



REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE AREPO BOARD OF PRODUCERS

2 March 2023

The meeting of the Board of Producers was held in presence, in the afternoon of 2 March 2023, at the Complejo cultural San Francisco, in Caceres (Extremadura).

The meeting was attended, among others, by the President of AREPO, **Ms Begoña García Bernal**, Regional Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory of Extremadura; the Vice-President of AREPO, **Mr Guglielmo Garagnani**, Vice-President of the Consorzio del formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano; the President and Secretary General of the Association of GI producer groups from Extremadura (Acrex), **Mr Angel Pacheco and Mr Raúl Muñiz Cimas**; several representatives of producers from Toscana, Andalucía and Corse, as well as a great number of GI producers from Extremadura; some member regions attending as observers; the Secretary General of AREPO **Mr Laurent Gomez** and the rest of the AREPO team.

Interpretation was provided in **EL-EN-ES-FR-IT**.

Welcome speech by AREPO President, Ms Begoña García Bernal, Regional Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory of Extremadura;

The President of AREPO introduced the meeting of the Board of Producers. She welcomed the participants thanking the AREPO Vice-President, the AREPO staff and all the producers participating. She recognised the importance of giving voice to producers in this difficult historic context. In this sense, AREPO board of producers represents a great opportunity to share concerns and to try to find common solutions. Finally, she passed the floor to Mr Angel Pacheco and Mr Raúl Muñiz Cimas from the Association of GI producer groups from Extremadura (Acrex), thanking them for sharing with AREPO members the point of view and reality of GI producers in Extremadura Region.

Presentation by the Association of GI producer groups from Extremadura, Mr Angel Pacheco and Mr Raúl Muñiz Cimas, Asociación de Consejos Reguladores de Extremadura (Acrex)

Mr Angel Pacheco, President of Acrex, Association of GI producer groups (consejos reguladores) from Extremadura and **President of the Consejo Regulador de la Torta del Casar DOP**, delivered a presentation on the registered geographical indications from Extremadura Region ([for more information consult here the presentation](#)).

Mr Raúl Muñiz Cimas, Secretary General of Acrex and Director of the Consejo Regulador de la IGP Cordera de Extremadura, draw some conclusion on the socio-economic impact of geographical indications at regional level, as well as on the needs of this productions. In particular, Mr Muñiz recalled that registered GIs in Extremadura represent an economic value of more than 60 million euros. Their intangible value is enormous since they contribute to the promotion of both agricultural products and the Region, with an important impact in terms of touristic attractiveness of the Region.

In light of that, Mr Muñiz called for an increased support from public administrations in order to ensure that geographical indications are clearly and specifically included in the CAP strategic plans. In particular, GI producers should receive direct subsidies and should have a priority access to rural development measures. This positive discrimination would be justified by the important contribution of GIs to the development of rural areas. In fact, GIs contribute to the conservation of landscapes and biodiversity and promote as well collective organisation of producers and interaction between all the element of the supply chain.



To conclude, Mr Muñiz shared GI producers demand to be exempted from the implementation of environmental assessment, assuming that geographical indications by definition meet the highest standards in terms of sustainability.

The future of GIs in the framework of the new policies related to the consumer, the territory, the environment, Mr Guglielmo Garagnani, Vice-President of Consorzio del formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano

Mr Guglielmo Garagnani took the floor thanking the representatives of Acrex for sharing their view. He greeted the participants to the meeting on behalf of the President of the Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium, Mr Bertinelli, and the Director, Mr Deserti. Then he introduced the **objectives of the meeting launching two themes for the discussion.**

1. GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The first topic open to discussion was Geographical Indications and sustainability. Mr Garagnani recalled that in the framework of Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategy, sustainability has become an absolute driver for all EU policies. This is the case for the CAP with the eco-schemes, for Farm to Fork legislative initiative on nutritional and environmental labelling, but also for the revision of GI system with one pillar dedicated to GIs sustainability.

It is unclear what kind of impact all these initiatives can have on GI sector: what is conceived as a positive principle, risks having a negative impact if it takes the wrong turn (i.e. nutriscore labelling, stricter rules on animal welfare, etc...). For this reason, it is important that producers may have a forum of discussion and exchange on this principle, to turn it into a strength for GIs.

To stimulate the debate, Mr Garagnani brought two examples from Italy perceived as wrong choices from producers in Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium:

- The first example concerns **eco-schemes**: Italy has chosen to allocate the minimum amount of 875 million euros (25% of CAP resources) to 5 sustainability objectives:
 1. Zootechnical practices for reducing the use of drugs and increasing grazing;
 2. Cover crop between tree rows on permanent crops – orchards;
 3. Olive groves of landscape importance;
 4. Extensive use of permanent grassland;
 5. and diffusion of non-returnable crops for flowering plants that produce nectar for bees.

Parmigiano Reggiano breeders recognise the importance of the first objective of reducing drugs in breeding. Nevertheless, they are also confronted with an unsustainable bureaucracy in the implementation of this objective that is leading them not to adhere to eco-schemes. The same can be said for the fourth objective (extensive use of permanent grassland), which requires such restrictions in terms of crop defence and prohibition of using certain chemicals, making it impossible to be implemented in the Po Valley.

Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium would like to initiate a discussion with other AREPO producer representatives in order to gather comments and experiences to build a proposal on sustainability adapted to GIs.

2. GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

The second topic launched by Mr Garagnani concerned the **interlinkage between Geographical Indications and tourism**. It is clear that GIs have important and positive spill over effects on tourism in their regions of origin. Nevertheless, GI producers' representatives are not associated in every Region/Member State in the



discussion and development of policy for gastronomic tourism. It requires reflection to bring GIs rightfully into the debate for the definition of tourism policies, since agricultural sector and GIs are usually excluded.

DISCUSSION

A great number of GI producers from Extremadura participated in the meeting, taking the floor to present their point of view on the topics discussed.

They referred in particular to their own experience as small producers working in and maintaining a peculiar territory such as the “*dehesa*”.

Their territories are facing depopulation. Furthermore, they often struggle to communicate the excellence of their products as well as sustainability aspects to consumers.

Against this background, tourism could represent opportunities, by bringing consumers closer to GI products through **experiential tourism**¹ in order to showcase production and production methods.

The hotellery and restoration sectors could contribute too, by encouraging the use of PDO/PGI products in their activities.

Also using GIs as ingredients in processed products might represent an opportunity to explain consumers the multiple use of a GI product, under the conditions to not unduly exploit the reputation of a name used as an ingredient that should be truly valorised.

The AREPO team also reminded that both tourism and GIs used as ingredients have been objects of studies carried out by AREPO in recent years. AREPO published a study on GIs used as ingredients in 2021 and it also started working on the topic of GIs and tourism by collecting some feedback and inputs from its members in order to start a cooperation with other EU organisation active in the tourism sector, e.g. Necstour.

Mr Garagnani wrapped up the debate, stressing that the exchange held pointed out that GIs are not simply good for the territory and tourism. Experiential tourism was mentioned, as a specific sector of tourism that could create opportunities and that need the involvement of restaurants and hotels to unlock its potential. As a result, he encouraged participants and AREPO members **to further explore the possibility of having a specific legislation to regulate experiential tourism as well as the use of GIs in sectors other than direct sales and processing**. Producers and Consortia must be associated to every national/regional/local discussion around tourism.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the meeting, the President of AREPO, Ms Begoña **García Bernal**, stressed that the issues dealt with during the afternoon exchange were vital for the future of the GI system and identified a set of priorities for future AREPO activities:

1. First of all, **AREPO will continue working on the revision of GI regulation**, trying to get all the proposed amendments in the final text;
2. In 2024, AREPO team will start working more actively on the topic of **gastronomic experiential tourism**;
3. Furthermore, we will continue **monitoring** the policies directly or indirectly related to Geographical Indications, with a particular focus on **promotion policy**;

¹ A type of tourism that focuses on the experience of the traveller rather than the destination itself. It is a form of tourism that aims to introduce new cultures, new ways of life, new activities and new landscapes.



4. Finally, the President proposed to conduct a study on **how AREPO member Regions are supporting GI producers with their CAP strategic plans.**