



REPORT ON AREPO'S PLENARY MEETING

Heraklion, October 5th 2017

Second plenary meeting

The second AREPO plenary meeting in 2017 was held on October 5th from 14h00 to 18h30, at the Chamber of Commerce of the **Heraklion (Crete)**, hosted by **Region of Crete**.

The President introduced the meeting by thanking the Region of Crete that hosted the assembly and gave the floor to Mr Stavros Arnaoutakis, Regional Governor of Crete, and Ms Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki, Regional Vice-Governor of Crete, for their welcoming speeches.

Welcome by Regional Governor of Crete, Mr Stavros Arnaoutakis

Regional Governor of Crete, Mr Stavros Arnaoutakis, welcomed the members highlighting how participation in AREPO brings significant benefits to Cretan producers, since the Region of Crete can strengthen the identity as well as the reputation of its local products thank to the action of the European network.

Introductory speech by Regional Vice-Governor of Crete, Ms Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki

Vice-Governor of Crete, Ms Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki, highlighted the importance for the Region of Crete to participate in AREPO in order to protect and promote its gastronomic richness, which is considered as a fundamental aspect of Cretan cultural heritage.

For this reason, the Region of Crete has adopted a strong strategy for the valorization of traditional products and is actively supporting producers to register new Cretan GIs. Vice-governor also presented the main data on Greek GIs, focusing her attention on Cretan products ([find here the complete list of Cretan products](#)).

In consideration of the important Greek heritage in term of quality and origin products, Vice-governor encouraged Greek Regions to actively participate in the network. Together, AREPO Regions should work to strengthen GIs recognition and to broaden the debate with the relevant EU institutions concerning protection, promotion and support of these products.

STATUTORY PART

The statutory part of AREPO plenary meeting was opened by the **Secretary General** who presented the agenda and gave the floor to the outgoing President of AREPO, Vincent Labarthe, Vice-President of Occitanie Region, for his final report on the three-years of presidency mandate (2014-2017).

Report of the outgoing President on realized activities

In his closing report, **President Labarthe** thanked AREPO members for their confidence and support during his mandate of presidency. He also gave a special thanks to the Secretary General and his staff for their work, the closeness and support. Then, he presented the main results achieved by AREPO during its mandate (October 2014 – September 2017) concerning the following issues ([see the activity report for more details](#)):

- **Common Agricultural Policy - CAP 2014-2020:** analysis of the implementation of RDP measure on operational groups and RDP measure on quality scheme (certification and promotion); **CAP post 2020:** contribution to EC public consultation on the future of CAP after 2020.
- **Implementation of the EU quality policy regulation of 1151/12:** AREPO contributed in the drafting of implementing acts concerning in particular the optional quality term for “mountain products”.
- **Review of organic regulation:** contribution to the reform of organic farming regulation.
- **Promotion policy:** maintenance of promotion measure for quality schemes in the RDP and important increase in the budget of EU promotion policy.
- **Research and Innovation:** AREPO worked to include quality and origin products in the EU R&I programme



Horizon 2020, organising a high level workshop with several European Universities and Research centers, in the EC pavilion at Expo Milan 2015. We also signed a cooperation agreement with the European Research Group SYAL and launched AREPO scientific committee.

- **EU trade agreement:** adoption of a clear position to assure that GI protection is recognized in the best possible way.
- **European Projects:** we won our first Interreg project (AGROSMART).
- **Institutional recognition:** the dynamic and proactive role played by AREPO is recognized by the European Institutions that react positively to our requests. Furthermore, we had the honour to welcome the Commissioner Hogan to our event in Brussels in 2015.
- **Members:** we managed to maintain the number of members stable even through the French administrative reform that made us lose 3 Regions, due to the fusion.

Finally, Mr Labarthe concluded its speech highlighting the important contribution of an association like AREPO to the construction of the European identity. Working together and joining forces at EU level is fundamental to realise a common European project and the products of origin, creating a sense of belonging, can contribute to build a common identity.

VOTE: The report of the President was unanimously approved.

Presentation of the financial accounts for 2016

The Secretary General presented the official financial accounts for 2016 certified by an independent expert, rectifying the presentation made during the first AG in January 2017.

Expenses: The year 2016 has been marked by two principal elements: AREPO GA in Strasbourg (April) and the new indeterminate term contract of our policy officer. The expenses exceeded the planned total of 26.300€.

Revenues: The revenues were 23.100 € higher than the estimated budget. AREPO received 26 membership fees. It is an exceptional result considering the impact of territorial reform in France.

Results: The financial year 2016 shows a negative result (-3.200 € or 2 % of the budget) that will be allocated to the association capital.

AREPO capital: Despite the negative result in 2016, the association capital is still very high (267.200€) and it corresponds to 2 full years of operation. Therefore, there is no need to reconsider the decision taken in 2014 concerning the annual contribution that should remain at 4.500€ also in 2018.

The Secretary General also recalled that the estimated budget for 2017 has been presented and approved by the plenary meeting held on January 25th in Brussels ([for more information read the financial report](#)).

VOTE: The financial account for 2016 was unanimously approved.

Renewal of AREPO Presidency 2017-2020

The Secretary General presented the formal candidacy for AREPO Presidency of **Mrs Vrentzou-Skordalaki, Vice-Governor of Crete**. **VOTE: The candidacy of the Region of Crete for AREPO Presidency has been unanimously approved.**

Mrs Vrentzou-Skordalaki will be AREPO 5th President and the first woman to chair the network. She said she was honoured to become President of AREPO whose work at European level is fundamental to assure the protection and valorisation of EU gastronomic heritage.

Moreover, she highlighted the principal challenges that lie ahead in the coming months and years, namely:

1. Assuring the protection of PDO and PGI quality products under the **free trade agreements**;
2. Achieving the right recognition and support under the **new CAP post 2020**;
3. Strengthening the **support of small GIs producers and family farms**.



Functioning of AREPO (Board of Directors and Renewal of Vice-presidency)

1. Board of Directors and AREPO statutes

The Secretary General reminded that AREPO functions with two general assemblies each year, instead of one GA and several meetings of the Board. In this way all the member Regions are included and motivated to participate to our activities. Nevertheless, the Statute requires the Association to have a Board of Directors and our actual functioning creates a divergence from this requirement.

For this reason, the Secretary General proposed to convene an extraordinary General Assembly, in occasion of the first plenary meeting of 2018, with the objective to modify the Statute and align it to our actual functioning.

2. Proposal to increment the participation of producers to AREPO activities

The Secretary General proposed to postpone the election of the Vice-President to the first GA in 2018, in order to achieve a greater participation of producer representatives. For this reason, AREPO will organize a working group dedicated to producers. AREPO could take charge for the costs of the meeting to ensure the participation of all producers, in order to renovate the Bord of Producers.

VOTE: The proposal has been unanimously approved.

THEMATIC PART

Economic added value of GI products: exchange of good practices and negative experiences. *Presentation of regional experiences:*

1. Pays de la Loire, Anne-Claire Branellec, Quality policy officer

The Region of Pays de la Loire has identified GIs as a priority for its territory to strengthen the regional identity. Faced with the lack of qualitative and quantitative data on quality systems, the Region has decided to start a project of observatory of quality that, by collecting objective data, will allow building a policy in support of quality products adapted to the needs of the sectors.

[Click here to consult the presentation.](#)

2. What is the added value of GIs and how to value it? The case of PDO olive oils in Catalunya, Mr Carmel Mòdol, Director General of Food, Quality and Agricultural Food Industries, Catalunya Region

The Ministry of Agriculture of Catalunya has decided to give a high priority to food policy in order to improve citizen knowledge of the regional food system. In particular, Catalunya intends to promote high quality products as the leading edge of its agricultural sector, enhancing consumption of its PDO/PGI products to increase the economic value of the sector –now representing €115M.

In order to succeed, Catalunya has commissioned a study to CREDA-UPC-IRTA with the objective to develop a methodology to evaluate Catalan GIs added value. The work started in 2017 and will be finalised before the end of the year. The intention is to set up a **methodology that could be used in future also by other Regions and the results will be shared with AREPO members.** The methodology will be applied and tested on the 5 Catalan olive oil PDOs, as a case study.

[Read the presentation for more information on the study.](#)

The **Secretary General** concluded this session recalling that these presentations were the first step toward a discussion on GIs added value which is fundamental in this political junction. In fact, AREPO should be able to demonstrate the socio-economic added value of these products, as well as their contribution in term of public good creation, in order to demand a new CAP in support of quality and origin products.



Presentation of the "Apulian Lifestyle Project - for a long lasting and healthy life", Mr Paolo Casalino, Head of the Brussels Delegation of Puglia Region

"Apulian Lifestyle" is a multidisciplinary project involving several policies dimensions and different actors at regional, national and international level. The **main goals** of the project are:

- Developing Health Innovation Policies aiming at the **promotion of a sustainable and healthy lifestyle**;
- Promotion and dissemination of the Apulian **Sustainable Mediterranean Diet**;
- Encouraging the engagement of Apulian citizens through **awareness-raising campaigns and training activities** inside the Region and abroad.

Puglia Region considers interregional collaboration and exchange of good practices as an important instrument to realise this project. **To this end, AREPO team would be available to support the creation of a working group concerning the main objectives and themes of the project.** [Read the presentation for more information on the project.](#)

Presentation of Euromontana study on the implementation of the optional quality term "mountain product", Juan Andres Gutierrez, President of Euromontana

Euromontana realised a study on the state of the art of the implementation of the optional quality term "mountain product", to analyse if and how the EU Member States decided to apply the derogations and how they are going to implement controls. The presentation focused on the following case studies: Austria, France, Italy and Romania. [For more information on the study, read the presentation.](#)

What instrument can be used to safeguard quality products in the new CAP? Marco Remaschi, Minister of Agriculture of Toscana Region

Tuscany Region is characterized by a predominantly mountainous and hilly territory. Faced with the obvious difficulties that this conformation implies for the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, the Region has chosen to focus on quality and to link the productions to its territories. The resources allocated by the CAP contribute substantially to the overall EU development, to the sustainable management of natural resources, to the improvement of the environment, and not least to a harmonious development of the territories (even the most fragile and marginalised). For this reason, Tuscany Region hopes for a more regionalized, simple and modern CAP, ensuring the prosperity of rural areas and greater synergies between regional, national and EU resources.

Presentation of the conclusions of the technical meeting on the future of CAP post 2020, Laurent Gomez, Secretary General of AREPO

The Secretary General presented a summary of the discussion held in the morning during the technical meeting on the future of the CAP post 2020 ([consult here the presentations](#)). The Assembly approved the approach of the position paper, focused in particular on geographical indications and quality products. The Secretary General proposed to organise **national technical meetings with AREPO regions** to develop proposals to strengthen and complement AREPO's position.

Among the other topics discussed during the morning session:

- It would be imperative to take into account the **climate change** and the need of adaptation of quality and origin products;
- **Small producers**: we should analyse how to improve and adapt European policies to better support small producers. Furthermore, AREPO could act as a platform for the exchange of good practices at regional level.
- **LEADER** could be a good instrument for regions to support GIs and it would be interesting to evaluate the possibility to carry out interregional project. We could consider realising a study on the implementation of LEADER among our member regions.
- **Trade agreements**: we should update AREPO position on trade agreement in order to ask the Commission to protect all the registered GI products from imitation and counterfeit, even those that have not been included in agreements.



Presentation of the outcome of Origo event, Ms Simona Caselli, Minister for Agriculture, Emilia-Romagna Region

ORIGO 2017 – Global Forum on Geographical Indications is the first European and international event for the promotion of quality agri-food products worldwide. It has been organised by the Italian Government and Emilia-Romagna Region, in partnership with the EC, the Parma Industrialists' Association and Parma Exhibition Centre. The event was created from the need to raise a new and stronger awareness of the strategic value of our quality products both within the European context and in the international markets.

For more information on Origo event, [read the presentation](#) and the [position paper](#).

Project AGROSMARTcoop, Anne Clermontelle, Consultant in agrifood strategies

On **March 21st 2018**, AREPO will organise in Brussels the 4th edition of the “**European event of quality and origin products**”. This edition will be organised in the framework of the project [AGROSMARTcoop](#) and the main focus of the event will be the CAP post 2020. AREPO member regions are invited to participate to the event and they will have at their disposal a stand to present their products.

Conclusions: work programme for the next months

The Secretary-General concluded the plenary meeting reminding the main points for AREPO work program for the coming months:

- Organisation of a meeting with AREPO producers dedicated to discuss how to achieve a **greater participation of producer representatives**.
- Organisation of **national technical meeting** in order to strengthen the position of AREPO on **CAP post 2020**;
- Update of AREPO position on GIs protection in bilateral and multilateral **trade agreements**;
- **Organisation of the European event of quality and origin products on March 21st 2018**, in Brussels.

Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki
President of AREPO
P/O Laurent Gomez
Secretary General of AREPO