



REPORT ON AREPO'S PLENARY MEETING

Thessaloniki, March 5th 2019

First plenary meeting

The first AREPO plenary meeting of 2019 was held on March 5th from 10h00 to 16h30, at Mediterranean Palace Hotel (Hall "Zeus"), in Thessaloniki (Central Macedonia), hosted by Region of Central Macedonia.

Ms Katerina Zografou, Regional Counsellor of Central Macedonia, introduced the meeting delivering her welcome speech, followed by **Ms Gerakina Bisbina**, Deputy Governor for Rural Development of the Region of Central Macedonia. Ms Zografou laid stress on PDO and PGI agri-food products as part of the identity and cultural heritage of a region, also reminding how these products can bring economic benefits and contribute to the growth and social well-being of the local community.

WELCOME BY REGIONAL GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA, MR APOSTOLOS TZITZIKOSTAS

The **Regional Governor of Central Macedonia, Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, also intervened in the General Assembly to welcome the participants, pointing out the importance of innovation for GIs as well as the key role geographical indications can play in the Tourism sector. As a consequence, he claimed for the importance of linking GIs with tourism and the recognition of GIs as added value to local development, especially in terms of jobs created.

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 **President of AREPO, Ms Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki**, Vice-Governor of the Region of Crete, for her Report on the activities AREPO carried out from April 2018 to March 2019.

Report of the President

The President first welcomed AREPO members at the General Assembly, especially new members such as Baden-Württemberg, thanking them for the participation. She reminded that with the new members acquired in 2018, AREPO currently represents 34 Regions from 8 different Member States.

She thanked the Region of Central Macedonia for hosting the meeting and having organized it in collaboration with AREPO team and she thanked as well the Secretary General and his staff for their work.

Then, she presented the main results achieved by AREPO from April 2018 to March 2019 ([see the activity report for more details](#)):

- **Executive Board meeting:** the first Executive Board meeting in AREPO's history was held on January 23rd in Lleida (Catalunya). Members discussed: the financial accounts for 2018 and the estimated budget for 2019; the organisation of AREPO General Assembly in Thessaloniki; the first working meeting of the College of Producers; the collaboration between AREPO and OriGIn on the elaboration of the amendments and common position for CAP revision; the Internal Regulation Concerning the Secretary General; the activities for 2019. Among the activities proposed for 2019, the Board decided to focus on producers and the topic of direct sales from the producers and on a research on GI wine, in order to develop a specific strategy understanding to what extent it could be useful a lobbying activity on this topic in Brussels.
- **First working meeting of the College of Producers:** hosted by the Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese Consortium in Reggio Emilia, on September 4th 2018. With 25 participants from 5 different Member States, the discussion focused on organising regular meetings of the College of Producers; strengthening the collaboration with OriGIn EU; monitoring EU bilateral and multilateral trade agreements; GIs sustainability. (see the [report](#) for

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more details).

- **Review of Common Agricultural Policy and Quality Policy:** it has been presented AREPO contribution to the reform of CAP post-2020. Particularly, AREPO collaborated with OriGIn in order to defend together geographical indications at EU level and adopt a common position and lobbying strategy concerning the CAP. We elaborated together a document with common amendments proposals on the CAP post-2020 and on the revision of GI regulations, which have been all presented by MEPs.
- **Promotion policy:** constant monitoring and information actions ([see programme fiche on promotion policy 2019](#))
- **EU trade agreement:** AREPO updated its position on trade agreements in order to ask the Commission to protect all the registered GI products from imitation and counterfeit, including those that have not been included in agreements. AREPO contributed to the EC consultation on the EU accession to the Geneva Act of Lisbon Agreement (LA) for the protection of Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications. The EC appreciated the expertise provided by AREPO.
- **GIs and Sustainability:** AREPO in collaboration with Emilie Vandecandelaere (FAO), Giovanni Belletti and Andrea Marescotti (UNIFI) organised a pilot meeting in Florence, with its Italian member Regions and Producers, to present and discuss FAO and UNIFI **guide concerning the evaluation of impact of GIs initiatives**, based on the original FAO guide "[Linking people, places and products](#)".
- **Cooperation with EU Institutions:**

European Commission: AREPO participated in **3 DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups**, "quality and promotion" (2 seats), "organic agriculture" (2 seats), and "rural development" (1 seat) and in the **Civil Dialogue Group of DG Trade**. AREPO is regularly invited to participate in DG AGRI relevant high-level conferences and **Ms Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver**, Director of Quality, Research & Innovation (DG AGRI) participated to our conference on the future of CAP post 2020.

European Parliament: we hosted **Mr Paolo De Castro**, Vice-president of COMAGRI, and **Mr Herbert Dorfmann**, COMAGRI rapporteur on the EC communication on the CAP future post 2020, during our "**European Event on Quality and Origin products**". In addition, AREPO is permanently invited to participate in the **Intergroup on wines, spirits and quality foodstuffs**, chaired by MEP Herbert Dorfmann.

All our amendments proposals concerning the regulations on the future CAP post 2020 have been tabled by the MEPs that we contacted in collaboration with OriGIn EU.
- **Workshops and Conferences:**
 - "[GIs as intellectual property of the EU and their contribution to the development of the Regions](#)" (04/12/18, Heraklion): a high level conference organised by the Region of Crete in collaboration with AREPO, with the aim to highlight the multidimensional character of GIs, their linkages with regional and rural development, their contribution to employment and sustainability of small and medium enterprises, as well as their potential in reducing the depopulation of rural areas and in assuring sustainable rural development.
 - "[Organic & Origin](#)" (27/11/18, European Parliament, Brussels): the President of AREPO participated in the high-level conference hosted by MEP Ivan Jakovčić at the European Parliament in Brussels. The objective of the conference was to discuss how to give the right place and acknowledgment to organic and origin products in the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2020.



- **ORIGO 2018 – Global Forum on Geographical Indications** (06/05/18, Parma): the President, the Vice-President of AREPO, and Mr Charalampos-Nikolaos Piteris, expert of GIs from Crete Region, participated in the high-level conference, that was attended also by **Commissioner Hogan**.
- **European Projects:** AREPO took part in the [AGROSMARTcoop project](#) «Space for the integration, competitiveness and intelligent economic growth of agri-food cooperatives in the SUDOE rural areas», ended in December 2018, and in the [Strength2Food](#) project, a 5-year EU-funded project that started in March 2016. AREPO has been invited to participate in this project as an **expert member of the Stakeholder Advisory Board (SAB)**.

VOTE: The report of the President was unanimously approved.

Presentation of the financial accounts for 2017

The Secretary General reminded that AREPO General Assembly usually takes place twice a year. For 2019, the second plenary meeting should be held in Brussels at the end of the year, waiting for the new European Parliament and the new European Commission to be in charge.

In 2018 Arepo held only one General Assembly (march 2018) and the certified financial accounts could therefore not be presented. For this reason, the Secretary General presented the official financial accounts for 2017, certified by an independent expert. ([for more information read the financial report](#))

Expenses: The year 2017 has been marked by three principal elements: AREPO GA in Brussels (January 2017) and in Hérahkion (October 2017) and the first full year under indeterminate term contract - excluding subsidised contract - of our policy officer, Giulia Scaglioni.

The consulting item increased with the continuation of the Agrosmart project (Interreg SUDOE), partially offset by pending subsidies.

Expenditure was €18,840 higher than the provisional budget, which was mainly due to the fact that the provisional budget was presented in balance, which is mandatory. In 2017 the total amount of expenditure was € 162 690.

Revenues: Revenues were €2,300 higher than the estimated budget. 26 contributions were received, the same number as in 2016. 2017 budget amounted at €144.000.

Results: The financial year 2017 shows in the end a negative result of – 18.164 €, compared to – 16.564€ presented at the March 2018 General Assembly, before certification.

The negative result for the financial year (-€18 164) has been allocated to the association's reserves.

AREPO capital: After the 2017 financial year, our shareholders' equity is still at an excellent level (€249.052), €90,000 above one year of operation and 15 years of negative income at the same level. Therefore, there is no need to reconsider the decision taken in 2014 concerning the annual contribution that was renewed at 4.500€.

VOTE: The financial report for 2017 was unanimously approved.

Presentation of the financial accounts for 2018

The report on the 2018 accounts, prepared by the independent accountant and certified by the independent auditor, was presented as well.

Expenses: The total amount of expenditure in 2018 was €189 000. The increase in expenses was due to the conclusion of the Agrosmartcoop project, in which AREPO had the role of disseminating the results, task resulted in 2 events: the Transnational Forum in Bordeaux (May 15th 2018) and the one in Brussels (March 2018). The expenses of the Agrosmart project were concentrated at the end of 2018, when the project ended.



This event will be 80% reimbursed by the European Development Fund (ERDF) grants that are still expected and will compensate for the cost of consulting. This is the reason why all the expenses related to this event (including interpretation) have led to an increase in the expected expenses, up to € 215 595, which will be compensated by the arrival of these funds.

The other main elements in terms of expenditure have been the General Assembly in Brussels and the first meeting of the producers' association on 4 September in Reggio-Emilia. The cost of all events has been of €70,000 (mission expenses, interpreters, catering, security, cleaning, communication, etc.).

The most important element of structural expenditure is Giulia Scaglioni's contract for the permanent office of AREPO in Brussels for an amount of €71,000 and the consulting on European projects item. Emilia Romagna region provides the premises with an occupancy agreement free of charge.

The expenditure is €18,840 higher than the provisional budget, which had been presented in balance, which is mandatory.

Revenues: Revenues are €4,542 higher than the estimated budget, for a total amount of € 193 542. AREPO received 26 contributions, such as in 2016 and 2017, and proposed to regions that had wished to join after August 2018 to pay their membership fees in 2019.

Results: As a result, also the 2018 financial year shows a negative result of €22,053 (10% of expenses). The negative result for the year will be attributed to the association's reserves, because our association's equity capital is still at an excellent level, € 228 600, which allow other 10 years with a negative result at the same level.

Therefore, there is no need to reconsider the decision taken in 2014 concerning the annual contribution that was renewed at 4.500€ also in 2018.

Budget proposal for 2019

The estimated budget for 2019 is in balance, with €132 000 of revenues and €132 000 of expenditures foreseen. This is a very significant reduction with the end of the Agrosmart project and without the organisation of the biennial. The total amount of contributions has been maintained at € 117 000 because we expect the entry of new members but we are never sheltered from the loss of regions, this is why AREPO prefers to maintain the provisional level of the last two years.

[Consult the budget for more info.](#)

VOTE: *The budget proposal for 2019 was unanimously approved.*

Vote on the contribution for 2019

Despite the negative financial year of 2018, it has been proposed to not increase the contribution, which will be maintained at € 4500, because AREPO considers this level of deficit as acceptable and its reserves can cover it.

VOTE: *The membership fee for 2018 was unanimously approved at 4.500 €.*

Independent auditor

AREPO usually turns to an independent auditor for the certification of financial accounts. Under French law (AREPO having its registered office in Bordeaux is subject to French law), it is not necessary to have an auditor for accounts, in case the threshold of public revenues the association receives is below € 153 000, which is AREPO's case. As a consequence, AREPO proposed to allocate the resources normally used for budget certification only to an independent accountant, who will monitor AREPO budget throughout the year, for the sake of more efficient resource management. The current auditor will make a [proposal for resignation](#), which will be signed by the President. On the other hand, the contract with the independent accountant will be



approved by the President and will include an alert mission for the President in the event of any particular difficulties in the use of AREPO funds.

[Model for the cooperation agreement with associated members](#)

In 2018 it was decided to add another college, in addition to that of regions and producers: **a college of associated members, with a consultative role**, in order to discuss with various other networks that can bring their experience and knowledge to AREPO's activity. A draft agreement, which will have an indefinite duration unless written communication from one of the partners, was then drawn up and presented the day of the Assembly.

It is **Title 2 of our statute** that allows the creation of this college. One of the first networks to join will be SYAL, a scientific network of European researchers working on food systems, with whom we already work on various projects such as Strength2food.

[Consult the content of the proposed agreement](#)

[Internal Regulation concerning the Secretary General](#)

The Secretary General presented the Internal Regulation concerning the role of Secretary General, a regulation proposed by President Ms Vrentzou-Skordalaki, during the March 2018 General Assembly in Brussels. The Executive board, in January, discussed and approved this document too.

Since the creation of AREPO, in 2005, the Secretary General has been provided by the Region Nouvelle-Aquitaine at the association's headquarters and free of charge, with the primary aim of ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of AREPO's actions, during different Presidencies. The objective is to define the framework for this provision.

For the sake of transparency, the internal regulation aims at setting out clearly the characteristics of this role, all the tasks undertaken by the Secretary General, and condition to renew or terminate the provision with Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region. In France, the Association of Chambers of Agriculture of the Atlantic Arc (AC3A) is also a candidate.

[Consult the content of the proposed agreement.](#)

VOTE: the Internal Regulation concerning the Secretary General was unanimously approved

THEMATIC PART I

[Report on the first producers meeting in Reggio Emilia, Guglielmo Garagnani, Vice-President of Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium, representing AREPO Vice-Presidency](#)

This was the first AREPO plenary meeting, with Parmigiano Reggiano as Vice-Presidency. Mr Garagnani presented the results of the first working meeting of the College of Producers held in Reggio Emilia, on September 4th 2018, with 25 participants from 5 different Member States.

The meeting has focused on 1) how to strengthen the participation of producer representatives in AREPO and 2) on identifying other themes to be addressed to reply to the interest of producers.

Producers representatives have highlighted the following key points:

1. **Better recognition of the role of producer organisations in the management of GIs.** Producer consortia are very important for the protection of rural territories, thus we should have a specific regulation defining duties/responsibilities, as well as recognising the rights of producer organisations to receive support and funding from rural development. For this reason CAP support should be directed to producer organisations.

Moreover, support policies should not only facilitate the creation of new GIs, but also support historical GI producers that need to adapt and modify their specifications to follow developments in technology and consumer needs.

2. **Bilateral trade agreements:** producers complained about lack of transparency from EC in this area. Well aware that it is not possible for all GIs to be protected in the negotiations with third countries, they asked the Commission to consider all stakeholders at the beginning of the negotiations, given the economic and socio-cultural importance of the GIs.
3. **Multilateral Agreements - Lisbon Agreement:** The EC has decided to join the Geneva Act of Lisbon Agreement to better protect GIs. Nevertheless, it is not certain that all GIs will be protected as the EC proposes protection for a limited list. This would be a significant step backwards as the Lisbon Agreement is in fact the only multilateral agreement that protects GIs in 28 countries. As the EC simply has to join an existing agreement, there is no need to use a list: by joining the agreement, all European GIs will be protected, without having to resort to negotiations. Accession is a unilateral process.
4. **Information and training on GIs:** producers representatives asked for more training and information for consumers, as well as for producers, about GIs. There is a need for greater awareness of the positive effects on the economy and growth of the territories and on the quality of food. They lay stress on the importance of promoting GIs through education and training programmes in schools, universities and research centres.
5. **Working methodology:** How to share/disseminate AREPO's work to involve more producers and try to include producers from Northern Europe? First of all, producers proposed to have more meetings, in order to monitor but also build proposals for politicians and to get to know each other better and exchange knowledge and experience. They proposed to strengthen the link between tourism and GIs, as well as the collaboration with OriGIn.

[Click here to consult the report on the first meeting of AREPO College of Producers](#)

[Update on AREPO lobbying activities on the future of CAP post 2020 and revision of quality policy,](#)

Francesca Alampi, AREPO Policy Officer

On June 1st 2018, the European Commission published the [legislative proposals for regulations modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy](#) (CAP), which consisted of 3 regulation proposals:

1. **CAP Strategic Plans** (a proposed new way of working covering direct payments to farmers, rural development support and sectoral support programmes);
2. **Horizontal Regulation** (financing, management and monitoring); and
3. **Amending Regulation** (proposes amendments to CMO Reg. 1308/13, [Reg. 1151/12 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs](#), Reg. 251/14 on GIs for aromatized wine, among other).

Following the appointing of the rapporteurs on each text by AGRI committee and the presentations of the related draft reports, [AREPO prepared an analysis](#) with the objective to **highlight the main amendments to the EC proposals** concerning the **place of quality schemes** in CAP Strategic Plans, as well as the **simplification of GIs system**.

AREPO lobbying strategy concerning CAP, has been carried out in collaboration with oriGIn, as discussed during the last General Assembly as well as the first meeting of the College of Producers. We elaborated together a document with common amendments proposals on the CAP post-2020 and on the revision of GI regulations (click here to find the text in [EN](#), [ES](#), [FR](#)). This work, in line with the positions and analyses of our two associations, proposes amendments to strengthen the position of GIs in rural development and sectoral interventions and to reinforce their protection in the relevant regulations. This lobbying strategy has proven to be really effective, as **our amendments proposals have been all tabled by MEPs from different political groups**.

[For more information consult the presentation](#)



This presentation was followed by an intense discussion on some critical points of the CAP after 2020, in particular on the weakening of the role of the Regions by proposing a single management authority at national level. This led to a discussion among AREPO members on the role of the regions. The discussion took into account two approaches: that of the regions participating in the **Agiregions** platform's position and those that could support a **Regional Manifesto for an effective subsidiarity** proposed by Euskadi. The central element of the discussion is: a national plan and regional adaptations managed by the Regions or regional plans.

The **Secretary General** concluded this discussion recalling that AREPO hasn't a position on this issue, as it's a question that goes far beyond the competence and the area of expertise of the network.

It must be noted that AREPO member regions are not at the same level of decentralization and subsidiarity. France, for instance, has a more centralised organisation, with a certain degree of "regionalisation" rather than decentralisation, and the position of French regions supports the idea of a national strategic plan, with regional managing authorities alongside. The French Constitution does not provide for a more important role of regions, unlike the States which are more or less federal states (Germany, Spain, Italy).

AREPO has taken into account the proposal of the Basque Country, recognising the need for a greater subsidiarity which could be important for its member regions in order to adapt the CAP to the requirements and achievements of quality products. Nevertheless, since it is impossible for AREPO to give its position as a whole on this subject, the Secretary General proposed to the interested member regions to eventually sign the manifesto as regions and not as AREPO regions.

[Speech by Ms Friedlinde Gurr-Hirsch, State Secretary of the Baden-Württemberg Ministry for Rural Areas and Consumer Protection](#)

Ms. Gurr-Hirsch, as representative of a new AREPO member Region, thanked for the invitation to the General Assembly and conveyed the greetings from Minister Peter Hauk. She presented the motivations and reasons behind Baden-Württemberg's decision to join the organization, and the importance this region places on the EU quality policy. She concluded her speech, with the presentation of a traditional spiritous beverage of the Region (Schwarzwälder Edelbrände).

THEMATIC PART II

[Presentation of the outcome of the International Conference "GIs as intellectual property of the EU and their contribution to the development of the Regions", \(Heraklion, December 2018\), Mr. Piteris Charalampos-Nikolaos, Training Director of V.T.C.R.R.U.-REGION OF CRETE](#)

The afternoon session of the plenary meeting opened with a presentation on the main results of the conference on GIs, organized by the Region of Crete, in the Chamber of Commerce of Heraklion, under the aegis of Mrs. Vrentzou-Skordalaki, President of AREPO.

The aim of the conference was to highlight the multidimensional character of GIs, their linkages with regional and rural development, their contribution to employment and sustainability of small and medium enterprises, as well as their potential in reducing the depopulation of rural areas and in assuring sustainable rural development.

For more information, read the presentation.

[GIs and sustainability: "Revealing the power of PDO/PGI: The strength2food Project", Mr Konstadinos Mattas, Professor of Agricultural Policy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki](#)

Professor Mattas thanked for the opportunity to collaborate once again with AREPO. His presentation concerned one of the European projects in which AREPO is involved: the Strength2food project.

The Strength2food project focus on **improving and promoting schemes that protect quality logos** (names of quality agricultural products and foodstuffs) **and take into account environmental, social and innovation-based criteria when awarding the public sector contracts to procurers and suppliers.**

With the aim to assess the social, environmental and economic sustainability of Food Quality Schemes, it takes into account 30 cases of organic, PDO, PGI schemes, spread across 14 countries (Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Spain, Thailand, UK and Vietnam). One of the case studies presented during the Assembly, has been the PDO Zagora Apple (Greece), the first apple with EU quality scheme (PDO). Particularly, he presented the results of the activity of the Agricultural Cooperative Union of Zagora-Pilio, one of the oldest cooperatives, explaining the positive implications of the work of this cooperative in terms of growth of income, economic impact and job creation and the role of women's work in the rural development of this place.

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

[European Projects, Anne Clermontelle, Consultant in agri-food strategies](#)

Ms. Anne Clermontelle reviewed all the European Projects AREPO participates in:

1. **[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 2014-2020 which aims to revitalize the rural areas in Southwestern Europe by supporting and improving the competitiveness of its agri-food cooperatives. The project **ended on December 31st, 2018**. AREPO contributed to the project by bringing its quality policies expertise and dissemination skills. The main results achieved were: the creation of a collaborative platform with tools and advanced services to improve agri-food cooperatives competitiveness and intercooperation (www.agrosmartcoop.eu); training courses; Intercooperation events that generated strategic alliances.

2. **AGROSMARTGlobal** “Space for the competitiveness, promotion and intelligent international expansion of agri-food cooperatives in the Sudoe rural areas” aims to improve the visibility and the competitiveness of agri-food cooperatives on the digital market place. The project was selected for the 1st phase and should be submitted before March 29th for the final evaluation. AREPO would contribute to this project by bringing its expertise for: the protection of GIs denominations on the Internet; the improvement of the visibility of GIs on the Internet; on the promotion and dissemination of project’s outcomes.

3. **MOVING2**: “Mountain Valorization through Interconnectedness and Green Growth” is an Horizon 2020 project which aims to build capacities and co-develop policy frameworks across Europe for the establishment of new or upgraded value chains that contribute to resilience and sustainability of mountain areas by valorizing local assets and delivering private and public goods. The project proposal was submitted on January 23rd for the first evaluation phase. AREPO would contribute to this project by: involving regional/local authorities and producers associations from mountain areas from its member Regions and by bringing its expertise on policy assessment and its experience on the promotion and dissemination of project’s outcomes.

4. **PROMETRA**: “PROfiling of secondary METabolites to ensure authenticity and TRAceability of Mediterranean foods” aims to strengthen and harmonize a technological tool, based on profiling food secondary metabolites, to achieve traceability and ensure authenticity of Mediterranean food products. The project proposal was submitted on February 28th for the first evaluation phase. AREPO will participate involving regional/local authorities and producers associations from Mediterranean areas from its member Regions; bringing its expertise on policy assessment and its experience on the promotion and dissemination of project’s outcomes.

5. **ALIMENT-TERRE**: “Network of facilitators in sustainable food and quality products” aims to ensure adequate,

safe and nutritious food in sufficient quantities, at an affordable and stable price, for both rural and urban population, by creating open educational resources to create a network of sustainable food and quality products facilitators. The project proposal will be submitted for the 2020 call for proposals session of the ERASMUS+ Programme. AREPO would contribute to this project by involving regional/local authorities and producers associations for the creation of a network of sustainable food and quality products facilitators within AREPO and in the promotion and dissemination of project's outcomes.

Presentation of AREPO study on regional brands, Laurent Gomez, Secretary General of AREPO

Following a previous study in 2014, last year AREPO carried out a research on regional brands, with the collaboration of a trainee. The research focused on 20 regions, which presented 20 brands (2 Portugal, 6 Spain, 2 Germany, 1 France, 3 Greece, 4 Italy). The research showed that only Corse region and Lombardy don't have territorial marks.

Three types of brands have been identified:

- **Umbrella brands:** they refer to a variety of products, which benefit from the grouping of communication devices;
- **Product brands:** they refer to a unique, differentiating and marketable identity for each product carried by a company;
- **Identity brands:** this type of brand is registered for territorial marketing purposes in order to strengthen the identity of the community to be promoted.

These brands meet one or more of the following objectives: they can contribute to economic development in terms of employment, added value in the territory, finding markets and improving cooperation; they contribute to promotion and valorization of regional and emblematic products, products with GI or sign of quality, radiation of the territory, tourism, gastronomy; they guarantee the quality of the origin of the raw material and/or of the total product; they contribute to social and environmental aspects.

The participation of GIs in a regional brand is a particular advantage but there are legal conflicts of denomination between GIs and brands (notion of comparable products). The communication of brands must be based on elements of reality and GIs can participate in the advertising of other lesser-known products. The objective of territorial brands is to coexist and interact with GIs for mutual benefit. Territorial brands can have an advantage of proximity and consumer confidence if they succeed in conveying identity and quality. The influence of a brand depends on the objectives it has set and the means at its disposal, but also on the reputation of the products it offers.

Update on the Lisbon Agreement on GIs, Laurent Gomez, Secretary General of AREPO

Within the framework of the **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**, GIs are protected through the Lisbon Agreement on the protection of PDOs and PGIs, as amended in 2015 by the Geneva Act, which allowed International Organisations, such as the European Union, to join the Lisbon Agreement. So far, GIs are protected under the Lisbon Agreement conditions in those countries that have signed and ratified the agreement.

In December 2017, the European Commission launched a public consultation to determine the conditions under which the European Union should access to the Geneva Act. Both AREPO and OriGIn gave their contribution to the consultation, laying stress on the importance for all GIs to be protected and calling for the recognition of non-agricultural geographical indications.

AREPO also received a request from the French Ministry of Finance for contacts of people who might be interested in the protection of non-agricultural GIs at European level, in all AREPO member regions.

AREPO has been contacted as well by the Swiss Institute of Intellectual Property concerning a consultation



opened by ICANN, the American public company that deals with domain names and their marketing. In fact, they are discussing on the idea of marketing top-level domain names (such as .fr, .cat, ecc...) linked to the territory. AREPO took part in the consultation by stressing that when the name of a community is likely to be registered by a non-legitimate claimant, this community should be questioned before the attribution of the domain name, in order to allow them to oppose in time against an improper registration of the domain name.

Update on Promotion Policy: New Work Programme for 2019, Francesca Alampi, AREPO Policy Officer

The last point in the agenda was the update on Promotion Policy, following the work programme for 2019 and the Infoday organised by DG Agri and CHAFEA in February 2019.

The [annual work programme for 2019](#) for EU agricultural products, with **increased budget of €191.6 million, puts emphasis on products under EU quality schemes**. Furthermore, it gives **priority** on increasing the number of individual campaigns aimed at non-EU countries with the highest potential for growth such as Canada, Japan, Mexico and Korea. This year, the focus will be on promoting **sustainably produced rice, and fruit and vegetables**.

For further details, read the [descriptive note concerning the promotion policy](#).

Any other business

Finally, as asked during the last General Assembly and by several AREPO members, the Secretary General informed the members that AREPO team is going to conduct an **INTERNAL study on wine topic**. Particularly, Jordan Garcia, intern at the AREPO office in Bordeaux, with the supervision and guidance of Anne Clermontelle, will be in charge to realise the survey and the study and will contact members and producers to collect the necessary information. The aim of this research is to understand where and how exactly an association of regions and producers as AREPO could be useful in dealing with wine sector, especially to not overlap with the activity carried out by AREV. This internal study will be reserved for the use of AREPO members who will be able to decide at a plenary meeting whether it is useful or not.

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