There is no authority in Moldova to verify compliance with geographical indications for agricultural non-wine products

The development of traditional products with Geographical Indications (GI) and Appellations of Origin (AOs) is a key part of European Union (EU) agriculture policy and the high reputation of such products contributes to national economies and exports. Moldova has successfully developed a GI system for wines, but has yet to develop a viable GI system for agricultural and food products. However, the main obstacle to the development of a viable GI system for these products is the absence of a competent entity that can verify the conformity of GIs.

In this context, experts from the EU funded Project "*Support to enforcement of the intellectual property rights*" have suggested solutions in a Report on gaps in the management and promotion of the GI system in Moldova. The Report was presented on 7th December at an international seminar titled “Ministries and agencies working on promotion and development of national products with Geographical Indications: experience of EU member-states and ways of implementation in Moldova”.

At the opening of the seminar, the Director-General of AGEPI, Lilia Bolocan declared: "*The Agency has made and will continue its efforts to create a strong system of protection and promotion of geographical indications in Moldova. At the same time, this is a complex system requiring the involvement of several actors - starting with producers, competent authorities, certification and control bodies and ending with consumers, who also need to know the benefits of products with geographical indications*".

The Project Key Expert, Yuriy Kapitsa, then stated “*The development of traditional products in the European Union with GI and AO is a remarkable feature of EU agricultural policy of significat economic and cultural value”.*

The Report on gaps in the management and promotion of the GI system in Moldova, presented at the seminar assess the level of harmonization of the national legislation on GIs with European legislation. The document was prepared based on the analysis of legal acts and on discussions with producers and representatives of public institutions.

According to EU and Moldavian requirements, each product, after registration as a GI and before placing on the market, should be subject to verification of compliance with a technical specification. Currently, this requirement is respected only in the wine sector by designating an authority responsible for the verification of compliance. "*Verification of compliance can be ensured either by certification bodies accredited by the National Accreditation Center or by state inspection authorized by a legal act or a mixed system in which both private certification bodies and the state inspection can provide this verification. In this case, the producers decides which entity will carry out the verification.*", states the Report.

The Report also shows that the legislative provisions are horizontal and apply only to agricultural and food products that can be registered as GIs. The implementing rules relating to the technical specifications approval procedure apply only to agricultural products and foodstuffs. There is no detailed procedure applicable to other products.

"*Experience in Italy, France or Spain, for which the promotion of traditional products has become a priority for national policies, shows that the existence of geographical indications can bring economic benefits to producers, protecting also the cultural and culinary heritage of the country. Therefore, the development of the geographical indication system in Moldova will only be possible if all elements such as registration, certification, ex officio control and promotion will be implemented. The legislation is ok, but practically, the system doesn’t work*”, considers the Project International Polish Expert, Dariusz Goszczyński.

On the other side, the Project Non-Key Expert, Anatolie Fala, put emphasis on the promotion of GI

„15, 20% of the population are looking for local products and we see clearly how the consumption tradition changes in our country. Thus, products have to be known by consumers. We have, for example, Corjeut potatoes or Ceadir-Lunga flour, but people do not know the real source of these products".

“GIs help producers to obtain premium prices for their products, bring added value to the region of origin and preserve cultural traditions. These are just some reasons why GIs are important marketing tool that could be used by the national policy of Moldova for its economic development”, stated the Project International Belgium Expert, Irina Kireeva. According to her, with only 10% of the world’s protected GIs coming from developing countries, there is great potential to use this tool for the development of Moldova, reducing poverty through trade.

In order to develop the GI system in Moldova, a series of recommendations on the harmonization of legislation with European regulations and the functioning of the system were formulated during the seminar.

"*In our field, we have strict controls that guarantee the quality of the wines. But we have problems with food and there all the barriers start with legislation. There must be, in my opinion, some regulations that describe the whole procedure and then to be respected. There must be strict control to provide credibility to the producers and, at the same time, to check the perishability of certain products*", says Elizaveta Breahna from the National Office for Vine and Wine of Moldova.

"*Moldova's geographical indications system is at its initial stage of development and its promotion at the level of producers and consumers requires information, reimbursement of costs for registration, training and the development of a national program in the field of geographical indications*", states the Report on gaps in the management and promotion of the GI system in Moldova. It also suggests removing the compliance requirement from local competent authorities that manufacture products in line with its specifications.

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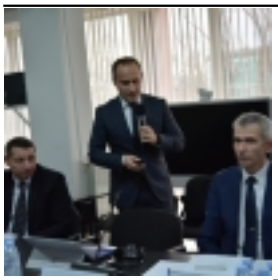
The following GI and AO are registered in Moldova: Divine GI, Stefan Voda GI, Trajan's Tide wine and Codru wine, Zabriceni GI for dry plants and fruits, Calarasi roses jam GI, Nimoreni apricot brandy GI, AO Ciumai for sweet red and naturally red dessert wine, Romanesti AO for red wine and the AO Cheese from Popeasca.

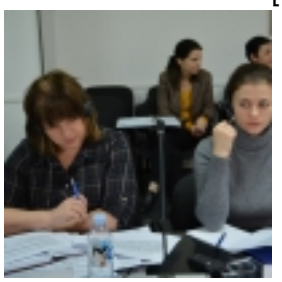
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Presentations from the seminar can be accessed in the section "Seminars".


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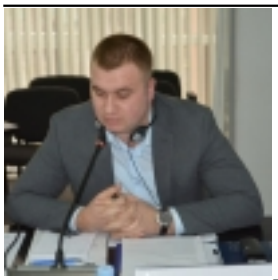

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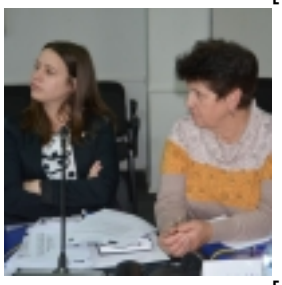

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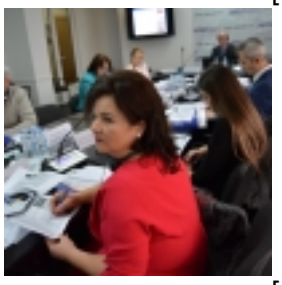

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