

AREPO

The Mantua Declaration on the Future of European Geographical Indications

15 October 2026



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

The Mantua Declaration on the Future of European Geographical Indications

AREPO priorities for the 2027 EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications

Geographical Indications (GIs) are one of the European Union's most distinctive policy achievements. They protect products whose quality, reputation and identity are rooted in a specific place, while creating economic value that cannot be relocated away from the territories where it originates.

They sustain agricultural activity and employment, strengthen locally anchored value chains and preserve know-how and cultural heritage. In doing so, they contribute to the vitality of rural communities and help create the conditions needed to maintain public services. They also offer a model for resilient rural development by linking economic competitiveness with the stewardship of natural resources, biodiversity and climate adaptation. For consumers, they provide a guarantee of authenticity, traceability and quality.

The EU Quality Policy should therefore be regarded as a strategic component of the Union's agricultural and rural policy, capable of creating value from the diversity of Europe's products, know-how and territories and ensuring that this value benefits the communities from which it originates.

Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 strengthened and modernised this framework, consolidated protection and reinforced the role of producer groups. The forthcoming 2027 EU Action Plan should now translate that ambition into coherent non-legislative measures. Its success should not be measured only by the number of registered names, but by whether it secures the long-term viability and capacity to adapt of GIs and their producer groups.

Gathered in Mantua, AREPO calls on the European Commission to build the Action Plan around six priorities.

I. Support GIs throughout their life cycle

Registration must be understood as the beginning of a collective strategy, not an end in itself. The Action Plan should support GIs from their emergence and registration through collective consolidation, market development and adaptation. Producer groups need accessible guidance, stronger capacity and better access to relevant EU support, with tailored assistance where participation or activity is declining.

II. Turn protection into fair economic value

The Regulation gives recognised producer groups a stronger legal and governance framework. The Action Plan should enable them to use it to organise collective strategies, defend registered names and improve producers' position in the value chain. Effective action against fraud and imitation, including on international markets, is essential to preserve trust and ensure that legal protection translates into fair and durable economic value.

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III. Bring GIs into citizens' daily lives

GIs need to be more visible and better understood. A coherent European communication and promotion strategy should strengthen the presence of PDO and PGI products across the market and connect them more clearly with their producers and territories. Promotion should stimulate demand, reward added value and ensure that all GI sectors can benefit.

IV. Prepare GI value chains for the future

The future of GIs depends on people, knowledge and the capacity to adapt. The Action Plan should support generational renewal and skills, strengthen the place of GIs in research and innovation, and help producer groups adapt to climate change while safeguarding biodiversity and production capacity, on which product quality and the territorial link depend.

V. Recognise regions as implementation and governance partners

GIs are inherently territorial policies. Regions should not be treated merely as stakeholders, but as partners in implementation and governance. Their proximity to producers and their capacity to connect GI policy with wider territorial development make them essential to the design, delivery and review of the Action Plan. Structured multi-level dialogue and cooperation between regions should underpin this role.

VI. Build a coherent, evidence-based delivery framework

As a non-legislative initiative, the Action Plan needs clear objectives, defined responsibilities and regular review. Economic and consumer evidence should show whether GIs remain active, create value and sustain participation in their territories as excellence in production. Monitoring and structured dialogue should guide implementation, identify obstacles and ensure coherence with other EU policies.

► The Mantua call to action

Europe already has the world's most advanced system for protecting and valorising origin-linked products. The 2027 Action Plan must now enable that system to deliver lasting value for producers, consumers and territories. AREPO calls on the European Commission to adopt an ambitious and comprehensive plan based on these six priorities. We call on the European Parliament, the Council and the Member States to support its objectives and contribute, within their respective competences, to their effective implementation.

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On behalf of AREPO's member regions and producer representatives

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TECHNICAL ANNEX TO THE MANTUA DECLARATION

VII. AREPO recommendations for the 2027 EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications

This Technical Annex complements the Mantua Declaration by translating its six political priorities into concrete recommendations for the 2027 EU Action Plan on Geographical Indications. The proposed measures aim to support GIs throughout their life cycle, strengthen producer groups and territorial governance, improve market opportunities and protection, and provide a coherent framework for the long-term development and adaptation of European GIs.

1. Support GIs throughout their life cycle

Registration should be the beginning of a long-term collective strategy rather than an end in itself. The Action Plan should provide differentiated support from the emergence of a GI project and preparation for registration through to post-registration consolidation, market development and long-term adaptation.

1.1 Support the development of credible GI initiatives and robust applications before registration

- **Develop targeted capacity-building in Member States and regions where GI uptake remains limited**, including mentoring and exchanges involving producer groups, public administrations and regions from more experienced Member States.
- **Support ex-ante strategic assessments** before registration to help producers evaluate collective commitment, governance capacity, market potential, territorial impact and expected control and compliance costs.
- **Promote exchanges of experience and good practices** at EU and national level to help producers develop GIs and effective GI groups, accompanied by appropriate technical and financial support and making use of the EU CAP Network.

1.2 Support registration and administrative implementation

- **Provide producer groups with practical guidance, technical assistance and preparatory support** during the registration process, including templates and model specifications.
- **Implement continuous training for professionals** involved in GI registration and amendments at national level to promote consistent understanding and application of EU GI rules across Member States and regions.

1.3 Improve access to existing EU support instruments

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- **Improve information and guidance for producer groups** on existing EU funding opportunities relevant to GIs, including under the CAP, the EU Promotion Policy, research programmes and other relevant instruments.
- **Encourage Member States and regions to make fuller and more consistent use of available CAP instruments** for new and existing GIs, including cooperation, control costs, information and promotion, investment and short supply-chain measures.
- **Facilitate access to support** by reducing unnecessary administrative complexity and ensuring that available instruments reflect the collective nature and different capacities of GI producer groups.
- **Consider dedicated calls or targeted funding opportunities for GI-related projects** under relevant EU programmes, taking into account the collective nature and specific needs of GI producer groups.

1.4 Consolidate and adapt registered GIs

- **Provide GI producer groups with tailored technical assistance** for controls, collective organisation, market development and adaptation to changing economic, environmental and social conditions.
- **Encourage existing GIs to periodically assess their economic, organisational and territorial performance** and identify areas for improvement.
- **Support ex-post assessments** where useful to identify necessary adaptations to product specifications in response to sustainability needs, consumer expectations, scientific and technical developments, market evolution, climate adaptation and risk management.
- **Provide tailored support to GIs experiencing limited economic or collective activity** to strengthen their long-term viability and prevent loss of producer participation, declining certified production or gradual inactivity.

2. Turn protection into fair economic value

Effective protection and economic development are two sides of the same policy. Producer groups, including recognised producer groups, should be able to use the strengthened framework established by Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 to organise collective strategies, defend registered names, strengthen producers' market position and ensure that the value generated by the GI translates into fairer remuneration.

2.1 Strengthen producer groups and collective value creation

- **Provide producer groups with appropriate technical, organisational and financial support** to exercise their responsibilities effectively, develop collective strategies and invest in the long-term economic development of their GIs, with particular attention to smaller groups and those with limited resources.

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- **Develop targeted capacity-building and exchanges of good practices** on collective organisation, market strategy, value creation and the long-term preservation of the economic value generated by GIs, to **strengthen producers' position in the value chain**.
- **Encourage cooperation between producer groups, public authorities and relevant value-chain actors** to identify factors that affect the economic viability of producers within the value chain and to develop solutions for optimising value chain structures.

2.2 Explore collective market-management tools for GIs

- **Assess how existing Common Market Organisation instruments could be used more effectively by GI producer groups** to strengthen collective market organisation, respond to market developments and preserve the long-term economic value of GIs.
- **Examine whether existing supply-management mechanisms available to certain GI sectors could provide useful lessons for other GI value chains**, taking account of sectoral specificities and the functioning of individual markets.
- **Explore how collective contractual approaches could strengthen the position of GI producers** in their relations with processors, retailers and other downstream operators, particularly where fragmented production faces concentrated purchasing power.

2.3 Strengthen enforcement and the defence of registered names

- **Strengthen the capacity of competent authorities and producer groups to prevent and respond to GI fraud**, including through training of control officers, targeted workshops and exchanges of enforcement practices.
- **Support producer groups in defending registered names**, including through access to legal expertise, market-surveillance tools and, where appropriate, financial support for enforcement action.
- **Build on the IP Enforcement Portal and other existing EU and national tools to establish a clear and accessible reporting pathway** through which GI producer groups can notify suspected infringements to the relevant competent authorities and receive appropriate follow-up, particularly in cross-border and online cases.

2.4 Protect GI value on international markets

- **Secure the protection of all EU registered GIs in EU trade agreements with third countries.**
- **Ensure effective implementation of GI protection commitments in EU trade agreements.**
- **Continue dialogue and cooperation with third countries** to strengthen the protection of European GIs and reduce fraud and misuse.

3. Bring GIs into citizens' daily lives

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Promotion should be part of a broader competitiveness and market-access strategy. The Action Plan should combine consumer communication with measures that strengthen the presence of GIs on the market, stimulate demand and ensure that their added value is better recognised.

3.1 Improve consumer understanding and awareness

- **Continue and strengthen EU-wide communication on GIs**, clearly explaining the guarantees associated with PDO and PGI products and the link between products, producers and their territories.
- **Develop targeted awareness-raising actions** in Member States where knowledge and uptake of GIs remain limited, working with national and regional authorities, Commission Representations and relevant stakeholders.
- **Ensure that fishery and aquaculture GIs are fully included** in relevant EU communication and promotion initiatives, reflecting their place within the wider European GI system.

3.2 Strengthen promotion and market visibility

- **Ensure an adequate and predictable budget for GIs under the EU Promotion Policy**, enabling producer groups of different sizes and from all GI sectors to access promotion opportunities effectively.
- **Give greater visibility to GIs in Commission trade and promotional missions**, including high-level missions led by the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food, to showcase European GIs and facilitate access to new markets.
- **Strengthen the visibility and consistency of EU GI logos** across retail, wholesale, food service, e-commerce and other digital channels, in cooperation with market operators.

3.3 Create visible European moments for GIs

- **Create a European flagship moment for GIs**, such as a **European GI Day**, accompanied by communication, educational and networking activities.
- **Introduce an annual awards initiative** linked to the European GI Day to recognise achievements in export performance, communication, generational renewal, diversification, sustainability, territorial commitment and GI routes.
- **Launch a travelling European PDO and PGI Expo across EU cities**, showcasing GI products alongside the territories, biodiversity, know-how and identities that underpin them.
- **Identify major European and national events** at which GIs and EU quality schemes can be promoted, particularly in countries where uptake and awareness remain below the EU average.

3.4 Expand GIs in food service and public procurement

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- **Stimulate greater uptake of GIs in sustainable food public procurement**, including by integrating GI products into minimum mandatory criteria and encouraging their use in schools, hospitals and other public canteens, and connecting procurement strategies with regional and local food policies to generate stable demand for GI products.
- **Develop the out-of-home channel as a strategic market for GIs**, working with catering and food-service operators to improve the correct use of GI names and avoid practices that devalue them.

3.5 Connect GIs with tourism, culture and territorial diversification

- **Develop gastronomy and tourism as strategic markets for GIs by supporting GI routes, direct links between producers and visitors, cultural initiatives and experience-based marketing, where these activities strengthen local demand, producer income and territorial identity. Promote recognition of the cultural heritage associated with GIs**, including, where appropriate, through UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage mechanisms.
- **Improve information on and access to relevant support instruments** for joint initiatives connecting GIs, gastronomy, tourism and territorial development.

4. Prepare GI value chains for the future

The long-term vitality of GIs depends on people, knowledge and the capacity to adapt. The Action Plan should address generational renewal and skills, research and innovation, and climate and environmental resilience as distinct but complementary dimensions.

4.1 Invest in people, skills and generational renewal

- **Support GI producer groups in providing mentoring, knowledge transfer and training for young producers and new entrants**, recognising collective organisation as a lever for generational renewal and covering entrepreneurial, governance, management, legal and digital skills.
- **Assist Member States and regions in designing measures** that improve employment, attractiveness and generational renewal in GI value chains, including through exchanges of good practices.
- **Strengthen farm advisory services and national and regional Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)**, including through CAP-supported strategic interventions, to provide GI producer groups and their members with tailored, GI-specific advisory services, specialised training and innovation support, particularly in the areas of collective governance and market management, digital traceability, fraud prevention, and the development and implementation of sustainability and climate-adaptation strategies.
- **Promote cooperation with vocational schools, universities and training providers** to develop multidisciplinary education on GIs and EU quality schemes, including through relevant Erasmus opportunities.

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4.2 Strengthen research, innovation and knowledge exchange

- **Integrate GIs more systematically into EU agricultural and food research and priorities**, including the Agri 2040 and Food 2040 agendas and relevant future calls, promoting research on their contribution to competitiveness, sustainability and the provision of public goods, as well as on consumer behaviour, digital traceability, governance and territorial impacts and on the conditions for the successful development of newly established schemes.
- **Strengthen knowledge exchange** between producer groups, public authorities, advisory services, universities and research organisations.

4.3 Support climate adaptation, sustainability and biodiversity

- **Support cooperation between producers, researchers and public authorities to help GI value chains adapt to climate change**, reduce environmental pressures and protect biodiversity and local natural resources.
- **Support GI producer groups in developing and implementing voluntary sustainability and climate-adaptation strategies**, backed by scientific and technical advice and investment support where appropriate.
- **Facilitate proportionate amendments to product specifications** where adaptation is needed to preserve production capacity, product viability, quality and the territorial link.

5. Recognise regions as implementation and governance partners

Regions should be recognised not merely as stakeholders to be consulted, but as implementation and governance partners. Depending on Member States' institutional arrangements, their proximity to producers and capacity to connect GI policy with wider territorial policies make them important actors in the delivery of the Action Plan.

5.1 Involve regions in Action Plan implementation

Systematically involve regions and their representative networks in the design and delivery of Action Plan initiatives, particularly where implementation relies on territorial knowledge, proximity to producers or coordination with regional policies.

5.2 Establish multi-level governance

Establish a structured multi-level dialogue between the European Commission, Member States, local and regional authorities and producer groups throughout the design, implementation, monitoring and review of the Action Plan, ensuring that regions and producer groups participate as active partners in policy design and delivery.

5.3 Strengthen cooperation between regions

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Develop structured peer-to-peer cooperation between European regions, enabling territories with mature GI ecosystems to share expertise, governance models and practical experience with regions where GI systems remain less developed.

5.4 Use regions as territorial laboratories

Mobilise regions as territorial laboratories for the Action Plan, supporting pilot initiatives and exchanges of good practices on issues such as sustainability, generational renewal, GI tourism, public procurement and innovation.

6. Build a coherent, evidence-based delivery framework

As a non-legislative initiative, the Action Plan should translate existing policies, expertise and funding opportunities into a coherent delivery framework. Regular evidence and structured dialogue should make it possible to assess results, identify obstacles and adapt implementation over time.

6.1 Strengthen the evidence base and monitor GI performance

- **Regularly update the EU study on the economic value of GIs and other quality schemes**, with analysis at EU, national and, where feasible, regional level.
- **Continue recurring consumer surveys**, including Eurobarometer-type monitoring, to measure awareness of the GI concept and logos and assess the impact of EU communication and promotion actions.
- **Monitor the performance of registered GIs and publish regular market and performance reporting**, covering production and sales value, exports, producer participation, generational renewal, sustainability, protection and territorial impact. Reporting should draw wherever possible on existing EU, national and regional data sources and established monitoring systems, while avoiding disproportionate new administrative burdens for producer groups. Where additional data contributions are sought directly from producer groups, participation should be voluntary, proportionate and should not create excessive administrative burden.

6.2 Set objectives and review implementation

- **Set measurable objectives, a clear timetable and defined responsibilities** for the implementation of the Action Plan.
- **Establish a regular review mechanism** to assess progress and, where necessary, adjust implementation.

6.3 Identify and address implementation obstacles

- **Systematically identify regulatory or administrative obstacles** that unintentionally hinder the functioning or development of GIs.

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- **Address identified obstacles**, as appropriate, through guidance, implementation dialogue or future policy review.

6.4 Maintain structured dialogue and policy coherence

- **Maintain structured dialogue with organisations representing GIs** throughout the implementation, monitoring and review of the Action Plan.
- **Use this dialogue to monitor the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 and the interaction between GI policy and other EU legislation**, identify practical implementation difficulties and strengthen policy coherence.

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