



Official Participant

Report Template for Events at EXPO

organised in the frame of the Week of DG AGRI stakeholders' at Expo Milano

Event Title :	Innovating and Organising Research, Education and Training for Sustainable GIs	Date:	11/09/2015
Event Organiser:	Association of European Region for Products of Origin (AREPO)		
Event Target Group:	Stakeholders from the research, education and training sectors: Local administrations, farm advisors, producers' associations, enterprises, researchers and professors.		
Rapporteur (name and email address):	Giulia Scaglioni, AREPO Policy Officer, policyofficer@arepoquality.eu		

Event Concept

The seminar aimed to bring together stakeholders from the research, education and training sectors in order to exchange experiences and practices and to define future priorities for the development of sustainable Geographical Indications (GIs).

The EU pursues three objectives through its Common Agricultural Policy: securing viable food production; ensuring sustainable management of natural resources and climate action and contributing to a balanced territorial development. Through the protection of GIs, the support and the promotion of products of origin can help meet these objectives, especially in disadvantaged rural areas.

Nevertheless, the potential of products of origin in terms of sustainable rural development both within and outside the EU has not yet been fully exploited, primarily due to a lack of knowledge and skills in this area. Relevant avenues of research should be pursued, in order to sustain and promote products of origin through the development of GIs, in line with sustainable rural development. To achieve this we need to integrate specific knowledge and skills from different stakeholders -local administrations, farm advisors, producers' associations, enterprises, researchers, etc.

Expected Outcomes

Stakeholders from the EU and other interested countries were invited to present their experiences, opening the debate on the following questions:

1. What are the needs in terms of knowledge and skills for the sustainable development of GIs?
2. Does the existing research and training meet the current priorities?
3. What kind of best practices should be developed?

The conclusion of this debate will help to define new strategies at the European level.

Main Conclusions

The European Union is a big stakeholder in this context since it provides financial support and funds research projects on GIs. However **this sector still needs the support of the EU to develop multidisciplinary research, education and trainings**. The existing research should be completed, exploring new issues and mobilising new disciplines to address the problems and challenges determined by the complexity of these products. *You can find the complete report and the presentations at the following [link](#).*

What follow-up actions emerged from this event?

The seminar has represented the **starting point of AREPO collaboration with research centers and universities**.

In the short term, AREPO is working with the stakeholders who participated to the conference, in order to present to the European Commission a **position paper on the conclusions of the seminar**. The position paper aims at assuring that the research needs and issues related to GIs and quality products will be included in DG AGRI long term research strategy.

In the long term, AREPO launched an internal discussion in order to restructure its own statute and membership to include an **academic committee** composed by research centers and universities. AREPO role would be to assist stakeholders in research, training and education sectors in order to disseminate knowledge, cooperate and create adequate tools to implement research results in regional policies.