

AREPO Activity report 2024

January - December 2024



The Association of European Regions for Products of Origin

The European network of regions and producer associations
that deals with products of quality and origin

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Part 1 | About 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.

AREPO aims **to promote and defend the interests of producers and consumers** of European regions involved in the valorisation of quality food products.



I. Member Regions

Our member Regions

France

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté
Bretagne
Centre-Val de Loire
Corse
Grand Est
Nouvelle-Aquitaine
Occitanie
Pays de la Loire
PACA

Italy

Emilia-Romagna
Friuli Venezia Giulia
Lombardia
Piemonte
Puglia
Sardegna
Toscana
Valle d'Aosta
Veneto

Greece

Attiki
Ditiki Makedonía
Épiros
Kentrikí Makedonía
Kriti
Thessalía

Spain

Andalucía
Catalunya
Castilla y León
Extremadura
Euskadi

Germany

Baden-Württemberg
Bayern
Hessen

Portugal

Açores

Poland

Malopolska (obs.)

Croatia

Istria (obs.)

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AREPO currently represents **36 Regions** (34 members and 2 observers) from 8 different Member States.

► New members

One Region joined AREPO as full members in 2024:

► **Sardegna** Region (Italy)



**REGIONE AUTÒNOMA
DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA
DELLA SARDEGNA**

Logo of the **Sardegna** Region



Find out more about the **Sardegna** Region and its quality and origin products on [the dedicated page](#) on AREPO website!

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II. Associate members

The College of **associate members** is a consultative body composed of organisations that have signed a **partnership agreement with AREPO** and wish to sit in it: thematic, territorial and scientific organisation, networks, etc.

► In 2024, AREPO associate members are the following:

ERG SYAL		European Research Group on Localized Agri-food Systems Find their website here
ERPA		European Rural Poultry Association Find their website here
Euro Foie Gras		European Federation of Foie Gras Find their website here
FedeLIS		Federation of Label Rouge, GIs and TSGs Find their website here
FEVAO		French Federation of Designation of Origin Meats Find their website here

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FFIGIA



French Federation of Industrial and Artisanal Geographical Indications

Visit their website [here](#)

UniPR



Università di Parma

Find their website [here](#)

To find out more about our associate members and partnership agreements, take a look on [our dedicated page](#) on AREPO website!

III. Scientific council

AREPO is supported in its work by a **Scientific Council**, a collegial consultative body composed of experts from universities and research centres of its member regions, aiming to develop cooperation between the research world and AREPO's member regions and producers.

The Scientific Council welcomes academics and researchers from research centres and universities situated in some of our member regions in Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, as well as experts in the field of Geographical Indications and Intellectual property coming from non-member regions or countries not represented within AREPO (Austria, England).

Members of the steering body of the Scientific Council, the **AREPO Scientific Committee**, contributed to the meetings of the working group on the GI revision.

[Click here](#) to read the detailed description of the structure of AREPO Scientific Council.

IV. Partner organisations

Partner organisations are organisations that share the same interests as AREPO and with which AREPO collaborates regularly.

This collaboration is not formalised by a partnership agreement as is the case for associate members. However, partner organisations that are interested may be associated as AREPO associate members at a later stage.

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► AREPO partner organisations are the following:

Agriregions		Support to the maintenance of the role of Regions as managing authorities in CAP Strategic Plans and cooperation on the Farm to Fork strategy.
AREFLH		Cooperation on promotion policy and on the Farm to Fork strategy.
AREV		Collaboration on the GI review.
Copa-Cogeca		Collaboration on the GI review and on the proposals for the Annual Work Programme and the revision of Promotion Policy
EFOW		Collaboration on sustainability and the GI review, collaboration on the proposals for the Annual Work Programme and the revision of Promotion Policy.
Euromontana		Exchange and collaboration concerning the optional quality term "mountain product". Collaboration on the response to the EC public consultation on Promotion policy. Collaboration in the framework of two EU projects.

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European
Countryside
Movement



Collaboration and exchange of information on the Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas ([RUMRA](#)).

FAO



Collaboration and exchange on GIs and GIs sustainability, especially with the Food and Nutrition division (ESN). AREPO is often invited at FAO conferences to present the role of local actors in the development and strengthening of GIs.

IFOAM



Cooperation in the field of organic farming.

OriGIn



Collaboration on the development of sustainable strategies and tools for GIs. Collaboration in order to defend together geographical indications at EU level, adopting a common position and lobbying strategy concerning the CAP and cooperating on the GI review. In addition, collaboration on the proposals for the Annual Work Programme and the revision of Promotion Policy.

Qualivita



Cooperation for the promotion of new Geographical Indications.

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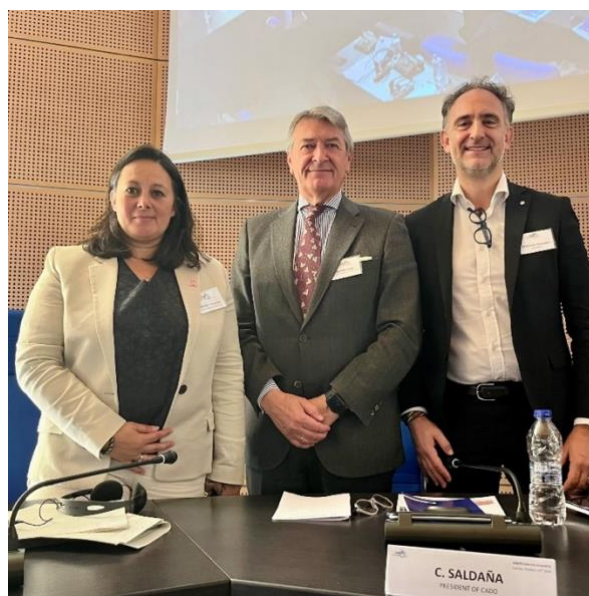
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V. Executive board

During its General Assembly held in Thessaly on 22 October 2024, AREPO members warmly welcomed the **outgoing Executive Board**, elected in 2021, which presented a comprehensive report highlighting the achievements of its three-year mandate. Under the **Presidency of the Extremadura Region**, with the **Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium as Vice-President** and the Region of **Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes as Treasurer**, the Board played a key role in reinforcing AREPO's political influence and visibility in the European debate on Geographical Indications, particularly during the legislative reform process.

Following this, the General Assembly proceeded to elect a new Executive Board. Members had the opportunity to hear from the candidates before the vote. **Mr Alessandro Beduschi**, Regional Minister for Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of the **Lombardy Region**, was elected **President**, presenting a strong commitment to enhancing AREPO's role and highlighting the strategic value of GIs for sustainability and rural development. **Mr César Saldaña**, President of the Conferencia Andaluza de Denominaciones de Origen (CADO), was elected **Vice-President**, underlining the cultural and territorial relevance of GIs. **Ms Temanuata Girard**, Vice-President for Agriculture and Food of the Centre-Val de Loire Region, was elected **Treasurer**, calling for greater innovation to support GI producers in times of crisis.



From left to right:

Ms Temanuata GIRARD | AREPO Treasurer
Mr César SALDAÑA | AREPO Vice-President
Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI | AREPO President

The newly elected Board reaffirmed AREPO's mission to promote and protect Geographical Indications as key assets for territorial development in Europe. It will be in charge for three years, until October 2027. ([Click here to read the report of the GA](#)).



President

Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI

President of AREPO

and Regional Minister for Agriculture, Food Sovereignty
and Forestry of the Lombardy Region

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Vice president**Mr César SALDAÑA**

Vice president of AREPO for the College
of Producers' Representatives
and President of the Conferencia Andaluza de
Denominaciones de Origen (CADO)

Treasurer**Ms Temanuata GIRARD**

Treasurer of AREPO
and Vice-President for Agriculture and Food of the
Centre-Val de Loire Region

VI. Our team**► Office in Bordeaux****Secretary general****Mr Laurent GOMEZ**

Secretary general of AREPO
and Technical Advisor for Agriculture to the President
of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region

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► **Representation office in Brussels**

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Part 2 | European policies

I. EU quality policy

The process of **revision of the EU quality schemes ended with the entry into force of the new Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 on 13 May 2024**, after years of tireless work for AREPO to protect and strengthen EU Geographical Indication system.

AREPO closely monitored the final steps of the legislative process, particularly the drafting of the **Delegated Regulation** and the **Implementing Regulation**, which are essential for the proper implementation of the new framework. Adopted by the European Commission in October 2024, these two complementary acts complete the legal package and specify key elements of the new system.

AREPO kept its members informed and remains available to support their understanding and implementation of the new provisions.

As the culmination of AREPO's advocacy on GI policy, a **high-level conference titled “The new legal framework for EU Quality Products: opportunities & challenges for mountain and GI products”** was held on 10 April 2025 at the European Committee of the Regions. Organised in partnership with Euromontana and oriGIn EU within the framework of the EU-funded MOVING project, the event gathered institutional representatives, regional authorities, producer groups, and agri-food stakeholders to explore the implications of the new GI regulation.

The timing was particularly significant, as it took place on the eve of the formal signing of the new legislative text. The presence of key policymakers, including **MEP Paolo De Castro**, rapporteur for the revision, underlined the importance of this milestone. The conference offered a timely platform to reflect on the new regulation, its added value, and its implementation challenges—highlighting the strong link between AREPO's advocacy work on quality policy and stakeholder engagement at EU level.

Looking ahead, AREPO is working with partner organisations oriGIn EU and EFOW on a **GI Action Plan**: a set of non-legislative measures aimed at further supporting and strengthening the GI sector, particularly in light of the new regulatory framework.

II. Promotion policy

AREPO regularly participates in the Civil Dialogue Group of DG AGRI on promotion, as well as in the **Infoday on the promotion programme** ([click here](#) to see the presentations of the 2024 virtual event), in order to update its members.



Moreover, every year AREPO updates and shares with members the descriptive note on promotion policy. Find [here](#) the **note on 2024 calls for proposal** presenting priorities and calls from the work programme of promotion policy for 2024.

AREPO also presented [its inputs for the 2025 Annual work programme](#). Following the news of a drastic cut to the Promotion budget for 2025 (only €92 million entirely dedicated to simple programmes, with €0 allocated to the multi programmes and the EC own-initiatives), together with other 18 European agri-food sector organisations, we sent a joint [letter to the EU Ministers of Agriculture](#) and to the [Agricultural Permanent Representatives to the European Union](#), to express the

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concerns of the sector and urge the Commission to support the continuation of an inclusive Promotion policy and to restore the previous budget.

AREPO also continued monitoring the process of **revision of EU Promotion Policy** ([click here](#) to consult the position submitted to the related public consultation). The legislative proposal was expected to be published in June 2022. However, due to delays, **it hasn't been published during the previous EU legislature (2019-2024)**.

III. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)



European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen announced during her annual State of the Union speech on September 13th, 2023, the launching of a "**strategic dialogue**" on the **future of agriculture in the EU**, aimed at reducing polarisation in the agri-food policy debate. This dialogue, promoted at the EU Agri-Food days on December 6th, 2023, began in January 2024. 30 stakeholders from diverse sectors of the agri-food

industry were invited to address key questions such as improving perspectives for farmers and rural areas, supporting sustainable agriculture, leveraging knowledge and innovation, and promoting a thriving future for Europe's food system.

Alongside the Strategic Dialogue, the Commission has organised a series of **5 technical workshops** through which it consulted Member States' experts and key stakeholders represented within the Civil Dialogue Group on CAP Strategic Plans, to identify challenges and to assess needs in agriculture with a view to gather input for future policy developments, particularly the future CAP whose proposal should be ready in Autumn 2025.

The workshops were focused on five topics: **Resilience; Food Security; Sustainability; Solidarity and Rural Area; Governance and performance.**

As a member of the DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Group on CAP strategic plans, **AREPO participated in all this workshops' cycle** that started in December 2023 and finished in April 2024.



IV. EU trade policy

AREPO usually monitors EU Trade Policy as concerns the trade agreements signed between the EU and third countries. Its approach focuses especially on the **chapter dedicated to the list of GIs protected through the trade deal.**

AREPO updates yearly its Report on EU trade agreements. You can consult the last update [here](#).

Furthermore, AREPO has been invited to join and become a founding member of the **China-European Geographical Indications Development Alliance (GIDA)**, a platform aiming to foster collaboration between China and Europe in the recognition and protection of GIs.

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Working groups

- Members often request to set up **technical working groups on specific topics**, directly or indirectly related to quality schemes and product of origin.
- AREPO usually takes care of the **logistic organisation of the meeting and contribute to the exchange with its expertise on EU policies and legislative processes**, as well as any other developments at EU level.
- The region which proposed the topic is asked **to animate and moderate the group**, so that the agenda setting follows the interests and practical needs of the members.
- We have set up at the end of 2023 a **working group on regional quality schemes**, chaired by Euskadi and moderated by AREPO, whose meetings began in 2024.
- To support this work, an in-depth study on existing public regional quality schemes in AREPO member regions was carried out in collaboration with a group of students from the Food Identity Master's programme. The study was completed in November 2024 and is currently under review by AREPO's services.

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Part 3 | Strategic cooperation with EU institutions

► European Commission



We have maintained good institutional relations with the European Commission, in particular with the Commissioner for Agriculture, **Janusz Wojciechowski**, until the end of his mandate. He has always shown interest in our work and responded positively to our invitations to participate in conferences and public discussions, e.g. in the 5th edition of the “[European Event on Quality and Origin Products](#)”, organised in the framework of the Interreg Sudoe project AGROSMARTglobal, where Commissioner concluded the conference and opened the tasting of products from AREPO regions.

In the second half of 2024 we also started building a constructive relationship with the [new Commissioner for Agriculture, Christophe Hansen](#), who officially took office in December 2024. We have been developing relations with members of his cabinet and he has confirmed his participation in our next conference on Geographical Indications in Brussels, on 25-26 June 2025.

Relations with **M Diego Canga Fano**, Director of DG AGRI, in charge of Dissemination, Research and Geographical Indications, and acting Deputy Director General, remain excellent. The Director maintains an open and regular dialogue with our association, consulting us on specific ideas and proposals regarding policies and initiatives for the GI sector. He always welcomes our invitations to participate in meetings and events, as demonstrated by his recent participation in the meeting of our Executive Board on 2 April 2025.

Furthermore, AREPO has been regularly invited to high-level conferences of DG AGRI.

↻ Civil Dialogue Groups of DG AGRI

With the new programming period of the Common Agricultural Policy, the DG AGRI renewed the structure of the Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs). [In the new system, AREPO seats in the CDGs:](#)

- Quality and promotion
- Organic farming

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► Rural development

In June 2023, we launched an internal call for experts to give AREPO members the possibility to follow these meetings. As a result, we drafted a list of regional experts and producers from 15 AREPO member Regions, setting up an alternating system in order to give everyone the possibility to intervene as experts in the discussion with DG AGRI and other stakeholders. There is also the possibility [to follow the meetings as observers](#).

Our membership in the CDG on CAP strategic plans gave us direct access to [the technical workshops organised by DG AGRI to discuss about the future of the CAP](#).

➞ CAP network



On October 2022, the European Commission launched the new EU CAP Network, merging the European network for rural development (ENRD) and the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) network, into one single EU-level network.

As a member of the CDG on CAP strategic plans, [AREPO is also a member of the EU CAP network Assembly](#). This gave us the possibility to appoint a representative in order to participate in two subgroups, namely on CAP Strategic Plans implementation and Innovation and knowledge exchange.

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (SolKE): AREPO, through [Mr. Giorgio Trentin \(Veneto Region\)](#), actively participates in the SolKE subgroup, which focuses on developing transnational and cross-border operational groups, fostering innovation in collaboration with universities and agricultural enterprises. The subgroup also serves to identify and indicate events, as well as a platform to set up interregional groups between different Member States. AREPO in this sense is an example of how this could be done. It is an option for the Commission to look favourably on this type of project, which brings together the political side and the producer side.

CAP Strategic Plans Implementation: [Mr. Malone Rolland \(Bretagne Region\)](#) represents AREPO in this subgroup, which focuses on identifying common challenges and opportunities for collaboration in the implementation of CAP National Strategic Plans. Discussions have included strategies to address the current agricultural crisis and opportunities for improving quality in agricultural practices.

➞ Civil Dialogue Groups of DG Trade

AREPO participated in the [Civil Society Dialogue of DG TRADE](#) to monitor the evolution of bilateral free trade agreements, with particular attention to the protection of GIs.



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► European Parliament



European Parliament

The European Parliament **reacts positively to our demands**. During the past term, AREPO has established solid relations with several MEPs of the AGRI Committee sensitive to the topic of quality. Proof of this solid relationship is the objectives achieved in the revision of the EU Geographical Indications system. In fact, **many of AREPO amendments were included by rapporteur De Castro in his report**.

In 2024, AREPO's longstanding collaboration with **MEP Paolo De Castro** (S&D) culminated with his participation in our conference at the Committee of the Regions on April 10th, marking a key moment in his continued support for the GI sector before his term ended. In addition, **MEPs Anne Sander** (PPE) and **Irène Tolleret** also participated in this conference, which represented the last of many during the 2019-2024 legislation to which they contributed to and supported AREPO's work for the GI sector.

2024 has been a transitional year for the European Parliament, with **elections held in June**, followed by the constituent session on July 16th. During this phase, the re-election of Ms. Roberta Metsola as President of the European Parliament took place, along with the creation of new parliamentary committees and the election of committee chairs and vice-chairs. The new Committee on Agriculture, which will play a key role in shaping policies for quality food and agriculture, also began its work.

In this context, AREPO has been actively involved in the reconstitution of the European Parliament's **Intergroup on Wine, quality foodstuff and spirits**, which is now co-chaired by **MEPs Ester Herranz García** (PPE) and **Eric Sargiacomo** (S&D). This has given us the possibility to start identifying the new MEP that are sensitive to quality issues and building a new network of contact in the EP.

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► European Committee of the Regions (CoR)



European Committee of the Regions

AREPO is **often involved in contributing to the work of the NAT Commission** of the Committee of the Regions, providing its expertise on several topics. This highlights the recognition of AREPO as a key player in quality policy at the EU level.

AREPO Policy Officer, Francesca Alampi, assisted Ms. Karine Gloanec-Maurin, the CoR rapporteur, in developing the opinion on the revision of the EU Geographical Indication (GI) system. This included supporting meetings, drafting amendments, and providing policy recommendations.

The opinion, which was unanimously approved by the CoR plenary in November 2022, was informed by AREPO's research and collaboration with GI stakeholders.

This collaboration not only strengthens AREPO's role in shaping EU policy but also ensures that the interests of AREPO Regions and GI producers are well represented. The conference organised by AREPO at the CoR on April 10, 2024, marked the importance of this collaboration, providing a final platform to discuss the outcomes of the GI revision.

► European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)



Despite defending the importance of maintaining the management of the EU GI system under the DG AGRI of the European Commission, AREPO has actively engaged in an **open dialogue** with EUIPO, with the aim to understand and discuss the competences that EUIPO has developed on GIs as well as its relation with DG AGRI.

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Part 4 | European projects

I. MOVING | Horizon 2020



MOVING | MOUNTAIN Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green growth was a Horizon 2020 project (2020-2024) coordinated by the University of Córdoba, gathering 23 partner organisations. It ended on the 31 August 2024.

The project intended to build capacities and co-develop policy frameworks across Europe. It established new or upscaled value chains to contribute to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas to climate change.

The project has rolled-out its research activities and actions engaging relevant stakeholders through Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs) in 23 mountain regions from 16 countries. These regions represented the wide diversity of mountain areas in Europe and neighbouring countries.

AREPO actively contributed to the project by engaging regional and local authorities, as well as producer associations, from the mountain areas of its member Regions. In addition, AREPO supported the research on quality and value products, co-authoring the cross-case comparison report on value chains across 23 mountain regions, and taking the lead on the section focused on quality schemes. AREPO also contributed to the development of a Policy Brief, identifying key challenges and formulating recommendations to enhance VCs contribution to sustainability and resilience of mountain areas. During the last phase of the project, AREPO has actively contributed to policy evaluation and dissemination of project's results. In particular, in 2024:

- We finalised and published the result of [a survey on the implementation of the optional quality term \(OQT\) mountain product](#), realised in collaboration with Euromontana. The OQT report is available [here](#).
- We participated in the [MOVING Steering Committee meeting and Scientific Conference](#) held in Cordoba in March 2024. AREPO participated in the conference presenting the preliminary results of the "Analysis of the implementation of the EU optional quality term (OQT) "mountain product".
- AREPO organised the conference ["The new legal framework for EU Quality Products: opportunities and challenges for mountain and GI products"](#) (Brussels, 10 April 2024), together with Euromontana and oriGIn EU gathering EU Institutions, Regional governments, Producers of mountain and of GIs products, and EU stakeholders from the agri-food sector, to discuss the new EU legal framework for Quality Products and to present the OQT report.
- Finally, AREPO supported AEIDL in the organisation of the [Final Policy Conference](#). The event was strategically timed to discuss the pivotal role of mountains and mountain value chains in achieving Europe's political targets by 2030 and shaping the post-2027 EU political agenda.



For developing those activities, AREPO received a **total budget of 85.506,87 euros** (fully funded).

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II. GI SMART | Horizon Europe



GISMART

GI SMART is a 4-year research project (2024-2028) that will provide evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the contribution of geographical indications to sustainable territorial development and the objectives of the EU Farm to Fork strategy. To

achieve this, GI SMART will develop tools and methodologies to foster the implementation of sustainability strategies by GIs producers, ensure their recognition by consumers, and formulate policy recommendations for a better design of GI policies.

The **project budget** is approximately **3 million euros**, fully funded (thus no expenses are expected from AREPO, as all activities will be 100% financed). **AREPO will have a budget of 220,000 euros** distributed over the 4 years to carry out these activities. The funding follows a lump sum approach, which ensures flexibility in budget management. The first tranche of pre-financing, amounting to €54,174.91, was received in October 2024, and the remaining half will be received between June and July 2025.

The **consortium** consists of 17 partners (15 beneficiaries and 2 associated partners), spanning 10 countries. The partners include leading universities, NGOs, and stakeholder organizations in the GI sector, aiming to provide a multi-stakeholder approach to ensure the project's objectives are achieved with maximum impact. The consortium is **coordinated by INRAE**, the French agricultural research institute. Several members of AREPO's scientific committee are involved in the project. AREPO has engaged various partner organisations: Euromontana, oriGIn International, and EFOW.



GI SMART kick-off meeting in Paris, October 2024

AREPO main role will involve leading **communication, dissemination, exploitation and stakeholder engagement**, in collaboration with Euromontana. Furthermore, AREPO will contribute to **policy analysis** of GI at regional level and develop **policy recommendations** based on project outcomes.

The main activities on **communication, dissemination and exploitation** realised in 2024 include the following:

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- From June to October 2024, AREPO and Euromontana collaborated on drafting the **Communication, Dissemination, Exploitation, and Stakeholder Engagement (CDESE) Plan**, finalised in October 2024. The Plan is essential to **maximising the project's impact**, ensuring its relevance with stakeholders and end users. It outlines key audiences, tools, and channels for disseminating project outputs, incorporates project branding, along with specific proposals for participation in third-party events.
- AREPO participated in the **kick-off meeting of the project held in Paris** (October 29-30, 2024). In collaboration with Euromontana, AREPO presented the work packages on Communication, Dissemination, Exploitation and Stakeholder Engagement and held an inception **workshop on exploitation**. The workshop was focused on the Key Exploitable Results (KERs) expected from GI SMART, to initiate discussions on the project's exploitation opportunities, ensuring partner alignment throughout the project to maximize GI SMART uptake and impact.
- In December, Euromontana organised an Internal communication webinar with support from AREPO, where we presented the stakeholder engagement strategy and related activities.

Setting up of the GI SMART Community Platform:

AREPO is responsible for creating and coordinating a European multi-actor network of stakeholders from the GI sector including producers, certification bodies, consumers, and public administrations (at national and regional levels). The aim of the network is to monitor and contribute to project activities. The CDESE Plan also includes the "Working Plan for Setting up the GI SMART Community Platform," outlining its objectives, composition, and activities. The platform will be structured with two levels of interaction:



- ▶ **National Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs):** In France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Switzerland, and the UK, these MAPs facilitate national collaboration.
- ▶ **European Multi-Actor Platform (EU MAP):** A central hub for stakeholders from across Europe, addressing cross-border challenges and shaping EU-wide sustainability policies for GIs.

National MAPs will hold three online meetings throughout the project to engage stakeholders, discuss preliminary results, and present final outcomes. The EU MAP will support the development of project deliverables, facilitate exchanges, and promote long-term stakeholder engagement.

As responsible for stakeholder engagement and coordination, our intention is to involve our member regions and producers as much as possible so they can contribute to and benefit from the project activities. To do that, between June and October 2024, AREPO carried out essential **preparatory work** for the platform, including **stakeholders mapping** across member regions, GI SMART partners, and relevant projects.

Between October 2024 and the end of the year, work focused on the setup of the Community Platform, including the creation of a **stakeholder database**, gathering initial contacts, and preparing the **registration form** in eight languages. **Stakeholder outreach** will be a key focus for 2025 to establish a solid foundation for the Community Platform. The first national MAP meetings and the launch event for the EU MAP are scheduled for the first half of 2025. Finally, as WP leader, AREPO is part of the

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project's Executive Committee and participates in bi-monthly meetings, contributing to the monitoring and evaluation of GI SMART's progress and ensuring alignment with project goals.

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Part 5 | Events

I. AREPO events

➔ AREPO General Assembly in Brussels | Belgium, 10th April 2024



AREPO General Assembly in Brussels, April 2024

AREPO's first General Assembly of 2024 was held in Brussels on 10 April 2024. This plenary meeting was organised in the premises of the Representation office of Toscana Region in Brussels.

The Assembly voted on key points, including the President's report, the 2023 financial accounts, the provisional 2024 accounts, and a proposal to update the membership fee to €6,000 due to inflation. Additionally,

the candidature of the Association of Andalusian PDOs and PGIs (CADO) for the vice-presidency of AREPO was presented by César Saldaña, President of CADO.

In the thematic part, there were updates on EU policies, including activities of the new CAP network, regional quality schemes, promotion policy, the future of the CAP, and updates on EU projects such as Horizon 2020 Moving and GI SMART, presented by AREPO's policy officers.

[Click here for the full report.](#)

➔ The new legal framework for EU Quality Products: opportunities & challenges for mountain and GI products | Brussels, 10th April 2024

On April 10th, a high-level conference on "[The new legal framework for EU Quality Products: opportunities & challenges for mountain and GI products](#)" was held at the **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)** to address the new EU legal framework for Geographical Indications (GIs) and quality products. Hosted by CoR member Karine Gloanec-Maurin, the event brought together EU Institutions, regional governments, producers of mountain and GI products, and agri-food sector stakeholders to explore the implications of the new



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regulation and how to ensure the unique characteristics of these products are preserved within the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other EU legislation.

Organised by **AREPO**, **Euromontana**, and **oriGIn EU** within the framework of the EU-funded **MOVING** project (MOUNTain Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green Growth), this event took place at an optimum moment, the day before the signing of the new legislative text. Furthermore, it allowed to reflect on the role of EU quality schemes in the sustainable development of rural and remote areas, with a particular focus on mountainous regions.

[Click here for more information.](#)

➔ AREPO General Assembly in Larissa | Thessaly, 23rd-24th October 2024



Participants at the AREPO General Assembly in Larissa, Thessaly, October 2024

Thessaly region (Greece) hosted AREPO second General Assembly in 2024, in the vibrant city of **Larissa**. The Assembly, held at the Regional Council Auditorium on 23 October, drew together representatives from regions and GI producers across Europe, to **elect the new Board of the Association** and to discuss the EU's upcoming agricultural agenda and the first steps of EU-funded GI SMART project.

On October 24, the Region of Thessaly organised two **technical visits**, allowing participants to experience first-hand the region's agri-food expertise. Attendees visited the Hotos cheese factory, renowned for its traditional production methods that highlight the unique flavors of Greek cheese, particularly **PDO cheeses Feta and Manouri**. They also explored the **Domaine D. Migas winery**, where innovative vinification techniques meet long-standing regional wine traditions. [Click here for the full report.](#)

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II. Other events involving AREPO

➔ EU foresight workshop (MOVING) | Brussels, 11 January 2024

AREPO dealt with the organisation of this event as of summer 2023. This workshop brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss scenarios and policy options for mountain areas at the European scale. Read more [here](#).

➔ MOVING final policy conference: A Future for Mountain Areas in Post-2027 EU Priorities | Brussels, 13-14 June 2024

Organised by the European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL) and hosted by AREPO within the framework of the EU-funded H2020 MOVING project (MOUNTAIN Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green Growth), the event was strategically timed to discuss the pivotal role of mountains and mountain value chains in achieving Europe's political targets by 2030 and shaping the post-2027 EU political agenda. Read more [here](#).

➔ GI SMART project: Kick-off meeting | Paris, 29-30 October 2024

On October 29-30, the Horizon Europe project GI SMART held its kick-off meeting in Paris, hosted in the premises of INRAE – National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, coordinator of the project. Additionally, dedicated sessions focused on communication, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement, led by AREPO and Euromontana, emphasised strategies to increase project visibility and impact. The two organisations also held an interactive exploitation workshop, equipping partners with approaches to maximize the project's long-term outcomes and benefits for the GI community. Read more [here](#).

➔ The Role of Origin in the Sustainability of Localised Food Systems | Parma, 20-22 November 2024

The Department of Economic and Business Sciences of the University of Parma together with Origin for Sustainability organised from 20 to 22 November 2024, in Parma, an international conference dedicated to the topic of Sustainability in products of origin. The event, titled “*The Role of Origin in the Sustainability of Localised Food Systems*”, brought together university researchers, producer groups, and experts from national and international institutions, such as FAO and AREPO, to develop a broad and transversal discussion on the many issues that sustainability poses for typical products and their related production systems. AREPO Policy Officer, Francesca Alampi, presented the GI SMART Community Platform and moderated a workshop on “Shaping New Geographical Indication: A GI SMART Perspective”. Read more [here](#).

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Part 6 | Communication strategy

AREPO constantly work to enhance the visibility and promotion of its initiatives and actions through a communication strategy thought to connect with and engage its members as well as a wider audience belonging to the agri-food sector. [This communication effort involves a living website and an increased focus on active participation across social media platforms.](#)

I. AREPO website



A new website was [published in April 2022](#). A more catchy and dynamic graphic design for a more user-friendly site where members could stay up to date and find all the news concerning AREPO activities and the EU policies followed, as well as being able to share it on social networks.

We also created a section dedicated to a series of tools for GIs where you will find:

- [AREPO publications and studies](#);
- [Bibliography](#) on studies on Geographical Indications and related issues;
- [Map on training offers of universities of our member regions](#), providing courses entirely dedicated to geographical indications and quality schemes;
- [Existing databases related to GIs](#) and EU quality schemes.

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II. AREPO social networks

AREPO social media promote the activities of the Association among its members and towards external audience. They give **priorities to news on GIs and EU quality policy**, as well as on **EU agricultural policy and all related issues**. These channels are also used to further **disseminate activities and key results of the EU projects** in which AREPO is involved as partner.

In general, we experience a good engagement rate on social media, considering that AREPO's actions generally target a very specific agri-food audience. Social media interactions typically involve other organizations and institutional accounts, particularly EU Institutions and Members of the European Parliament and the official accounts of our member regions.

Social networks		Find us	Followers
	Facebook	@arepoquality	748 followers and 713 likes
	Linked In	AREPO Quality	802 followers
	X	@arepoquality.eu	378 followers

AREPO

Activity report

2024

January - December 2024

AREPO | **Association of European Regions for Products of Origin**



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