GISMART

HIGHLIGHTS EVENT REPORT

From recognition to value

STRENGTHENING GI PRODUCERS GROUPS ACROSS THE EU

BRUSSELS
25 JUNE 2026



AREPO ASSOCIATION DES REGIONS EUROPÉENNES DES PRODUITS D'ORIGINE

European Federation of Origin Wines EFOW

oriGIn EU Organization for an european Geographical Indications Network

INRAE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To discuss the opportunities and challenges arising from the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 on Geographical Indications (GIs), particularly regarding the role and responsibilities of GI producer groups. AREPO, EFOW, INRAE and oriGIn EU convened GI producers, representatives from the EU institutions, national authorities, and researchers in Brussels for a dedicated stakeholders workshop hosted by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and held within the GI SMART project.

The workshop marked the **fourth meeting of the GI SMART Multi-Actor Platform (EU MAP),** the Europe-wide stakeholder network established to foster dialogue, knowledge exchange and evidence-based policymaking on the contribution of GIs to sustainable territorial development.

This one-day stakeholders workshop focused on the implementation of **Regulation (EU) 2024/1143**. The morning session brought together representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Food of **France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain** to discuss the recognition of GI producer groups and compare national implementation approaches. The afternoon session was dedicated to producers' practical experiences in regulating production potential, creating value, and preserving the long-term value of Geographical Indications across different sectors and national contexts.



GI SMART is a 4-year research project that will provide evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the contributionof 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

WELCOME ADDRESS

Ms. Karine Gloanec-Maurin

Member and Rapporteur on GIs, European Committee of the Regions



Ms Karine Gloanec-Maurin, reaffirmed the CoR's longstanding support for GIs as strategic tools for rural development and recalled the Committee's contribution to the adoption of **Regulation (EU) 2024/1143** through recommendations aimed at strengthening the GI system and enhancing its resilience to future economic, environmental and social challenges. She also introduced the study commissioned by the CoR- and carried out in collaboration with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), on the role of local and regional authorities in supporting the recognition and development of GIs. Highlighting its main findings, she stressed the important contribution of local and regional authorities to the success of GIs and emphasised the value of exchanging experiences and good practices. Finally, she pointed to the complementarity between the study's findings and the ongoing work of the GI SMART project, underlining the benefits of bringing these initiatives together.

The CoR study: understanding the role of regional and local authorities

Mr. Timothy Yu-Cheong Yeung

Research Follow at CEPS (Center for European Policy Studies)



Mr. Yu-Cheong Yeung, Research Fellow at CEPS, presented the study *"How local and regional authorities support the recognition and development of geographical indications in their territory"*[1]. The study examines the role of local and regional authorities (LRAs) in supporting GIs, identifies good practices and challenges, and seeks to raise awareness of GIs.

The findings show differences in the distribution of GIs across Europe, with southern Member States generally recording higher numbers of registrations than northern ones. The analysis also highlights that, while countries such as France and Italy perform above expectations given the size of their agricultural sectors, others, including Spain and Germany, have untapped potential. These differences are linked to a combination of historical, cultural, territorial, economic and institutional factors.

[1] European Committee of the Regions, *How Local and Regional Authorities Support the Recognition and Development of Geographical Indications in Their Territory*, CEPS/CASE, 2026

The study concludes with **12 policy recommendations** to reinforce the role of LRAs in supporting GIs, such as increasing awareness of GI products, investing in digital skills, and providing clearer guidance to help producers navigate the GI registration process. These measures aim to help GI sectors address challenges such as generational renewal, climate change, evolving consumer preferences and broader economic change.

Roundtable: recognising GI Producer Groups across EU Member States

The workshop continued with the roundtable **"Recognition of GI Producer Groups Across EU Member States",** moderated by **Olivier Beucherie** (Oliver Beucherie Conseil), bringing together representatives of the ministries of agriculture from France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.

Ms. Armelle Mazé

Senior Researcher in Economics, INRAE, lead partner of GI SMART



The session opened with a presentation by Dr. Armelle Mazé (Senior Researcher in Economics at INRAE) who presented the GI SMART research results on the role of GI Producer groups under the framework of the EU Regulation 2024/1143.

Her presentation highlighted that **collective action, while being a core principle and key driver of the success of GIs, can also generate challenges**. In this context, consensus and a strong governance framework are essential to ensure democratic decision-making, effective leadership and broad participation. The analyses on governance models pointed out differences both between sectors, particularly wine and food products, and between governance approaches, including intra-professional, and inter-professional. In this regard, she underlined that the differences in countries' size, history, traditions, and institutional frameworks require tailored support that takes region and local specificities into account.

She also explained that **collective action plays a fundamental role in creating value and encouraging collective investment.** For this reason, governance rules should facilitate access to resources for the promotion of GI products while ensuring fair competition and equitable value sharing. Producer groups play a crucial role in **balancing and strengthening producers' bargaining power.** However, Dr. Mazé noted that the most appropriate institutional model depends on several factors, including the structure of the supply chain, its internal organisation, the nature of economic and market opportunities, and the compliance with EU competition law. Finally, she highlighted that the new EU regulation recognises the strategic role of producer groups in strengthening the **sustainability** of GIs across its three dimensions: social, environmental, and governance.

Looking ahead, her presentation also explored the **future role of public policies in supporting more sustainable GIs.** In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP), the role of GI

institutional ecosystems, and the possibility of introducing sustainability requirements.

Existing national framework on GI producer groups

Ms. Isabelle Ouillon (Ministry of Agriculture, Agri-Food and Food Sovereignty of France), **Mr**. **Christian Busse** (Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity of Germany), **Ms. Alexandra Petropoulou** (Ministry of Rural Development and Food of Greece), **Mr. Vincenzo Carrozzino** (Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of Italy), **Mr. Carlos Carvalho** (Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Affairs of Portugal) and **Ms. Lucia Martinez Hernandez**, (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain) presented the national frameworks currently governing GI producer groups in their respective countries, addressing their formal status, recognition procedures, membership rules, and their respective strengths and challenges.



Application procedures and the difference between the wine and food sectors

The exchange of experiences highlighted several common features across the participating countries. In most Member States, membership of producer groups is voluntary (except France). Several Member States maintain distinct legal frameworks for the wine and agri-food sectors.

Key patterns identified:

- The degree of institutional maturity varies considerably
- The institutional architecture differs in terms of centralisation
- Sector-specific regimes remain widespread
- Voluntary membership is not a shared principle across all six Member States



Ms. Isabelle Ouillon presented the French recognition system, set out for almost twenty years in the French Rural and Maritime Fishing Code. Producers are required to submit, together with the application for the GI recognition, an **application to be recognised as ODG** (Organisme de Défense et de Gestion). This requires the submission of a formal request letter, a technical and economic presentation, a motivation note, the product specification, and documentation on control arrangements. In addition, the application should include the indication of the group's chosen legal form (association, union, or interbranch organisation) and its rules on representativeness. Recognition as an ODG is granted by the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO), following consultation with the relevant national committee and verification that the group's

governance structure complies with the principles of representative democracy.

Mr. Christian Busse presented the German system, **characterised by a division of competences between the federal and regional levels**. GI applications are handled at federal level by the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Food, while the responsibility for the recognition of GI producer groups and the organisation of official controls (excluding customs controls) lies with the Länder, based on detailed rules set out in a federal implementing regulation. Once established, the formal recognition of the producer group is carried out by the competent authorities of the Länder, in accordance with the procedures laid down at regional level.

Ms. Alexandra Petropoulou described the **Greek framework**, which features two **separate systems for food products and for wine**, neither of which currently provides a comprehensive regulatory basis for the recognition of producer groups. Existing collaborations take the form of informal producer groups that lack official recognition. Ms. Petropoulou pointed out that, although the establishment of producer groups is voluntary, **structural factors significantly constrain collective action in practice:** the geographical dispersion of producers, the mountainous landscape and the high degree of land fragmentation have led to a predominance of small-scale agricultural holdings. This context increases transaction costs, reducing both the incentives and the opportunities for producers to engage in effective collective organisation.

Mr. Vincenzo Carrozzino presented the **Italian registration system**, which distinguishes between **two distinct phases** in the life cycle of a producer group: **before and after GI registration.** Prior to registration, producer groups operate as applicants under the procedure established in the EU legislation. Once the GI is registered, the establishment of a producer group is not mandatory, and membership remains voluntary: any eligible operator retains the right to join a recognised group and participate in its activities. Associations seeking **national recognition** as producer groups must adopt statutes that clearly define their objectives and confirm their purpose in relation to the GI registration.

Mr. Carlos Carvalho illustrated the **Portuguese system**, which maintains two separate regulatory frameworks for the wine sector and for food products. While the wine sector benefits from a long-established organisational structure, **the food sector has historically relied primarily on direct compliance with EU legislation rather than on a dedicated national framework**. As in the other Member States examined, membership of producer groups remains voluntary under Portuguese law. Producer groups may take the legal form of cooperatives, associations established specifically for GI purposes, or other non-profit organisations governed by private or public law.



Ms. Martinez Hernandez presented the **Spanish framework**, in which the establishment of a producer group is conditional on the approval of a Statute. This document must specify the group's legal personality, ensure balanced representation of all relevant sectors, define a precise governance structure, indicate the resources necessary to carry out its activities, set out membership obligations and clarify the

applicable tax regime. A distinctive feature of the Spanish system is the role played by the *Consejos Reguladores*, some of which are established as public-law corporations with independent legal personality and entrusted with specific public functions in the management of GIs. Depending on the applicable national or regional framework, these functions may include setting minimum requirements for commercial labels, managing seals, numbered labels and other authenticity marks, and maintaining official PDO and PGI registers, including registers of operators.

GI Producer groups' missions, internal organisation and governance models

Key patterns identified:

- Missions extend beyond protection of the denomination to promotion, communication, and market surveillance
- Governance models vary widely, with no single model considered universally effective
- Representativeness criteria typically combine production volume and membership share

Ms. Isabelle Ouillon (FR) noted that the broad legal definition of an ODG in France allows missions and organisational models to vary considerably, including through **multi-product ODGs**, adopted for territorial and quality management needs, or economic reasons. She stressed that **no single governance model is universally effective**.



Mr. Christian Busse (DE) explained that, as in other Member States, German producer groups are responsible for applications, specification amendments, quality control and monitoring of counterfeiting. No dedicated studies have yet assessed the effectiveness of current governance models, but **larger groups in particular face challenges around voting rights, financial contributions, and balancing cooperation with internal competition** - making it difficult to ensure balanced participation of both small producers and large-scale operators, including processors.

Mr. Vincenzo Carrozzino (IT) explained that representativeness within Italian *Consorzi di tutela* is calculated based on GI-certified production volume and the share of members among all registered operators. Beyond protecting the denomination, Consorzi are also responsible for promotion, communication, marketing and consumer information. Following the adoption of *Decreto Ministeriale (DM) MASAF n. 264637 del 3 giugno 2026 sui Consorzi di tutela DOP e IGP dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari*, establishing the national regulatory framework laying down general provisions on the establishment and recognition of protection consortia for agricultural and food PDOs and PGIs, a single consorzio may represent as well multiple GIs. This possibility was first introduced in the wine sector and now extended to agricultural products to achieve economies of scale through shared administrative structures. He

reiterated that a **GI success depends on producers' willingness to prioritise the collective value of the GI,** work towards a shared long-term vision, and maintain mutual trust and cooperation alongside technical management.



Mr. Carlos Carvalho (PT) pointed out that quantitative criteria for representativeness, such as minimum production volumes, raise practical questions about the **definition of a "producer"**. In this regard, he stressed the importance of first clearly identifying the GI, then recognising the relevant stakeholders involved in its production and management.

Ms. Luisa Martinez Hernandez (ES) noted that, as in other Member States, in Spain the main objective of producer groups is **defending the denomination**, including through legal action against abuse, fraud or misuse of the GI, often in cooperation with other authorities such as the competition authority. Spanish *Consejos Reguladores* also carry out **promotional and communication activities** and may propose amendments to the product specification to the competent authority.

GI Producer groups' financial support

Key pattern identified:

- Members' contributions remain the primary source of funding across all Member States
- Access to public funding (regional, national or EU) is uneven and often unstructured
- Larger groups are generally better positioned to fund promotion and protection activities
- CAP funding and the upcoming MFF are seen as key levers for strengthening financial support

In France, all producers must contribute to the financing of the GI producer group. Public support to GI producer groups depends on choices made by regional authorities using CAP funds.

The German representative emphasised the importance of CAP funding to set up a GI group.

He called for a simplification of CAP rules in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and stressed that further improvements are needed to strengthen the role of producer groups.



In Greece, **membership fees are often difficult to collect,** limiting producer groups' financial capacity to fully perform their functions across the production cycle, from promotion to protection. This points to the need for stronger public support through national and EU-level subsidies, alongside additional financial instruments.

In Italy, funding is available at regional level through Rural Development Plans, resulting, however, in territorial disparities. The

Consorzi have access to dedicated national support for promotional activities.

The Italian *erga omnes* system allows officially recognised Consorzi to carry out certain protection, promotion, and governance functions on behalf of all producers using the GI, not only their members. As these activities benefit the entire GI, both members and non-members may be required to contribute to their costs under national law. This ensures collective management and protection of the GI as a shared asset.

The Portuguese representative stressed that **financial capacity depends largely on sector and scale**: larger GIs are better positioned to fund promotional and anti-counterfeiting activities, while smaller ones face clear limitations, in some cases leading to the dissolution of consortia due to financial unsustainability. **Portugal does not yet have a dedicated public financing framework for producer groups;** some promotional grants exist, particularly in the wine sector, but are not specifically targeted at GIs. This is considered an important moment to address the issue at policy level, especially considering ongoing MFF discussions.

Novelties introduced by EU Reg. 2024/1143

The second theme addressed by the panel session on GI producer groups across EU Member States concerned how each country is implementing the novelties introduced by EU Regulation 2024/1143, notably with regard to the **recognition of producer groups under Article 33**, the concept of **representativeness** set out in Article 33(2)(b), and the new provisions on **sustainability**.

GI Producer groups recognition and representativeness

Key patterns identified:

- The new GI regulation preserves the specificities of each national GI system.
- The definition of "producer" and of representativeness thresholds are central.
- Article 33 on recognised producer groups is slowly being implemented across Member States.

In France, where recognition procedures were already in place, the current revision aims to formally establish that ODGs correspond to recognised producer groups and to explicitly reference Article 33(2), ensuring that the relevant criteria are properly defined and consistently applied.



Mr. Carrozzino explained that, **in Italy**, the representativeness mechanism under Article 33(2)(b) already existed in the wine sector but has been **newly introduced for food products**, where representativeness was previously assessed mainly on the basis of the production volume. Given the voluntary nature of membership, representativeness is reviewed every three years.

Mr. Busse noted that **Germany is going through a transition period with regard to the recognition of GIs producer groups.** Recognition requires at least 50% of producers to be represented, though systematic data on production volumes is not yet available. He stressed that even non-recognised groups continue to play an important role in protecting GIs, through

market monitoring, consumer information and protection activities.

The **Greek** representative stressed that **the flexibility offered by Article 33 will allow Greece to design a framework tailored to national and regional specificities**. Given significant differences in scale across regions, a fixed representativeness threshold such as 50% may not always reflect production realities, suggesting that alternative or differentiated criteria could be considered.

Mr. Carvalho stressed that **Portugal's national legislation on recognition is still under development**. Today, the accepted legal forms include private or public law associations, provided they are non-profit. On representativeness, he reiterated that the definition of "producer" remains a key issue.

In Spain, the Ministry of Agriculture is working to update its national legal framework to implement Articles 32 and 33. The updates should introduce a new system for the recognition of GI producer groups, together with revised representativeness criteria. Within this framework, recognised producer groups may be established as public-law corporations exercising specific public functions in the management of geographical indications. The future Spanish framework should also assign new exclusive tasks to producer groups, including developing the product specification, applying for registration, and agreeing on sustainable practices.

GIs Sustainability

Key patterns identified:

- Sustainability is approached through voluntary, guidance-based frameworks rather than binding obligations
- Implementation is seen as a gradual process requiring time, coordination and capacity-building
- Disparities in producers' knowledge, resources and interest remain a common constraint

In France, sustainability in wine-growing organisations is addressed primarily through a voluntary, guidance-based framework. The INAO developed a set of guidelines to facilitate the introduction of sustainable practices in the product specification, and while there is a degree of encouragement, **implementation remains voluntary**. Other supply chain stakeholders are also engaged in sustainability initiatives, with numerous projects providing tools and support to assist ODGs.

Mr. Busse noted that sustainability is an increasingly integrated aspect of GI producer groups activities **in Germany, with groups already involved in practices such as addressing water scarcity, renewable energy use and photovoltaic installation**. However, producers do not always have the knowledge or capacity to implement such measures, which is why sustainability initiatives remain voluntary. Nevertheless, it is gradually being incorporated into product specifications, which reflects a progressive transition, with disparities in capacity across the sectors.

The Greek representative noted that sustainability has gained importance in light of climate change and rising energy costs, with policy measures focusing on resilience and adaptation, particularly in the wine sector. Measures should remain non-binding, to avoid additional administrative complexity and financial burden for producers, and **the transition towards sustainable solutions will require time** to achieve realistic objectives.

Mr. Carrozzino also **stressed that sustainability implementation should be voluntary and managed by each Consorzio,** reinforcing local responsibility and autonomy. It is therefore seen as a

gradual process requiring time, coordination and progressive adaptation, with producer groups playing a central role.

Mr Carvalho highlighted the complexity of addressing sustainability within the Portuguese GI system, with **many producers showing limited interest due to implementation difficulties and administrative burden (ex: amending product specification)**. While many GIs are linked to large-scale farming systems, producers play a key role in safeguarding cultural heritage and addressing environmental concerns, including protection of endangered species. Efforts are being made to integrate sustainability into new GI registrations. Sustainability is nonetheless also seen as an opportunity to enhance the value and visibility of production.

Mr. César Saldaña

Vice President of AREPO and President of CADO



The morning session concluded with remarks by **Mr César Saldaña**, Vice-President of AREPO, who reflected on the key messages emerging from the discussion. He observed that, although Member States have developed different regulatory frameworks for the recognition of GI producer groups, they are ultimately addressing many of the same challenges in implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1143. He also emphasised that **strong, representative GI producer groups are fundamental** to the long-term success of GIs and welcomed the greater recognition of their role under the new Regulation. At the same time, he underlined that the broader responsibilities entrusted to recognised producer groups must be matched by adequate technical, organisational and financial support, particularly for smaller GIs with more limited resources. He concluded by calling for continued dialogue, exchange of best practices and cooperation among producer groups, public authorities and EU institutions to ensure the successful implementation of the new framework and of the future European GI Action Plan.

The afternoon roundtables: How GI Producer Groups Can Improve Competitiveness

Mr. Charles Deparis

President of Origin EU and raw milk producer for "Pont-l'Évêque" PDO and "Camembert de Normandie" PDO

Charles Deparis introduced the afternoon session, which focused on the role of practitioners in preserving and developing geographical indications. Discussions addressed three main areas: managing production potential and adapting supply to market realities, value creation strategies within GI sectors, and approaches to preserving this value over time.



Regulating the production potential

The first roundtable brought together the experiences of **Mr. Riccardo Deserti** (Director PDO Parmigiano Reggiano) and **Mr. Miguel Sanz Cabrejas** (PDO Ribera del Duero). Moderated by **Mr. Miguel García Navarro** (Deputy Head of Unit E.2 on Wine, spirits and horticultural products, DG AGRI, European Commission).



Mr. Deserti presented the results of the **milk quota system** introduced by the Parmigiano Reggiano producer group twelve years ago to support production growth while preventing oversupply. Given the long maturing period required for the production of the Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and its consequent vulnerability to market crises and speculation, the system rests on three pillars: **allocation of individual production quotas**, an **over-production fee**, and the **reinvesting of the resulting funds in market development initiatives**.

The system had a direct effect of supply regulation and reducing historical cycles of highs and lows with a steady upward trend. He also remarked that the strategy had a **positive impact on both the production and price,** never suffering prolonged crises. Value has consistently reached producers rather than remaining with traders, and more stable income has improved farmer access to credit on better terms. The plan also helped implementing **specific supply chain policies**, such as **quota bonuses or free discounts for young farmers, mountain areas producers, and animal-welfare practices.** This system also reinforced the group's accountability and ownership within the group. Finally, Mr. Deserti concluded by highlighting that this model could offer a valuable reference not only for other GIs but for the Common Agricultural Policy more broadly.



Mr. Sanz Cabrejas presented the experience of Ribera del Duero PDO, established in 1982, which in just over 40 years has become one of Spain's most prestigious wine regions. He highlighted that this success has been built on a clear commitment to quality and differentiation, resulting in strong brand recognition and a premium market position. However, the region's growth remains structurally constrained by its production capacity, due to its high-altitude vineyards, extreme climate conditions, frequent adverse weather events, and naturally low yields.

He explained that the PDO's objective is to achieve sustainable and balanced growth by carefully managing production potential. As the only realistic way to increase supply is through expanding vineyard area, the Regulatory Council regularly analyses market trends, sales evolution, and production capacity before issuing recommendations on vineyard authorisations.

While recognising the vineyard authorisation system as a positive instrument for ensuring controlled growth, Mr. Sanz Cabrejas pointed out several limitations affecting its efficiency and adaptability. These include the need for greater flexibility for Member States in establishing eligibility and priority criteria, the difficulties faced by established producers seeking to expand, and the lack of sufficiently precise data to accurately assess production potential. He also noted that the system's reliance on historical data makes it challenging to anticipate future market developments in an increasingly uncertain environment.

Finally, he underlined that replanting authorisations would benefit from a more targeted approach, as the current "all-or-nothing" system does not allow Regulatory Councils to define specific planting areas or volumes.

Creating value

The second-round table brought together the experiences of Mr. Gualberto Ricci Curbastro (PDO Franciacorta) and Ms. Cécile Podeur (PDO Pélardon). Moderated by Ms. Teresa Pais Coelho (oriGIn Portugal/Qualifica).



Mr. Gualberto Ricci Curbastro (PDO Franciacorta) presented the appellation's strategy to create value. First, **Franciacorta Economic Observatory,** a tool developed to collect and analyse useful market data. Companies participating in the system - currently account for 84% per cent of the region's total production - receive a monthly report containing all the relevant aggregate information: data on sales, average prices, typologies, destinations and export countries. The Consorzio uses the same data to shape its promotion and protection policies. Then, to support its promotional policies, the Consortium invests in **strategic partnerships In Italy and abroad**. Collaborations may be linked to the **lifestyle sector to further enhance the brand's positioning,** while **trade sponsorships** increase Franciacorta's market penetration and product visibility, for example through international events such as Milan Fashion Week, the Emmy's Awards. **Commercial partnerships** in the Italian market with Parmigiano Reggiano and the Michelin Guide foster the positioning of the product and sustain its value. Finally, he noted that the Consorzio **is investing heavily in research and development.** The Franciacorta Microvinification Laboratory, inaugurated in 2024 in Erbusco in partnership with Accademia Symposium, replicates the winemaking process on a small scale, enabling research into climate-resilient viticulture and genetic improvement of the native Erbamat variety. Equipped with advanced fermentation monitoring and an

experimental cellar, the laboratory represents a strategic investment in sustainability, knowledge transfer and the future of Franciacorta DOCG.

Mr. Ricci Curbastro closed by underlining the **long-term vision underpinning the denomination's approach:** a bottle of Franciacorta reaches the market only at least two years after harvest, and vines must be four years old before they can be used for production. **Understanding market data, is then crucial to ensuring balanced growth while keeping quality high.**



The intervention of **Ms. Cécile Podeur (PDO Pélardon)** focused on three pillars underpinning the PDO's ability to create and protect value:

1. Protect the PDO against misuse, imitation and evocation from the outset and throughout its lifecycle.
2. Ensure product quality through a robust and distinctive product specification.
3. Promote the PDO to strengthen and maintain its reputation and market recognition.

Protection operates at three levels: **internationally**, through multilateral agreements listing protected GIs by country; **at EU level**, through the recognition, the PDO logo and the dedicated regulation; and **at national level**, in France, through anti-fraud action carried out in collaboration with INAO, fraud investigation agencies and the Pélardon protection association, aimed primarily at curbing unfair competition from producers who benefit from the PDO's reputation without being subject to its controls. **Quality** is guaranteed through the **product specification**, the foundation of the whole GI system, governing rearing conditions, cheese-making practices and the finished product alike. **Promotion activities** contribute to building and maintaining the reputation of PDOs, generating added value for local territories. **Ensuring a clear and consistent visual** identity is essential to improve the visibility and recognition of PDO products. **Joint communication initiatives centred on a single European logo for all agri-food PDOs** helps in further enhancing consumer recognition and strengthen the common values associated with the EU quality schemes. This work is funded through membership fees and dedicated grants for collective marketing at departmental, regional, national and EU level. Furthermore, the Pélardon PDO is now **revisiting its specification on three dimensions**: the **sustainability** of production systems, including the integration of new breeds and recalculation of feed-to-goat ratios; the **impact of climate change** on a Mediterranean-climate appellation, which may require adjustments to the appellation zone, forage and external resources; and **evolving societal expectations around GMO-free feed and animal welfare**. Despite these efforts, Ms. Podeur acknowledged that **maintaining the system carries real costs.** The number of Pélardon producers has halved, as many who initially saw the PDO as an easy win found it harder in practice to work within a closely managed specification, and hesitated between staying in the system or opting out to operate more freely. **Producers cited significant constraints from the specification itself**, the cost of membership contributions and inspections, unfair competition from local producers who do not respect the rules yet benefit from the reputation of the GI,

difficulties enforcing product protection, and generational turnover. In her view, respecting the rules collectively, despite shared challenges such as difficult mountain terrain and climate, remains essential.

Preserving the value created

The third and final roundtable, moderated by **Mr. Fabien Santini** (Head of Unit E.1 – Governance of the Agri-food Markets, DG AGRI, European Commission), featured contributions from **Mr. Stephane Gabard** (President of PDO Bordeaux) and **Mr. Klaus Hoffmann** (Director PGI Bayerisches Bier), who discussed **strategies for preserving the value generated by GIs.**



President **Stéphane Gabard** presented the specific situation of PDO Bordeaux, which is facing a deep structural crisis resulting from declining wine consumption, reduced export opportunities, market pressures, climate-related challenges, and a growing mismatch between supply and demand. Despite a reduction of more than 21,000 hectares of vineyard over the past two years, the balance has not yet been restored, leading to continued pressure on producer prices and a loss of value for winegrowers.

He highlighted that, over the past 25 years, producer prices have remained largely stable while production costs have increased significantly, weakening the economic sustainability of farms and threatening the value created by the PDO system.

In this context, Mr. Gabard underlined the importance of Article 172 ter as a tool to improve market transparency. The publication of non-binding price indicators for grapes, musts, and wines would provide economic benchmarks to support better anticipation, more balanced commercial relations, and fairer value sharing, while remaining compatible with competition rules.

For Bordeaux, this tool forms part of a broader approach combining production management, improved market information, contractual tools, and the development of producer organisations to strengthen the position of growers. Mr. Gabard stressed that restoring value to PDO Bordeaux requires a coordinated toolbox capable of rebuilding balance between supply, demand, competitiveness, and producer remuneration.

.



Mr. Hoffmann presented the experience of **PGI Bayerisches Bier**, emphasising the importance of preserving value through a combination of legal protection, promotion, and the reinforcement of regional identity. The producer association plays an active role in defending the denomination against counterfeiting and ensuring the effective enforcement of intellectual property rights. He also highlighted the complementary relationship between the GI and individual brewery brands, which successfully coexist and reinforce one another by combining collective reputation with individual marketing strategies.

In his experience, promotion is closely linked to Bavaria's cultural heritage. **Traditional venues and events, particularly Oktoberfest and the region's beer gardens, contribute significantly to strengthening the reputation of Bavarian beer as a high-quality and authentic product.**

The discussion highlighted how these locally rooted traditions generate value for the territory as a whole. Oktoberfest, for example, is organised and financed primarily by the City of Munich, with additional support from sponsors and visitors through ticket sales, while participating breweries do not bear the costs of the event itself. Despite the strong reputation associated with the PGI, Mr. Hoffmann noted that breweries continue to face **challenges arising from the bargaining power of large distributors**, whose purchasing capacity enables them to exert considerable pressure on prices. Therefore, collaboration among producers, together with effective legal protection and promotion remains essential to preserve the value and distinctiveness of the GI.

Conclusion

Mr. Riccardo Ricci Curbastro

President of EFOW



Mr. Riccardo Ricci Curbastro, President of EFOW, concluded the workshop by stressing that the future success of GIs depends on their ability to create and retain value through strong collective organisation and effective governance. Drawing on the experiences shared by producer groups, he underlined that the value of GIs is not automatic: it requires time, coordination, and the capacity to take collective decisions.

In this context, he highlighted the key role of GI producer organisations in managing supply, strengthening quality strategies, and improving the position of producers within the value chain. However, he also stressed that these organisations need an enabling regulatory framework and coherent support from public authorities at regional, national, and EU level to fulfil their potential.

Mr. Ricci Curbastro recalled that GIs represent a diverse and strategic asset for Europe, going far beyond a limited number of well-known premium products. Thousands of smaller GI productions contribute to rural development, employment, and territorial cohesion and must be fully considered in EU policies.

Looking ahead, he called for a more strategic EU vision for GIs, including reflection on a possible European Action Plan on Geographical Indications. A stronger and more coordinated approach would help improve implementation, address common challenges, and ensure that GIs continue to deliver economic, social, and territorial value across Europe.

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

AREPO, the Association of European Regions for Products of Origin (www.arepoquality .eu), is a network of regions and producer associations that deals with products of origin and EU quality schemes.

It represents 33 European regions and over 800 associations of producers for over 60% of European GIs.

EFOW, the European Federation of Origin Wines (www.efow.eu), 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 the global alliance of GIs (https://www.origin-gi.com/web_articles/origin-eu/). Its mission is to ensure better protection and promotion of GIs.

oriGIn EU represents individual European GIs groups as well as national GIs organisations.

INRAE, L'Institut national de recherche pour l'agriculture, l'alimentation et l'environnement (www.inrae.fr), is France's public research institute dedicated to agriculture, food, and environmental sciences.

It is the scientific coordinator of the EU project GI SMART on the contribution of Geographical Indications to sustainability and smart territorial development.



MORE INFORMATION

www.gismart.eu

@GI SMART project

Funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union.Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, or the European Research Executive Agency (REA), the SERI or the UKRI. Neither the European Union nor the granting authorities can be held responsible for them.