

AREPO

Activity report

2025

January - December 2025



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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About AREPO

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

Ditiki Makedonia
Épiros
Kentriki Makedonia
Kriti
Thessalia

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 **35 Regions** (33 members and 2 observers) from **8 different Member States**. In 2025, three Italian regions, Abruzzo, Calabria and Liguria, showed interest in joining AREPO as observers and they are currently in the process of adhering to the Association.

II. College of Producer Representatives

The College of **Producer Representatives** ensures that the voices of producers from AREPO member regions are heard. It is currently chaired by the **Conferencia Andaluza de Denominaciones de Origen (CADO)**, which represents producers from the Andalusia region.

This college nominates the candidate for the association's vice-presidency, who is then elected by the General Assembly.

III. 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.

► New members:

In February 2025, AREPO welcomed **Ecovalia** (Spanish Professional Association of Organic Production) as a new associate member. As a competent and recognized organization for producers and professionals from the organic sector, Ecovalia plays a crucial role in advancing organic agriculture in the EU and can assist by providing the necessary expertise in this domain to AREPO.

► In 2025, AREPO associate members are the following:

ERG SYAL		<p>European Research Group on Localized Agri-food Systems</p> <p>Find their website here</p>
ERPA		<p>European Rural Poultry Association</p> <p>Find their website here</p>

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Euro Foie Gras		<p>European Federation of Foie Gras</p> <p>Find their website here</p>
FedeLIS		<p>Federation of Label Rouge, GIs and TSGs</p> <p>Find their website here</p>
FEVAO		<p>French Federation of Designation of Origin Meats</p> <p>Find their website here</p>
FFIGIA		<p>French Federation of Industrial and Artisanal Geographical Indications</p> <p>Visit their website here</p>
UniPR		<p>Università di Parma</p> <p>Find their website here</p>
Ecovalia		<p>Spanish Professional Association of Organic Production</p> <p>Visit their website here</p>

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

IV. 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.

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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.

V. 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.

► AREPO partner organisations are the following:

Agiregions	Cooperation on CAP implementation and the role of regions in CAP Strategic Plans, including exchanges on rural development priorities and innovation.
AREFLH	 <p>Cooperation on promotion policy and on the Farm to Fork strategy.</p>
AREV	 <p>Collaboration on the GI review.</p>
Copa-Cogeca	 <p>Collaboration on the GI review and on the proposals for the Annual Work Programme and the revision of Promotion Policy</p>

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EFOW		<p>Collaboration on sustainability and the GI review, collaboration on the proposals for the Annual Work Programme and the revision of Promotion Policy.</p>
Euromontana		<p>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.</p>
European Countryside Movement		<p>Collaboration and exchange of information on the Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas (RUMRA).</p>
FAO		<p>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.</p>
IFOAM		<p>Cooperation in the field of organic farming.</p>
oriGIn		<p>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.</p>
Qualivita		<p>Cooperation for the promotion of new Geographical Indications.</p>

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VI. Executive board

During its General Assembly held in Thessaly on 22 October 2024 ([click here to read the report of the GA](#)), AREPO members elected a new Executive Board, that will be in charge for three years, until October 2027:

- **Mr Alessandro Beduschi**, Regional Minister for Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of the Lombardy Region, was elected **President**;
- **Mr César Saldaña**, President of the Conferencia Andaluza de Denominaciones de Origen (CADO), was elected **Vice-President**;
- **Ms Temanuata Girard**, Vice-President for Agriculture and Food of the Centre-Val de Loire Region, was elected **Treasurer**.



From left to right:
Ms Temanuata GIRARD | AREPO Treasurer
Mr César SALDAÑA | AREPO Vice-President
Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI | AREPO President

The new AREPO Executive Board met for the first time in Brussels on 2 April 2025, at the seat of the Emilia-Romagna Region Representation Office.

A key highlight was the strategic dialogue with **Diego Canga Fano**, Acting Deputy Director-General of the **European Commission (DG AGRI)**, focusing on the priorities for EU Geographical Indications (GIs) policy. Discussions covered the need to:

- enhance consumer awareness of GI labels through retail, catering, tourism, and education,
- better support small and medium-sized GIs,
- promote GIs via public procurement, and
- explore the creation of a European GI sustainability award.

The Board also reviewed the 2024 accounts and the 2025 budget forecast. Planning updates were shared for the next General Assemblies (Brussels in June, Barcelona in October), the 2026 European GI promotional event, and the GI SMART Horizon Europe project, including the launch of its Community Platform during the conference in June 2025.

Finally, updates were presented on AREPO's involvement in major international GI events and ongoing technical working groups.

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President

Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI

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

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

VII. 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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Ms Alexandra DURIEZ

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► Representation office in Brussels

Policy officer	Policy officer
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► External staff

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European policies

Part 2 | European policies

I. Vision for Agriculture and Food

On 19 February 2025 the European Commission (EC) published the [Vision for Agriculture and Food](#). It was proposed as a priority initiative for the first 100 days of this Commission's mandate, led by Executive Vice-President Fitto and Commissioner for Agriculture Hansen, under the guidance of President von der Leyen.



It sets out a vision for Europe's agri-food system for 2040 and beyond to secure its long-term competitiveness, attractiveness and sustainability. The document provides for broad guidelines and ambitions without specifying how they will be implemented, but listing a series of forthcoming strategic or legislative texts that will clarify this aspect.

AREPO services prepared an analysis of the text to start identifying the role of GIs in the agriculture strategy of the new European Commission for the next five

years, as well as to identify potential areas and initiatives where GIs might be relevant and find a place even if not explicitly mentioned in the communication published ([Click here to read the analysis](#)).

Under the priority "Connection" aiming to make rural areas more attractive by fostering fair living and working conditions in rural areas and valuing food, EC set **promoting further the uptake of geographical indications as a key action**. Even if no concrete actions or engagement are proposed, explicitly including GIs in the Vision reaffirms firstly their recognition as key tools for rural development as well as guarantees that GIs remain in the EU agenda for the next legislature.

Particularly, this **paves the way for the possibility of developing a EU Action Plan for geographical indications** (consult the following paragraph for further information).

Furthermore, GIs can support and be embedded in other core actions of the Vision, that AREPO started to closely monitor, such as the EU Promotion Policy, the On-farm Sustainability Compass (a voluntary benchmarking system for on-farm sustainability assessments, developed based on a bottom-up, participatory and 'customer-driven' approach), the review of the animal welfare legislation, the Generational Renewal Strategy and the revision of the legal framework on public procurement.

AREPO also participated in the [conference on the Vision for Agriculture and Food](#) held in Brussels on 8 May 2025.

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II. EU quality policy

► The new GI Regulation and the path to an Action Plan

After **the entry into force of the Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 on 13 May 2024**, AREPO began a reflection process together with its partners EFOW and oriGIn EU, as well as in dialogue with the European Commission, to understand how to keep ensuring support and strategic guidance to the EU GI system.

For this reason, the three organisations started developing some proposals for a **European GI Action Plan**: a comprehensive set of non-legislative measures aimed at promoting GIs across the Union. Such a plan would serve to consolidate the achievements of the reform and support the development of the sector, to the benefit of both producers and consumers.

► The Brussels conference: a milestone moment

The **conference on Geographical Indications held in Brussels on 25–26 June 2025** represented a key moment of collective reflection.



Titled *“A Producers’ Vision for the EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications & Launch of the GI SMART Community Platform”*, it aimed to contribute to shaping the EU Action Plan for GIs by bringing forward the practical challenges and expectations of GI producers.

Furthermore, the topics addressed were not only timely and relevant for producers, but also fully aligned with the research agenda of the **GI SMART** project.

Conference on Geographical Indications, Brussels, June 2025
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► Key themes from the five panels

Structured around five thematic panels, the event offered a rich and multifaceted exploration of the current challenges and opportunities linked to GIs in Europe:

- **Panel 1 – “Why choose the GI path?”**

Broadened the usual narrative surrounding GIs, which often centers on well-known products from Southern Europe, by bringing forward the voices of producers from less represented regions. By showcasing experiences from countries like the Netherlands, Czech Republic,

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Romania, Belgium, and Finland, the discussion highlighted the diversity of motivations and impacts associated with GIs and the importance of reinforcing the GI system.

- **Panel 2 – “Challenges arising from the EU Regulations”**

Shed light on the various challenges that GI producer groups face when implementing EU regulations, extending beyond the specific GI framework and rules. It explored how regulatory processes at the national and EU level could be made more practical and supportive for GI producers.

- **Panel 3 – “Economic challenges – building a competitive environment for GIs”**

Provided an opportunity to discuss the economic challenges faced by GI producers and the strategies they use to remain competitive in evolving markets. Discussions covered key issues such as market tools, the constraints of EU competition law, the role of promotion, and the rising costs of protecting GIs in the digital age.

- **Panel 4 – “Social challenges – GIs and the rural fabric”**

Addressed the social challenges faced by GI producers, highlighting how GIs serve not only as quality labels but as vital anchors for rural identity, cohesion, and generational renewal. Through diverse examples, from Jura’s Vin Jaune and Tokaj’s wine culture to Sardinian lamb and Irish whiskey, speakers underscored the importance of education, strong community governance, fair economic conditions, and cultural heritage in ensuring the long-term sustainability of GI systems across Europe.

- **Panel 5 – “Environmental challenges – promoting biodiversity and natural hab”**

Explored concrete experiences demonstrating how GIs are evolving from individual farming practices into territorial models of certified sustainability. Discussions highlighted the role of GIs as tools for environmental governance, resilience, and cohesion, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between sustainability, biodiversity, and international competitiveness.

► Institutional voices and political perspectives

The conference also saw the participation of **Commissioner for Agriculture, Christophe Hansen**, and **MEPs of the European Parliament Intergroup on Wine, Quality Food and Spirits**, especially **MEP Eric Sargiacomo, co-chair**, and **MEPs Enikő Győri and Carlo Fidanza, vice-chairs**.

“We must boost GI uptake, increase visibility, and strengthen consumer trust. Rather than new reforms, the priority is to implement the existing Regulation within a strategic framework that supports producers and raises awareness among consumers.”

— Commissioner Christophe Hansen

Commissioner Hansen stressed the need to boost GI uptake, especially in Member States with untapped potential, and noted that consumer recognition remains low. Rather than amending the recently adopted GI Regulation, he advocated for fully implementing it within a strategic framework aimed at increasing visibility, supporting producers, and raising consumer awareness.

The Commissioner’s main proposals included:

- targeted promotion campaigns;

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- the creation of an annual **EU GI Award**;
- stronger cooperation with supermarkets;
- exploring the use of GIs in **public procurement policies**, inspired by the organic sector;
- reinforcing GI protection through trade agreements;
- using platforms like the **GI SMART Community** to share best practices;
- **leveraging EU-funded innovation projects** to strengthen the credibility and sustainability of the GI system.

He concluded by reaffirming his personal and the Commission's commitment to working with stakeholders to ensure GIs continue to grow as a success story for Europe's agriculture and rural development.

In essence, the event demonstrated the practical relevance of ongoing research and confirmed the urgency of a shared European strategy to accompany the GI system into its next phase.

► AREPO's contribution and next steps

"This is the right moment to build a common strategy for the future of GIs. With the input of producers and regions, we can make sure that the Action Plan delivers concrete answers to real challenges."

— Alessandro Beduschi, President of AREPO

In his concluding remarks to the conference, the President of AREPO, **Alessandro Beduschi**, stressed the importance of capitalising on the momentum created by the 2024 reform and the launch of the new Vision for Agriculture and Food.

Looking ahead, he put forward a concrete proposal for **future action**:

- the launch of a **Europe-wide survey** to assess the early stages of implementation of the new GI Regulation.
- The results of this survey would help shape the upcoming European GI Action Plan, ensuring it reflects the real needs and experiences of stakeholders across the Union.



Mr **Alessandro BEDUSCHI** | AREPO President
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► 7th Forum on European Quality



Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI | AREPO President

President Beduschi was invited as a keynote speaker to the **7th Qualivita Forum on European Quality**, held in Siena (Italy) on 5 December 2025. On this occasion, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, Christophe Hansen, officially announced the launch of the EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications as of 2027, aimed at supporting and strengthening rural territories across Europe.

In his intervention, President Beduschi renewed the call for a strong European GI Action Plan capable of providing the sector with concrete measures, built through close dialogue with producers and territories. He highlighted in particular the need to reinforce promotion activities, ensure a meaningful role for GIs in public procurement, and fully exploit the link between Geographical Indications and sustainable tourism.

Emphasising that each PDO and PGI product tells the story of its community and landscape, he underlined how this connection can become a powerful driver of rural development.

Finally, he stressed that the future of GIs depends on the next generation, calling for adequate tools to facilitate the entry of young farmers and producers into the sector, while expressing concern about the future Common Agricultural Policy, warning that a weakened rural development framework would risk failing to address the specific needs of GI systems.

III. 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 2025 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 2025 calls for proposal** presenting priorities and calls from the work programme of promotion policy for 2025.

In April 2025, AREPO presented [its inputs for the 2026 Annual work programme](#), urging the Commission to continue defending this policy in a tangible manner, particularly by safeguarding its budget. In fact, despite including in the Vision for Agriculture and Food the priority of strengthening Promotion Policy, **the budget for the Annual Work Programme 2026 was expected to have a drastic reduction.**

Following the announce of the budget cuts to promotion, AREPO and other 17 European agri-food sector organisations sent a [joint letter to the Agricultural Permanent Representatives to the European Union](#), to express their concerns and to ask for a sizeable budget allowing promotion policy to function properly.



These actions proved effective, leading the European Commission to make an effort to provide a sizeable budget to the 2026 AWP ([Click here to know more](#)).

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In addition, AREPO contributed to the simplification of the implementation of promotion programmes. After consulting members actively involved in several promotion projects in the internal market and third countries, AREPO prepared a [document with its feedback on the Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2015/1831](#) and submitted it to the Unit in charge of Promotion policy.

IV. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

AREPO is a member of the DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groupe on CAP strategic plans.

Following the **5 technical workshops** to assess needs in agriculture and gather input for the future CAP, organised between December 2023 and April 2024, discussions on CAP post-2027 kept going on within this CDG.



The focus was on the simplification of the CAP and the reduction of the administrative burden for farmers, as well as the first elements and orientations emerging regarding the next legislative framework for the CAP and the possible proposal of a Single Fund, intended to merge several existing funding instruments into one financial tool.

These initial discussions anticipated the official presentation by the European Commission of its legislative proposals for [the future CAP](#) and the [creation of the Single Fund](#), which took place on 16 July 2025 ([Click here to read the analysis realized by AREPO services](#)). This marked the beginning of a new phase of institutional negotiations and stakeholder engagement around the post-2027 CAP.

During its General Assembly in Barcelona, AREPO organised a dedicated **thematic working group** to discuss with members the new proposals on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the CAP, with a specific focus on their implications for GIs. AREPO Policy Officers introduced the main elements of the legislative texts and outlined **a twofold approach**: a general assessment of the proposed MFF and CAP architecture, aimed at developing a consolidated AREPO position in cooperation with other EU regional networks, and a targeted analysis on GIs, with a view to strengthening collaboration with EU GI thematic networks.

The debate, enriched by contributions from AREPO member regions and partner networks, highlighted strong concerns regarding budget cuts, the proposed single fund, the weakening of the “common” nature of the CAP, and the marginalisation of regional governance. Several regional representatives stressed the need to preserve a meaningful role for regions, which are closest to producers and territorial needs, and underlined the strategic importance of GIs, calling for a dedicated action plan. While acknowledging that a complete reversal of the reform may be unlikely, participants agreed on the need for a united and critical regional stance to improve the proposals, clarify governance arrangements, and safeguard food sovereignty, agricultural competitiveness, rural development, and the future of Geographical Indications.

The debate ended with the agreement of issuing a press release. You can consult it [here](#).

V. Food Public Procurement

While awaiting the European Commission's proposal to revise the public procurement legal framework, expected in the fourth quarter of 2026, AREPO has worked to promote the use of public procurement and collective catering as strategic tools to support access to “good food” and to democratise the

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consumption of quality products. In this context, AREPO contributed to policy discussions at regional level, including during the *Assises régionales de l'alimentation* organised by the Centre-Val de Loire Region in October 2025, where the role of Geographical Indications and quality products in improving access to sustainable and high-quality food was discussed with institutional and sectoral stakeholders.

In parallel, AREPO closely followed policy developments related to the strengthening of farmers' position in the food supply chain. In this context, AREPO supported an amendment to the position adopted by the European Parliament (EP), calling on EU Member States to ensure that supply contracts awarded through public procurement procedures are sourced from agricultural and food products originating in the Union, with particular emphasis on local and seasonal products. The amendment also provides that priority should be given to products bearing EU Geographical Indications. This amendment was ultimately incorporated into the position adopted by the European Parliament.

VI. Tourism

In September 2025, AREPO was invited to participate in the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) Flagship on the Mediterranean Diet. In this context, AREPO will take part in a dedicated Working Group established for the period 2025–2027. The Working Group brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including Ministries of Tourism from the countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Region, local and regional authorities, academic institutions, SMEs and producers' associations, chambers of commerce, consumer organisations, civil society organisations, agri-food partnerships and clusters, as well as international and EU-level actors such as IFOAM, CIHEAM and DG REGIO.

Within this framework, AREPO will contribute in an advisory capacity to discussions aimed at defining strategies, sharing experiences and designing future initiatives under EUSAIR's Action dedicated to Sustainable Tourism. In particular, AREPO's involvement will focus on promoting the Mediterranean Diet and local, organic and Geographical Indication products as key drivers for sustainable tourism, cultural heritage valorisation and local territorial development.

The launch event of the flagship initiative was held in Bari on 29-30 September 2025.

The Working Group held its first online meeting on 1 December 2025 for discussing its functioning, objectives and rules of procedures.

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Strategic cooperation with EU institutions



Part 3 | Strategic cooperation with EU institutions

► European Commission



In 2025, AREPO maintained regular institutional relations with the European Commission, especially with DG AGRI senior management on geographical indications and EU quality policy developments. In particular, AREPO continued its constructive cooperation with **Mr Diego Canga Fano**, Director of DG AGRI, in charge of Dissemination, Research and Geographical Indications, and acting Deputy Director General. The Director regularly dialogues 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 participation in the meeting of our Executive Board, on 2 April 2025, and the Conference on Geographical Indications on 25-26 June 2025.

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

More importantly, AREPO continued to build relations with **Commissioner for Agriculture, Christophe Hansen**, (in office since December 2024) through exchange with his Cabinet and his [participation in our conference on Geographical Indications in Brussels](#), on 25-26 June 2025.

↻ Civil Dialogue Groups of DG AGRI

AREPO continued to contribute to DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups, ensuring that the perspective of regions and GI systems is reflected in EU policy discussions. AREPO holds seats in the CDGs on:

- Quality and promotion
- Organic farming
- Rural development

An internal rotation system enables members to participate as experts or observers, supporting broad representation across AREPO regions.

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](#).

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➔ CAP network



As a member of the Civil Dialogue Group on CAP Strategic Plans, AREPO is also a member of the **EU CAP Network Assembly** and can appoint representatives to participate in two sub-groups: **CAP Strategic Plans Implementation and Innovation and Knowledge Exchange**.

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (SoIKE): AREPO, represented by **Mr. Giorgio Trentin (Veneto Region)**, actively participated in the SoIKE subgroup. The subgroup supports innovation and knowledge exchange, including through transnational and cross-border cooperation and the development of Operational Groups. It also provides a space to share practices and identify opportunities for interregional collaboration. **AREPO warmly thanks Mr Trentin for his valuable contribution and long-standing commitment to representing the Association in this subgroup.** Following Mr Trentin's upcoming retirement in early 2026, AREPO will appoint a new representative to ensure continuity of engagement.



AREPO General Assembly, Brussels, June 2025 | Giorgio Trentin, Veneto Region

CAP Strategic Plans Implementation: **Mr. Malone Rolland (Bretagne Region)** represents AREPO in this subgroup. The discussions focus on common challenges and opportunities in the implementation of CAP National Strategic Plans, including exchanges on current policy priorities and approaches to improve the quality and sustainability of agricultural practices.

➔ Civil Dialogue Groups of DG Trade

AREPO participated in the **Civil Society Dialogues 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

AREPO continued to engage with MEPs, particularly those active in the AGRI Committee, and supported the reconstitution of the Intergroup on Wine, Quality Food and Spirits. Several MEPs contributed to the European Conference on Geographical Indications co-organised by AREPO, EFOR and origIn EU in Brussels (25–26 June 2025), namely **MEP Eric Sargiacomo, co-chair of the Intergroup, and MEPs Enikő Győri and Carlo Fidanza, vice-chairs.**

► European Committee of the Regions (CoR)



European Committee of the Regions

AREPO regularly contributes to the work of the NAT Commission of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), offering its technical expertise on issues related to agricultural quality and geographical indications.

In 2025, AREPO continued to support the CoR's rapporteur on the revision of the GI Regulation, **Karine Gloanec Maurin**. In particular, AREPO accompanied the rapporteur at the International Conference on GIs organised by DG AGRI and EUIPO in Alicante in January 2025, taking advantage of this occasion to strengthen dialogue with EUIPO. This included exchanges on potential cooperation in the context of the **EUIPO Liaison and User Group**, a forum for discussion on intellectual property issues, including geographical indications, and on exploring how to enhance coordination between the CoR, regions and EUIPO in matters relating to GI implementation and awareness.

Furthermore, AREPO started collaborating with the CoR on a **study on the role of regions in supporting geographical indications**. In the course of the last months of 2025, AREPO participated in the Scientific Board that contributed to drafting the concept note for the study and that will oversee its implementation by the selected contractors. AREPO will monitor the development of the survey designed to collect data, contribute to its dissemination, and will be able to access the final results for analysis within the framework of the GI SMART project.

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► **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.

AREPO participated in the [International Conference on Geographical Indications \(GIs\) entitled "Safeguarding Heritage, Cultivating Future,"](#) held on January 28-29 2025, at the EUIPO headquarters in Alicante, Spain.

► **International Organizations: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**

In 2025, AREPO initiated cooperation with the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** in the context of WIPO's efforts to promote the **Lisbon System** and its benefits for the international protection of appellations of origin and geographical indications. WIPO contacted AREPO with the objective of facilitating outreach to regional authorities and local stakeholders. In this framework, WIPO expressed interest in organising an information session in connection with a future AREPO General Assembly and requested AREPO's support in facilitating contacts with member regions, with a view to potentially organising additional awareness-raising meetings at regional level.

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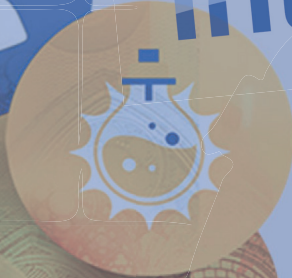
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HORIZON
EUROPE



European projects

Part 4 | European projects

I. GI SMART | Horizon Europe



GISMART

GI SMART is a four-year EU-funded research project (2024–2028) with a total budget of around **€3 million**. The project aims to strengthen the contribution of Geographical Indications (GIs) to the sustainable development of rural areas and to the

objectives of the *Farm to Fork* strategy. It is coordinated by INRAE and involves 17 partners from 10 countries, including universities, NGOs, and organisations active in the GI sector.



GI SMART Consortium Meeting in Parma, July 2025

AREPO has been allocated a budget of **€220,000** over the four years, fully financed under the lump sum scheme (meaning no co-funding is required from members). In October 2024, AREPO already received the first pre-financing instalment of **€54,174.91**, with the second instalment expected at the end of summer 2025. This funding will support AREPO's leadership role in communication, dissemination, exploitation and stakeholder engagement, in collaboration with Euromontana, as well as contributions to policy analysis on GIs at regional level.

► Main activities in 2025

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- **Launch of the GI SMART Community Platform:** In the first semester, AREPO focused on setting up the Community Platform, which brings together stakeholders of the GI sector at both national and European level. The platform is structured on two levels:
 - **National Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs)** (9 activated: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Switzerland, UK), fostering national collaboration.
 - **EU MAP**, a European hub to address cross-border challenges and contribute to EU policy debates.

By June there were 191 registered members (151 in the EU MAP), showing significant progress towards the project's final target.
- **Creation of the GI SMART Team for Stakeholder Engagement:** AREPO coordinated the creation of a European team bringing together national MAP coordinators and partners such as Euromontana, EFOR and oriGIn. The team met regularly throughout the year to coordinate outreach and ensure consistency across national platforms. A dedicated coordination meeting held in **December 2025** allowed partners to share feedback from the first round of MAP meetings and identify needs, priorities and themes for the upcoming cycle.
- **Tools and operational support:** To facilitate the work of national MAPs, AREPO and Euromontana developed and shared a set of operational tools: agenda and reporting templates, communication materials, and participatory resources (Miro, Mentimeter). An internal webinar was also organised to align MAP activities with the project's research lines.
- **First national MAP meetings:** Between May and December 2025, all national MAPs held at least one introductory meeting. AREPO actively participated in most of these sessions, presenting the objectives of GI SMART and the structure of the Community Platform, while supporting the involvement of GI stakeholders and encouraging the identification of key national priorities related to sustainability and geographical indications.
- **European conference in Brussels (25–26 June 2025):** In collaboration with EFOR and oriGIn, AREPO organised the conference “A Producers’ Vision for the EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications & Launch of the GI SMART Community Platform”. The event gave a voice to European GI producers, contributed to shaping the EU Action Plan on GIs, and marked the official launch of the Community Platform. The [final report of the conference](#) was published in September.
- **GI SMART Consortium Meeting in Parma (1-3 July 2025):** AREPO participated in the GI SMART consortium meeting hosted in Parma, which provided an opportunity to review progress across work packages, strengthen coordination among partners and plan the next implementation phase. The meeting also supported alignment between stakeholder engagement activities and the project's research and methodological work.
- **Bilateral meeting with DG AGRI:** AREPO contributed to exchanges with DG AGRI to ensure that GI SMART activities and early insights remain connected to EU policy priorities, and to explore how the project's work can support the evolving debate on geographical indications and sustainability.
- **GI SMART joint workshop: Internal Capacity Building and Exploitation (3rd November 2025):** AREPO co-organized with Euromontana the internal joint workshop dedicated to capacity building and exploitation, aimed at strengthening partners' shared understanding of



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project objectives, supporting the uptake of tools and methodologies developed so far, and preparing the ground for the next implementation phase.

- **GI SMART workshop “Geographical indications: Consumers perceptions and future perspectives”:** AREPO contributed to the organisation of this workshop, held in Brussels in the framework of the SAFE annual conference and organised in collaboration with SAFE and UNEW. The session helped connect GI SMART discussions with consumer-related perspectives and expectations on GI sustainability.
- **Second round of national MAP meetings (special mention of Spanish MAP during our GIs)** Building on the first round of meetings, AREPO supported the preparation of a second cycle of MAP meetings aimed at deepening discussions and consolidating stakeholder input. In particular, AREPO supported the organisation of the second Spanish MAP meeting, held in a hybrid format in Barcelona and online on the occasion of AREPO’s General Assembly.
- **Collaboration with Committee of Regions for a study on the role of regions in support of GIs:** AREPO contributed to the preparatory work of the Committee of the Regions study “*How local and regional authorities support the recognition and development of geographical indications in their territory*”, which will be carried out in the first three months of 2026. AREPO joined the study’s Scientific Board together with INRAE to ensure coordination with GI SMART activities and to maximise the potential re-use of the data collected beyond the scope of the study report. During this initial phase, AREPO provided feedback on the study scope and on the draft questionnaire for data collection, and will support the dissemination of the survey among relevant stakeholders in 2026
- **Project coordination:** As work package leader, AREPO is part of the Executive Committee and participates in bi-monthly monitoring meetings to ensure the smooth progress of activities.

► Next steps

In November 2025, GI SMART concluded its initial phase was mainly dedicated to establishing the state of the art on geographical indications and sustainability, designing and testing the project’s methodology, and setting up the stakeholder engagement structure through the Community Platform.

! Budget at a glance

- ➔ **Total project budget:** ~€3,000,000
- ➔ **AREPO budget (2024–2028):** €220,000
- ➔ **EU funding:** 100% (no costs for members)
- ➔ **First pre-financing received (Oct 2024):** €54,174.91
- ➔ **Second pre-financing expected:** Summer 2025

The **second project phase will focus on data collection and data analysis**. In 2026, the project will progressively move towards large-scale data collection and analysis, with the objective of delivering evidence-based insights and concrete recommendations to support GI systems in their sustainability transition and contribute to EU policy debates. The first results of this work are expected to become available towards the end of 2026

For AREPO, efforts will focus on consolidating the Community Platform through a new round of national MAP meetings and EU MAP workshops, strengthening stakeholder participation and ensuring that national and EU-level discussions feed into the project’s research activities.

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Events



Part 5 | Events

I. AREPO events

➔ AREPO General Assembly in Brussels | Belgium, 25 June 2025



Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI | President of AREPO
introducing the General Assembly

AREPO's first General Assembly of 2025 was held in Brussels on 25 June 2025. This plenary meeting was organised in the premises of the Common House of Emilia-Romagna, Hessen, Nouvelle Aquitaine and Wielkopolska in Brussels.

The Assembly voted on key points, including the President's report, the 2024 financial accounts and the provisional 2025 accounts.

In the thematic part, there were updates on EU policies such as the Vision for Agriculture and Food, on the activities of the CAP network, a presentation from region Epirus and an update on the EU project GI SMART. [Click here for the full report.](#)

➔ GI Conference “A Producers’ Vision for the EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications & Launch of the GI SMART Community Platform” | Brussels, 25-26 June 2025

In the framework of the GI SMART project, AREPO, EFOR, and oriGIn EU organised a conference to officially launch the GI SMART Community Platform and to provide GI producers with a platform to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities, ensuring their voices shape future research and policies.

A key aim of the conference was to contribute to shaping the EU Action Plan for GIs by bringing forward the practical challenges and expectations of GI producers.

The conference saw the participation of **Commissioner for Agriculture, Christophe Hansen**, and **MEPs of the European Parliament Intergroup on Wine, Quality Food and Spirits**, such as **MEP Eric Sargiacomo**, co-chair, and **MEPs Enikő Győri and Carlo Fidanza**, vice-chairs.

It explored the role of GIs as a successful tool for sustainable rural development and as an attractive, competitive model for farmers and producers. By showcasing the economic, cultural, and societal value of GIs, it emphasised why producers decide to embark on the GI path and the added value they bring to local communities and beyond.



Conference on Geographical Indications, Brussels, June 2025 | Commissioner Christophe Hansen
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➔ AREPO General Assembly in Barcelona | Catalunya, 22-23 October 2025



From left to right:
Mr César SALDAÑA | AREPO Vice-President
Mr Alessandro BEDUSCHI | AREPO President
Rosa CUBEL MUÑOZ | Secretaria de Alimentación de la Generalitat de Catalunya
Mr Laurent GOMEZ | AREPO Secretary General

participants the opportunity to discover the excellence and diversity of quality products from Catalonia.

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

II. Other events

➔ International Conference on GIs, “Safeguarding Heritage, Cultivating Future” | Alicante, 28-29 January 2025

AREPO participated in the conference co-organized by EUIPO and the European Commission. It gathered GI professionals, public authorities, journalists, and media from around the EU, providing a platform for networking and collaboration. The conference aimed to discuss the opportunities and challenges resulting from the Regulation on Agri GIs as well as the Regulation on Craft GIs. Read more [here](#).

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➤ International Conference on GIs, "Worldwide Perspectives on Geographical Indications (GIs)" | Rome, 18-21 February 2025

Jointly organized by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and FAO, in collaboration with CIRAD, IPI, oriGIn, oriGIn Italia, and the Qualivita Foundation, the event brought together almost 400 participants from all around the world and from diverse sectors, including researchers, policymakers, producers, public actors and development experts. Discussions centered on how GI systems can foster innovation to enhance sustainability across economic, social, environmental, and governance dimensions, while preserving traditional knowledge and practices. GI SMART took center stage during the conference, with several project partners contributing to technical sessions by presenting the research progress and initial findings from the first months of the project. The conference also dedicated space to the role of public actors at local level, with several AREPO member regions (Bavaria, Epirus, and Tuscany) sharing their experiences in supporting producers both before registration and throughout the management of a GI product. Read more [here](#).

➤ "Sustainable and Innovative Food Systems: The Mediterranean Diet as a Tool for Tourism and Local Development in EUSAIR Communities" | Bari, 29-30 September 2025

Organised by the EUSAIR Presidency of North Macedonia together with CIHEAM Bari, DG REGIO and EGP, in cooperation with DG AGRI, DG MARE and DG GROW/DG MOVE, the two-day event focused on leveraging the Mediterranean Diet, recognised by UNESCO and FAO, as a strategic tool to support sustainable tourism, rural development, youth engagement and food system innovation across the Adriatic-Ionian region. The programme included high-level panels, interactive workshops and best-practice showcases on agrotourism, ecotourism and bio-districts, organic and origin quality food, and youth skills and digital tools in food and tourism. AREPO was invited as a speaker and closely followed the work related to the new EUSAIR Flagship Project on the Mediterranean Diet, aimed at coordinating activities, developing policy initiatives and exploring future EU funding opportunities (e.g. Horizon Europe, LIFE, COSME).

➤ "Assises régionales de l'alimentation" | Orleans, 7 October 2025

On 7 October 2025, AREPO participated in the "Assises régionales de l'alimentation", the regional food conference organised in Orléans by the Région Centre-Val de Loire and the CESER. AREPO contributed to the discussion on access to "good food", highlighting the role of geographical indications and quality products in supporting healthier and more sustainable food systems, preserving cultural heritage and ensuring fair value for producers.

➤ VII European Forum on Food Quality | Siena, 5 December 2025

On 5 December 2025, Alessandro Beduschi, President of AREPO, took part in the 7th European Forum on Food Quality in Siena, organised by the Fondazione Qualivita. Together with oriGIn EU and its national branches, he reiterated the call for a European GI Action Plan to support the sector through concrete measures aligned with the needs and priorities of producers and their territories. During the Forum, he highlighted the importance of strengthening promotion, ensuring a meaningful role for geographical indications in public procurement, and fully leveraging the link between GIs and sustainable tourism as a driver for rural development. He also stressed that the future of the GI sector depends on enabling young farmers and producers to enter and remain in the sector more easily and sustainably, while raising concerns about the future Common Agricultural Policy and the risk of weakening rural development and overlooking the specific needs of GI systems.

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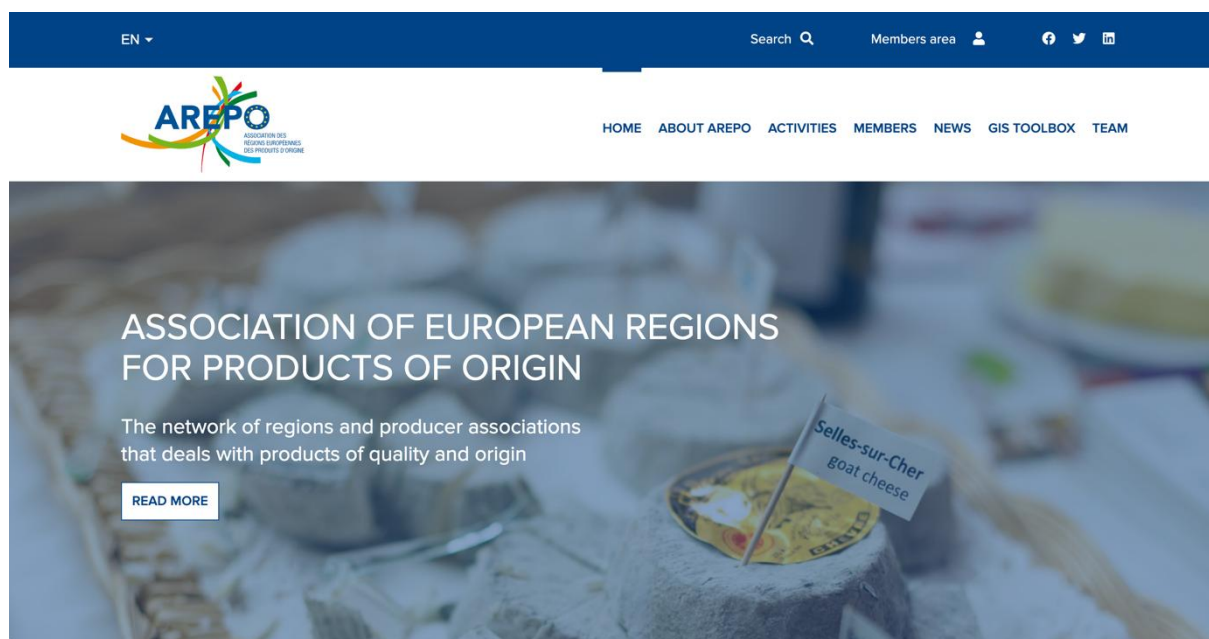


Communication strategy

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



AREPO maintains and regularly updates its website as a key communication tool to ensure members and stakeholders can easily access information on the Association's activities and on EU policies followed by AREPO. The website provides up-to-date news and resources and facilitates the dissemination of AREPO content through social media.

The website also includes a dedicated section gathering practical tools and resources for Geographical Indications, including:

- ▶ **AREPO publications and studies;**
- ▶ **A bibliography** of research on Geographical Indications and related topics;
- ▶ **A map of training offers from universities in AREPO member regions**, including courses specifically dedicated to Geographical Indications and quality schemes;
- ▶ **Links to existing databases related to GIs and EU quality schemes.**

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II. AREPO social networks

AREPO's social media channels promote the activities of the Association among its members and towards external audience. They primarily highlight **news on geographical indications and EU quality policy**, as well as **EU agricultural policy and related developments**. Social media is also used to further disseminate activities and key results from EU projects in which AREPO participates as a partner.

Overall, AREPO continues to register a good engagement rate, considering that its communication targets a highly specialised agri-food audience. Interactions mainly involve other organisations and institutional accounts, including EU Institutions, Members of the European Parliament and the official accounts of AREPO member regions.

Social networks	Find us	Followers
 Facebook	@arepoquality	753 followers and 719 likes
 Linked In	AREPO Quality	879 followers

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AREPO

Activity report

2025

January - December 2025

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



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