of new members and partner Regions from Greece: Central Macedonia, Epirus, Ionian Island, Thessaly, and Western Macedonia.

About AREPO: AREPO is a network of regions and producer associations. It represents 30 member regions, from 8 different Member States of the EU, and around the 50% of European GIs.

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