

## PRESS RELEASE

### *EU GI stakeholders unite in Brussels to shape the future of Geographical Indications*

Brussels – 26 June 2025

The European GI community gathered in Brussels on 25 and 26 June for a major conference that brought together more than 200 stakeholders - producers, European and national policymakers, regional authorities and researchers - from across the EU. Organised by oriGIn EU, EFOW, and AREPO, in the framework of the [GI SMART project](#), the event provided a platform for vibrant discussions on the current state and future prospects of Geographical Indications (GIs) in the EU.

The conference was opened by **EU Agriculture and Food Commissioner Christophe Hansen** who underlined: *"For 30 years, the GIs have been a proven system, granting recognition to the most emblematic and prestigious products that represent the true taste of Europe. These quality labels open up a wealth of opportunities, offering a competitive edge to producers and rural areas while enhancing the economy. This conference is a unique opportunity to share innovative ideas and build partnerships, aiming to drive us collectively into a stronger and better future for the GIs for the next 30 years. By promoting awareness and expanding international markets, we can ensure that GIs remain a true EU success story and a source of pride and protection for generations to come."*

**The Polish Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Adam Nowak**, underlined: *"Food security, improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and increasing its resilience to crises as well as stabilisation of farmers' incomes and strengthening their position in the supply chain were among the priorities of Polish Presidency. Products with geographical indications not only support the income of farmers and producers, but also create jobs, promote sustainable resource management and contribute to economic growth in rural areas. They are a symbol of European quality and tradition – values that we must support in a changing world."*

The discussion emphasised the extraordinary diversity of GI products, reflecting the vitality and strong engagement of the GI sector across Europe. Participants raised several key concerns: uneven GI uptake across regions due to gaps in resources and capacity; regulatory and legal uncertainties, particularly regarding the scope and enforcement of GI protection in the EU; high costs associated with protection in third countries and online; and insufficient consumer awareness. They also underscored the pressing need to support young and small-scale producers, strengthen climate resilience within the GI framework, and better connect GIs to tourism and regional development strategies. *"Geographical Indications are valuable assets delivering economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits,"* said **oriGIn EU President Charles Deparis**. *"Yet, this conference has clearly shown that to fully unlock their potential, we must improve legal protection and enforcement, broaden access and support for producers, and enhance the visibility of GIs among consumers."*

**Alessandro Beduschi, President of AREPO**, reiterated the essential role of regions in supporting GIs, both as implementing authorities and as drivers of innovative solutions. He announced a **Europe-wide survey to evaluate the implementation of the new GI Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 and assess the functioning of the current system**. This initiative, supported by AREPO-EFOW-oriGIn EU is developed under the GI SMART project. It will provide essential data and stakeholder feedback to inform future policymaking, including the upcoming European Commission GI Action Plan announced by Commissioner Hansen. *“This conference is not the end, but the beginning of a wider movement,”* said Alessandro Beduschi. *“We want policies that are grounded in evidence, but above all in the voices of those who live and work within the GI system. This is why we invite all GI stakeholders to engage with the GI SMART Community Platform launched today to help co-design the future of EU GI policy”*

**Riccardo Ricci Curbastro, President of EFOW**, thanked EU decision-makers who joined the discussion and expressed their support for GIs: Commissioner Christophe Hansen, the Polish Presidency, Member States representatives and Members of the European Parliament, in particular **Eric Sargiacomo, co-chair of the Wine, Quality and Spirits Intergroup, as well as vice-chairs Enikő Győri and Carlo Fidanza**. He delivered a strong message to the European institutions and Member States: *“In a world marked by geopolitical instability and trade pressures, a well-supported GI policy is more vital than ever to ensure the resilience and autonomy of the EU agrifood model.”* He called for GIs to be placed at the heart of the next Common Agricultural Policy (post-2027), with dedicated funding, regulatory support, and measures to foster sustainability, competitiveness, and protection in both EU and global markets. He also urged the European Commission to publish, as soon as possible, the Geographical Indications Action Plan. *“2026 must be the year where this vision becomes a reality—through a roadmap co-created with producers.”*, he concluded.

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## About GI SMART

GI SMART is a 4-year research project that will provide evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the contribution of geographical indications (GIs) 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.

## About the organisers

**AREPO** - the Association of European Regions for Products of Origin, is a network of regions and producer associations that deals with products of origin and EU quality schemes. It represents 35 European regions and over 800 associations of producers for over 60% of European GIs.

**EFOW** - the European Federation of Origin Wines, is the Brussels-based organisation representing PDO and PGI wines towards European institutions. As the voice of origin wines, our mission is to protect and promote the GI concept in all policy areas.

**oriGIn EU** is the European branch of oriGIn (Organisation for a network of Geographical Indications). Its mission is to advocate for the protection and promotion of products whose quality and reputation are linked to their geographical origin, a concept known as a geographical indication and/or designation of origin. OriGIn EU represents individual European GIs groups as well as national GIs organisations.