

## PRESS RELEASE

On the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the  
**European Event** on  
Quality and Origin Products

in the framework of the **AGROSMARTcoop** project

Brussels, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

On March 21<sup>st</sup> 2018, AREPO - Association of European Regions for Products of Origin - held in Brussels the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the "European Event on Quality and Origin Products" in the framework of the AGROSMARTcoop project to raise awareness on the importance of quality and origin products for EU agriculture and to stimulate the discussion on the needs of the sector. The day before, AREPO's members elected the President of the Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese Consortium, Mr Nicola Bertinelli, as Vice-President of the association. He will be part of the new Executive Board of AREPO together with the President Mrs Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki, Vice-Governor of Crete, and the Treasurer Mr Joan Godia Tresanchez, Subdirector General de Industries i Qualitat Agroalimentària de Catalonia.

The AGROSMARTcoop project "Space for the integration, competitiveness and intelligent economic growth of agri-food cooperatives in the Sudoe rural areas" is a European project cofinanced at 75% by the Interreg Sudoe programme which aims to revitalize the rural areas in Southwestern Europe by supporting and improving the competitiveness of its agri-food cooperatives.

The main focus of the conference was the role of Geographical Indications and quality products in the rural development with the aim to discuss how to strengthen GIs support in the CAP post 2020. José Severino Montes Pérez, President of AGACA - Union of agri-food cooperatives of Galicia and coordinator of the project - presented the AGROSMARTcoop project and Jesús González Vázquez, President of Origen España intervened on the key factors of the intelligent marketing strategy of Geographical Indications highlighting the importance to boost the knowledge on GIs within the consumers.

Several representative of European Institutions participated to the event, namely the Director of Quality, Research & Innovation of DG AGRI, Mrs Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver, the rapporteur on the Communication on "The Future of Food and Farming" for the European Parliament, MEP Herbert Dorfmann, and the First Vice-President of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament, MEP Paolo De Castro.

"AREPO calls for a new approach, capable of providing high quality food and to contribute to EU priorities in term of sustainable rural development. The EU faces strong societal demands for a renewed CAP, which are pushing towards a greater recognition of environmental and socio-economic public goods role in the policy. In this context, quality and origin products can help addressing citizens' concerns, contributing to the transition towards a more sustainable agriculture", said AREPO President, Mrs Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki, Vice-governor of Crete.

### AREPO

The Association of European Regions for Products of Origin - AREPO - is a network of Regions and producer associations that deals with products of origin and EU quality schemes. It represents 32 Regions from 8 European countries and 700 associations of producers for over 50% of European GIs.





She added that “The revision of Common Agricultural Policy is at the moment the most important priority for AREPO, in order to achieve the right support for GIs and quality products in the next programming period”.



Assuring that the CAP budget is maintained at least at current levels, re-affirming the principle of subsidiarity and the importance of regionalisation of the largest part of CAP instruments are the general objectives shared by AREPO member Regions.

Concerning quality and origin products, AREPO asks for strengthening support through Rural Development both introducing a strong horizontal priority and integrating support for producers groups in the existing measure for quality schemes.

The round table with high level regional representatives of AREPO Regions, introduced by the President of OriGIn, Claude Vermot-Desroches, President of the famous French cheese Comté PDO has further highlighted the importance of valorisation of quality and origin products for the rural development.

The conference was followed in the evening by the presentation and tasting of traditional products from AREPO member Regions and from agri-food cooperatives of the Sudoe. This year AREPO welcomed the products from 22 member Regions from 5 different EU countries and from 3 unions of agri-food cooperatives from the AGROSMARTcoop project - AGACA, Coop de France Nouvelle-Aquitaine and UniNorte from Região do Norte in Portugal. OriGIn as well participated in our event with a stand of GI products. This event showed the diversity and quality of European productions of agri-food products under PDO, PGI and Organic Farming.



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AGROSMARTcoop partners from 5 unions of agrifood cooperatives AGACA (Galicia), FCAE (Euskadi), CACLM (Castilla-La Mancha), UniNorte (Região do Norte) and Coop de France Nouvelle-Aquitaine and two research centers UTAD (Região do Norte) and CICYTEX (Extremadura) with the President of AREPO, Mrs Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki, Vice-Governor of Crete. The picture was taken during the tasting evening.