

## REPORT OF THE VIDEOCONFERENCE WITH AREPO SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

### List of participants

<u>Members of the Scientific Committee:</u>	<u>AREPO Team:</u>
Claire Cerdan	Giulia Scaglioni, Policy Officer AREPO
Denis Sautier	Francesca Alampi, Policy Officer AREPO
Filippo Arfini	
François Casabianca	
Giovanni Belletti	
Olivier Beucherie	
Philippe Mongondry	

On June 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 AREPO Scientific Committee met via videoconference with the Policy Officers of AREPO representation office in Brussels. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the main points outlined in the “*Roadmap for the Scientific Committee*”, in order to define together the new structure, role and competences of the Scientific Committee within AREPO.

Giulia Scaglioni, AREPO Policy Officer, introduced the meeting welcoming and thanking the participants before presenting the agenda.

### STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The first topic in the agenda concerned the structure and governance of the Scientific Committee. The “*Roadmap for the Scientific Committee*” reminded that this body is **not currently recognised by AREPO statutes** and it has just a **consultative role**. However, in order to ensure its effectiveness, it has been proposed to define a **multi-level governance structure**:

- A collegial body, rather institutional, named the **Scientific Council**. It will be open to all universities and research centres in AREPO member regions;
- A coordinating and steering body, rather functional, named **Scientific Committee**, made up of experts identified and invited by the AREPO secretariat. It will be in charge of activating and stimulating the activity of the Council. **The work of the Scientific Committee will be coordinated by Professor Giovanni Belletti.**

Experts participate **on a voluntary basis on their own behalf**. They will not represent the position of their own organization of origin, which might later be associated as an AREPO Associate Member.

If universities or other research centres should be interested at a later stage in formally recognize the collaboration of its expert with AREPO, Giovanni Belletti suggested to adopt a document of the type of a “*Memorandum of Understanding*”, with no financial implication for the interested organisations.

With regards to the size of the Council, it has been agreed **to not impose a limited number of participants**. It should include experts on different topics coming from each AREPO member region, so that the Council can provide wide expertise and knowledge. Furthermore, it will be open to researchers and experts coming from governmental bodies at regional or national level.

As concerns **the Scientific Committee, it should be made up of no more than 10 experts**.

## EXPANSION

At present, the Scientific Committee is composed by experts from: INRA Corse, CIRAD, ESA d'Anger / Master Food Identity, University of Parma, University of Florence.

As already pointed out in the Roadmap, Giulia Scaglioni stressed the interest in expanding the membership of this body and its geographical coverage, especially referring to **future members of the Scientific Council**. As a result, AREPO Policy Officer called for the support of the Scientific Committee to contact other research centres/universities to involve new experts.

**Priority will be given to experts coming from AREPO member regions**, especially targeting organisations from AREPO Spanish, German and Greek regions, given that the experts so far come exclusively from Italy and France. Nevertheless, the Scientific Council will also remain open to researchers and academics outside AREPO geographical coverage.

The Scientific Committee committed to broaden the base of experts starting from the Regions which are already members of AREPO. It required AREPO to prepare **a document to be shared with new experts explaining the type of experts and competences AREPO is looking for as well as the role they will have within the Scientific Council**.

## THEMES

After discussing the overall organisation of this consultative body, participants discussed the main themes it should be dealing with in order to develop a specific and clear strategy, eventually allowing to involve other actors.

In the Roadmap, AREPO proposed the following topics:

1. Following the emergence of **Covid-19**:
  - Analysis and sharing of good practices from our member Regions to support the agri-food sector during the health crisis;
  - Elaboration and sharing of public policy recommendations aimed at supporting short supply chains and the development of local/regional agri-food policies;
2. **Farm to fork strategy (F2F)**: a follow-up of this strategy is ever more relevant in the context of the Covid-19 crisis as it has emphasized the importance of local food supply;
3. **Evaluation of EU quality policy**;

4. Inventory and analysis work on the **formative offer** concerning GIs, in order to identify the needs that remain unanswered (e.g. training needs for professionals). The final goal is to create an interactive map on the new AREPO website (currently under renovation), giving an overview of the situation of the formative offer on the matter in EU Member States.

In the light of the proposed themes, the Steering committee stressed the importance to precise the field of interaction. In particular, it has been suggested as follows:

- A focus on Geographical Indications and products of origin as tools for regions for tackling territorial development;
- The new configuration of the Scientific Committee should allow to create a forum of exchange of practices among AREPO members, taking into account regional diversities. Furthermore, it could provide a platform of discussion on Food Systems Governance and the role of Regions, helping giving more visibility to some regional food practices in the light of the Farm to Fork strategy;
- Maintenance of a certain level of constant contact between the research level and the regional policy level of AREPO;
- Thinking about widening the scope of AREPO, focusing more on Quality and localised agri-food products.

#### POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

AREPO proposed the following set of activities to carry out the work of the Scientific Committee and Council:

- **Periodic meetings** by videoconference to work on the identified themes + meeting of the Scientific Committee at the next AREPO General Assembly;
- **Dissemination of research results to AREPO members:** publication of an article on the site + email to members (e.g. every 3 months) to send out the latest publications concerning GIs.

In order to maintain and strengthen the link between the Scientific Committee and Council and AREPO regions, meetings and events with members have been proposed, which will be structured around scientific presentations followed by feedback and recommendations from members. The experts of the Scientific Committee are supposed to propose activities and workshops for and with AREPO members.

#### WORKING METHODS FOR THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The above-mentioned governance requires a strong engagement in terms of time and meetings for the Scientific Committee.

**The Steering Body agreed on periodical video-conferences and in-presence meetings, to be scheduled ahead via a planning with the relative themes.**

#### AOB

Philippe Mongondry presented the idea of a project to be presented under the ERASMUS framework. Based on an **analysis of the needs for training of professionals** in the field of Geographical Indications, **it aims at providing a training offer for experts in charge of training several types of professionals of the sector:** producers; journalists, chefs...



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The rest of the Scientific Committee expressed interest in the project, also suitable for training officers working for Regions. A note and a draft of the proposal will be shared with the Scientific Committee.

## CONCLUSION

After scheduling a suitable date via Doodle, the participants agreed to organise another meeting between the end of August and the beginning of September, in order to lay the groundwork and set the priorities with respect to the Farm to Fork Strategy.