

AREPO CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEFINITION OF PRIORITIES IN THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2025 CONCERNING PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The **Association of European Regions for Products of Origin (AREPO)** brings together 35 European regions and more than 850 associations of producers for over 60% of European GIs. AREPO aims to promote and defend the interests of producers and consumers in European regions committed to promoting quality agri-food products.

As **member of the Civil Dialogue Group on Quality and Promotion**, AREPO welcomes the Commission's request for inputs from stakeholders to the definition of priorities in the Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2025 concerning the promotion of agricultural products.

The revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2025-2027 considered, we would like **to raise our concerns on the possible reduction of the budget** allocated to promotion programmes, already subject to repeated cuts in recent years.

Understanding the seriousness of the international situation that required supportive intervention from the EU, **we hope that the Commission can continue to defend the Promotion Policy and limit the impact of these reductions to funding for multi programmes.**

In addition to this, we would like to stress that **budget allocations need to mirror market realities and take into account previous AWP submission statistics.** This entails greater support for simple programmes, quality schemes and other sustainable agricultural practices on the internal market.

Particularly, **AREPO would like to recall to the European Commission that EU quality schemes**, besides being the expression of EU culture and identity and accounting for 15.5% of the total EU agri-food exports¹, **represent a sustainability tool thanks to their potential in generating public goods** (e.g. sustainable rural development, growth and employment, diversification of rural economy, protection of natural resources and landscape, welfare of farm animals, food security, food safety and traceability).² Therefore, EU quality schemes **could considerably contribute to meeting the objectives set by the Farm to Fork strategy** and they **should remain a priority topic in the future promotion policy.**

Despite EU Promotion programmes, both simple and multi, proved so far to be effective in raising the awareness on EU Quality schemes and contributed as a useful tool in supporting EU GIs producers in their endeavours to conquer new markets and increase exports, there is still scope for improvement³.

As a result, EU promotion policy **funds earmarked for Geographical Indications and other quality schemes should remain significant**, supporting GI producers in communicating to consumers that societal expectations they have can be fulfilled with these products.

¹ Study on economic value of EU quality schemes, geographical indications (GIs) and traditional specialities guaranteed (TSGs), 2020. AND-International, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (European Commission), ECORYS

² [AREPO Position Paper on European Commission Evaluation of Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed Protected in the EU](#), January 2020

³ Commission Staff Working Document, [Evaluation of the impact of the EU agricultural promotion policy in internal and third countries markets](#)

PDOs and PGIs should be promoted also **in the wider frame of a diversified and balanced diet and considering quality as a competitive factor for health and proper nutrition**. The nutritional characteristics of GIs linked to their geographical origins and largely attributed to their unique ingredients and production procedures, make them contribute to healthy diets and to curb non-communicable diseases⁴.

In light of the aforementioned, we call on the European Commission to please ensure that the 2025 AWP:

- **Maintains as much as possible a budget fit to respond to the ongoing challenges;**
- **Allocates the budget available where most demanded** to simple programmes, mirroring market realities and previous AWP submission statistics;
- **Restores a sizeable budget dedicated to promotion of EU quality schemes or at least safeguards the current allocated budget**, recalling that the requested grants for GI campaigns last year exceeded by over 170% of the available budget.
- **Avoids any discrimination against specific products or sectors**, such as red and processed meat or wine and spirits, maintaining the current list of eligible products;
- Despite the likely reduction of budget dedicated to multi programmes, **maintains the “flexibility clause”** (allowing for re-allocating unused funds from multi to simple programmes) introduced with the 2024 annual work programme;
- **To specifically include EU Optional Quality Term (OQT) “mountain product” as an eligible scheme for action under EU Promotion policy**. In order to enhance the promotion of the term at EU level and increase the awareness on its characteristics, AREPO would like to suggest to the European Commission to give visibility to the OQT “mountain product” in annual Work Programmes.

⁴ FAO, 2021. [The nutrition and health potential of geographical indication foods](#), Rome