



**A tradition of technical and technological innovation: Opportunities, ways of evolution and limits to create resilient GIs**



# **The Geographical Indications, a Challenge for Bulgaria – Initiatives and Divergences**

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**ESSEDRA**

Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic  
Development of Rural Areas



Slow Food®

a project implemented by

# GIs in Bulgaria – where to start with?

- Diverse climate, orography, landscapes (both wild and cultural);
- Long agricultural traditions and related knowledge;
- Geographical and historical isolation among neighboring regions - diverse gastronomic culture.

Food reflects the skills of local communities to utilize available resources



Rich food heritage and food-related biodiversity in Bulgaria



# Rural Areas in Bulgaria



# Bulgarian Agriculture - Historical Background

**1878 – 1944** – ca. 80% of the population in rural areas. Slow, but sustainable growth with entrepreneurial start;

**1944 - 1989** – nationalization of land (over 95%); urbanization and industrialization; private entrepreneurship disappearing in rural areas

**1989 – 2007** – restitution of land; co-operatives and agro-industrial complexes destroyed; arable land concentrated in few large farms

**2007 – 2014** – RDP I – ineffective implementation of measures related to rural development and agroecology;

**2014 – 2020** – RDP II – is there a place for GIs?

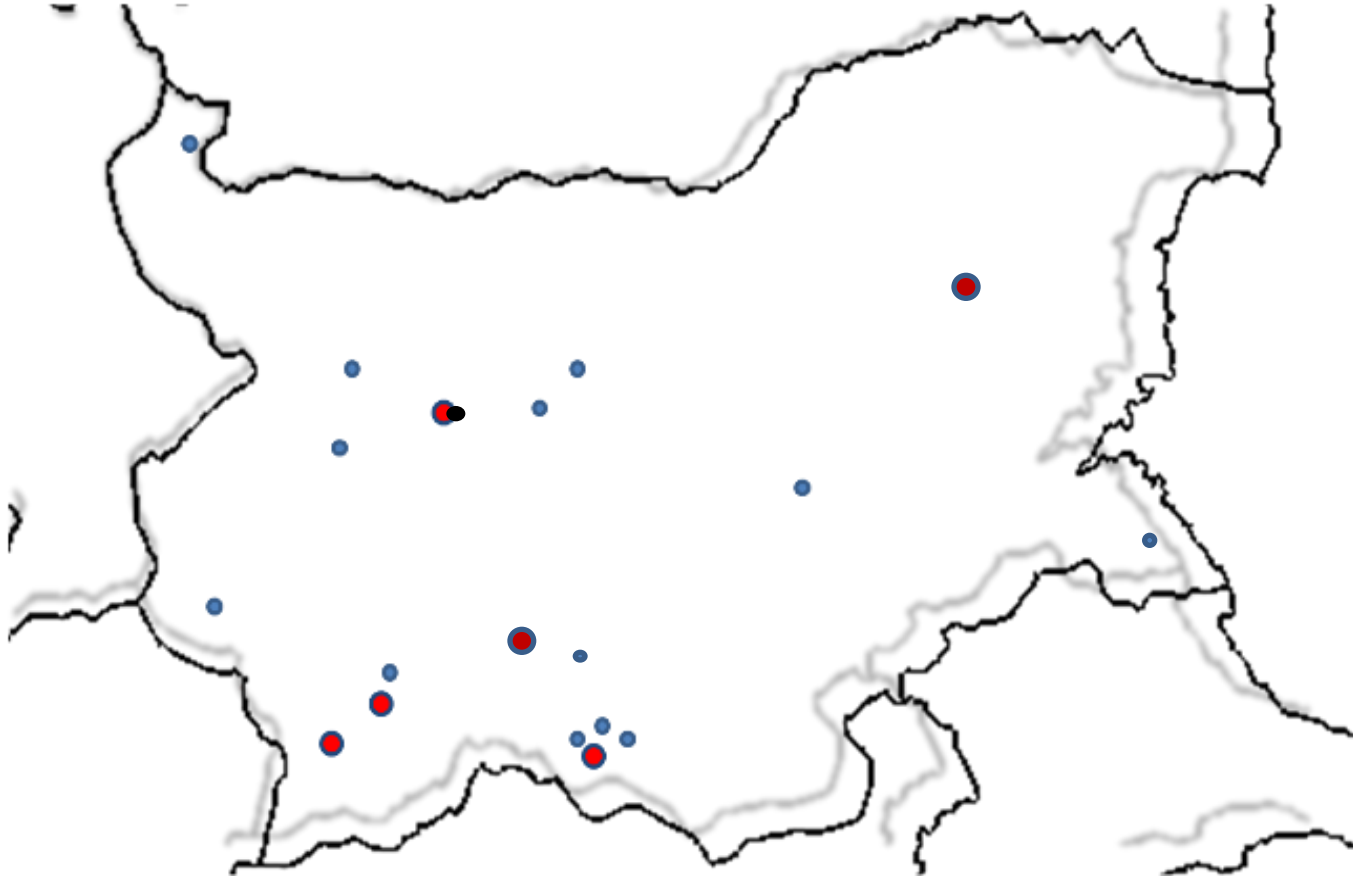


# Rural Areas or Areas for Agriculture?

- **Concentration of agricultural land** in large farms owned by few landowners;
- **Limited access to market** for small farmers and food producers due to mechanistic implementation of the *acquis communautaire*;
- **Long food supply chains** – low prices for raw goods and high prices for endusers;
- **Cheap imports of food** – sometimes with low or questionable quality;
- **Depopulation** of rural areas due to limited development perspectives;
- **Loss of Bulgarian plant and animal genetic resources**;
- **Loss of Bulgarian gastronomic identity and tastes.**



# Slow Food in Bulgaria



- 6 Slow Food Presidia
- Food communities and Slow Food Convivia
  - 1 Earth market



# ESSEDRA - Environmentally Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Rural Areas (2012 – 2016)

**Strengthening the capacity and giving voice to Civil Society Organisations** in the Balkans and Turkey with particular reference on environment, agriculture, rural development and the food sector.

**Spread an agricultural model** based on traditional food, which is good for the environment, good for our health, contributing to social and economical development.

Network of local communities for preservation of local breeds, varieties and traditional food.

[www.essedra.com](http://www.essedra.com)

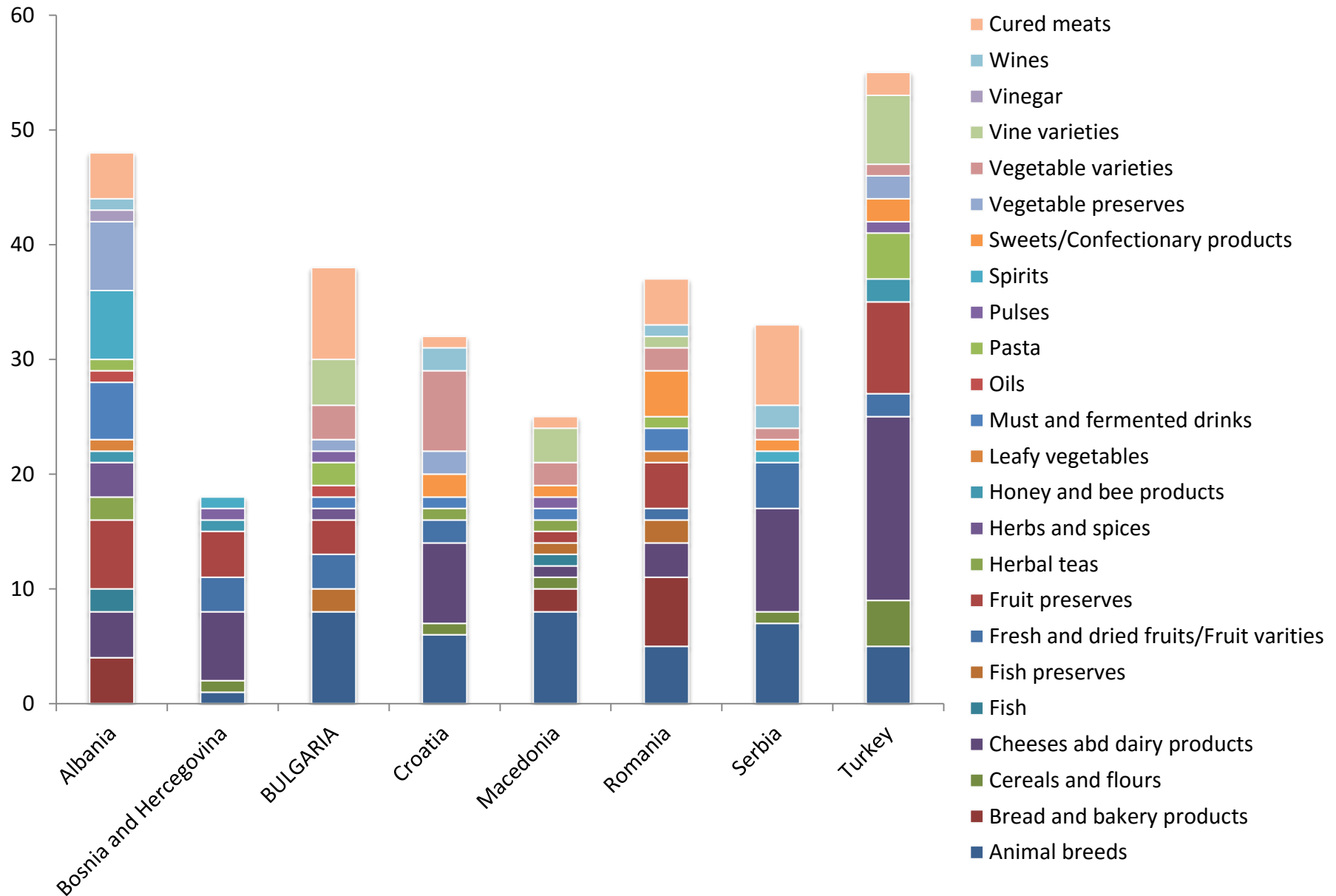
Slow Food Ark of Taste/Slow Food Presidia

[www.slowfoodfoundation.com/ark](http://www.slowfoodfoundation.com/ark)

[www.slowfoodfoundation.com/presidia](http://www.slowfoodfoundation.com/presidia)



# Products Identified by ESSEDRA Project





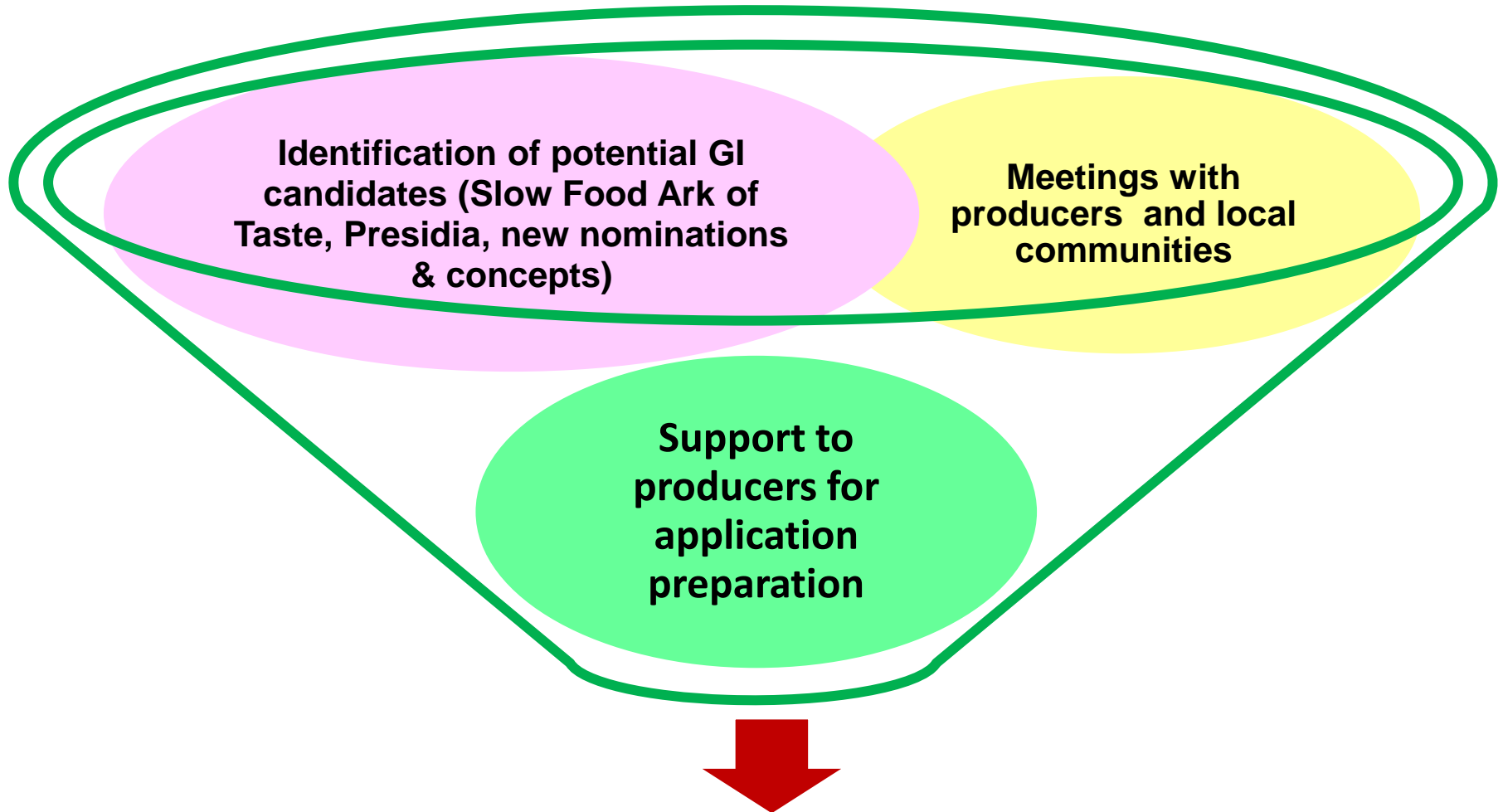
# “Let’s save the Bulgarian Taste“

- A campaign designed and initiated by Momchil Nekov, a MEP from Bulgaria (S&D Group), Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- Official launch – July 2015;
- Impact and results from the first year:
  - Cooperation with Bulgarian and EU authorities improved;
  - Media and public presence;
  - Enhanced expertise;
  - Interest by producers;
  - Improved image of the EP and the EU;
  - More visibility for Slow Food Bulgaria.



# „Let's save the Bulgarian Taste“

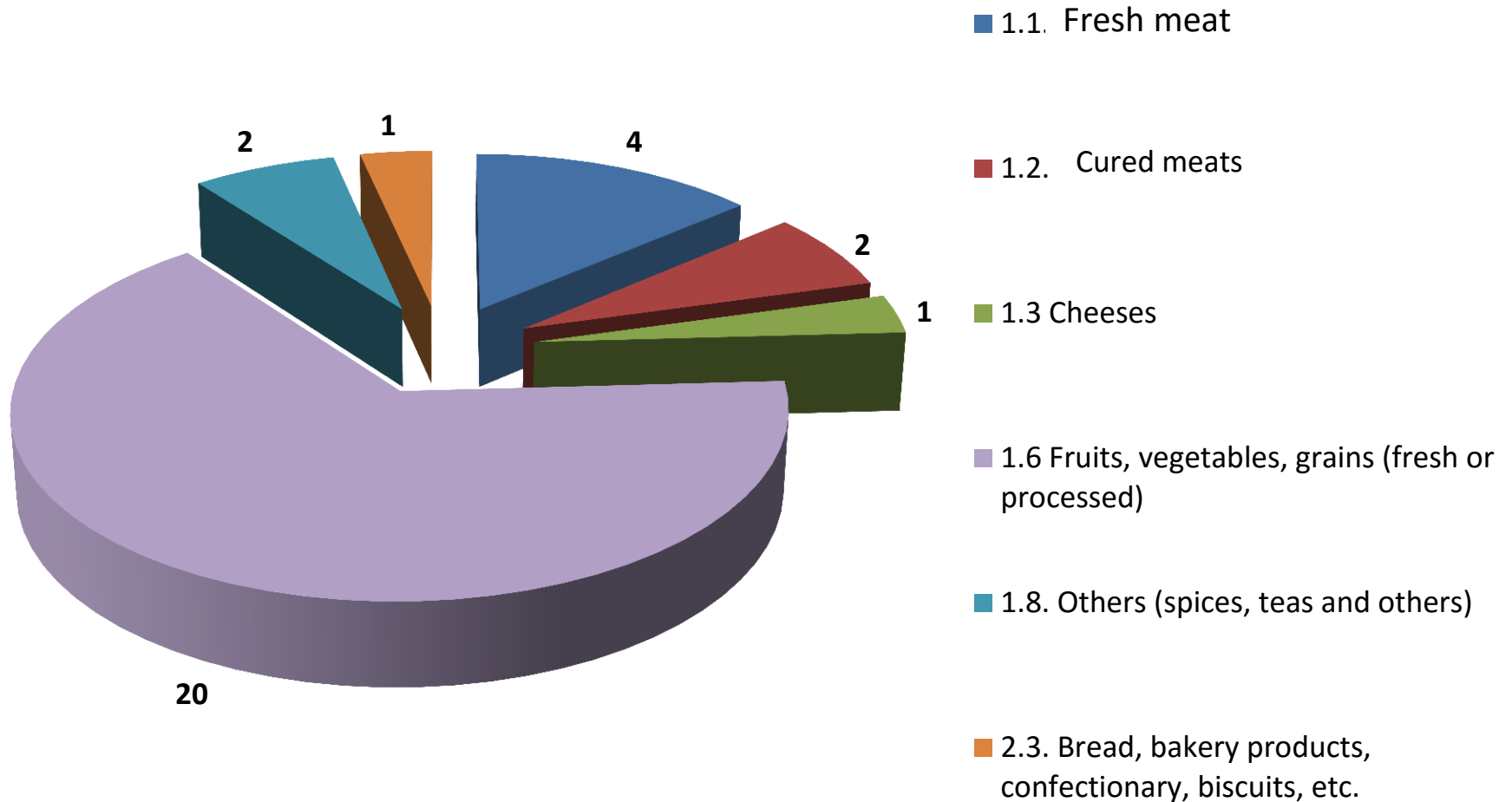
## Methodology

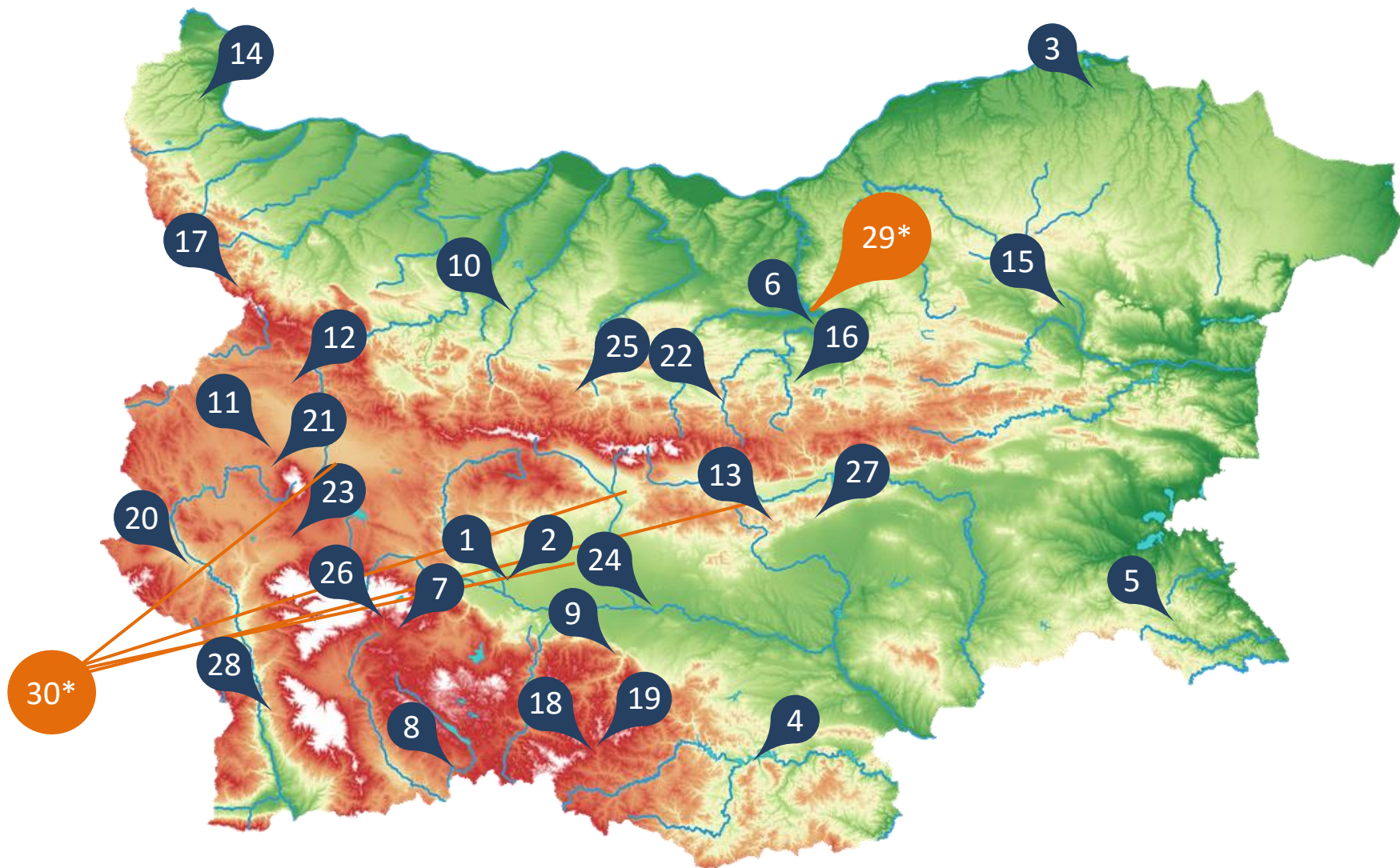


**Promotion of products and producers in the campaign  
Increased variety of quality products for the EU market**

# “Let’s save the Bulgarian Taste”

## Nominated Products





1 Pink tomato from Kurtovo Konare – 2 Kurtovska kapiya (pepper variety) – 3 Silistrenski kajsii (Apricot varieties) - 4 Meat from Rhodope shorthorn cattle – 5 Bulgarian Strandzha tea - 6 Lyaskovski luk (onion variety) - 7 Belishki luk - 8 Banichanski luk - 9 Asenovgradska kaba (onion variety) - 10 Reseshki voden luk- 11 Meat from Sofia sheep – 12 Meat from Zapadnostoroplaninska sheep – 13 Starozagorski kamush (leek variety) - 14 Vidinski koravci (melon variety) - 15 Meat from East Balkan swine - 16 Elenski but (cured pork leg) – 17 Chiprovski obge (filo pastry sheets) - 18 Smilyanski fasul (bean variety) - 19 Smoljanski kartofi (potato varieties) – 20 Kyustendilski chereshy (cherry varieties) - 21 Radomirski chesan (garlic variety) - 22 Gabrovski pestil - 23 Samokovski kartofi – 24 Sadovski fastaci (peanut varieties) 25 Zeleno sirene (cheese) - 26 Napavok (cured sausage) - 27 Samardala (spice) – 28 Brejanski kesten (chestnut variety) **29\* Gornooryahovski sudzhuk (cured sausage) – 30\* Bulgarsko rozovo maslo (Bulgarian rose oil)**

# Bulgarian GIs?

## 2 Bulgarian PGIs and 5 TSGs in DOOR system

Challenges and divergences encountered in Bulgaria:

- Prevalence of industrial agriculture and food production
- Gaps in market history for artisan food products
- Implementation of EU regulations in Bulgaria do not reflect the national specificities in agriculture;
- Small food producers do not tend to cooperate and reach larger markets;
- Depopulation of rural areas, lack of social services, poor infrastructure;
- Lack of consistent national policy for preservation of food traditions;
- Globalized seed exchange and loss of local plant varieties;
- Subsidies for local breeds do not stimulate artisan food production.



# GIs, Local Plant Varieties and Land Races

- Plant varieties and land races preserved by the local communities;
- Partnership with research centres to guarantee the genetic identity;
- Promotion of Bulgarian plant varieties among farmers;
- Support from Measure 10. Agroecology from RDP (2014-2020);
- Adding value by processing plant products:
  - Need for flexible implementation of hygiene regulations;
  - Need for cooperation among farmers
- Farmers' markets to stimulate sustainable entrepreneurial approach



# GIs and Local Breeds

- Registered farmers and breeding associations;
- Subsidies for preservation of local breeds;
- Subsidy only per capita of animal - no stimulus or own initiative for processing of primary products;
- Low prices of primary products;
- No geographical reference for products from local breeds on the market.
- Need for cooperation among farmers for processing and promotion



# GIs and Processed Food

- Transition from home-made to market oriented production;
- Reduced local production of raw materials – transformation of the recipes as an excuse to use food additives and preservatives;
- Take the name – change the rest – imitation of traditional products to attract consumers
- Need for flexible implementation of EU food regulations;
- Promotion of cooperation among farmers for processing and marketing their production





# Traditional Knowledge and GIs – Starting Point for Innovations

- ✓ Traditional knowledge provides for:
  - ✓ Long-term, geo-referenced sustainable practices of local communities;
  - ✓ Sustainable use of plants, animals and landscapes
  - ✓ Resilience to climate change and desertification
  - ✓ Successful local level adaptation to climate change and advice on sustainable mitigation activities
- ✓ Bidirectional cooperation between local communities and researchers

Farmers – “interpreters” of traditional knowledge to researchers.



# Example 1. Bulgarian Alliums – Potential GIs

Denomination	Origin/Distribution areas	Species	Ethnobotanical use	Potential QS
<b>Banichanski luk</b>	Banichan village, Gotse Delchev Municipality, Blagoevgrad District	<i>Allium cepa</i> L.	Medicinal Edible fresh and cooked	PDO
<b>Belishki luk</b>	Belitsa, Razlog municipality, Blagoevgrad District	<i>Allium cepa</i> L.	Medicinal Edible fresh and cooked	PDO
<b>Reseleshki luk</b>	Reselets village, Pleven District	<i>Allium cepa</i> L.	Medicinal Edible fresh and cooked	PDO
<b>Radomirski leten chesan</b>	Radomir municipality, Pernik District	<i>Allium sativum</i> L.	Medicinal Edible fresh and cooked	PDO
<b>Samardala</b>	Stara Zagora, Sliven, Bourgas, Varna District	<i>Nectaroscordum siculum</i> ssp. <i>bulgaricum</i> ( <i>Allium siculum</i> ssp. <i>dioscoridis</i> )	Edible fresh and cooked	PDO/PGI

## Example 2. Cherni Vit Green Cheese

- Made from sheep milk and covered with a crust of bluish-green mould
- Produced for centuries, abandoned, rediscovered and promoted by Slow Food.
- Isolated LAB strains of *Lactobacillus plantarum* – various activities against pathogen bacteria (*Escherichia coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterobacter feacalis*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *P. putida*, *Bacillus subtilis*).
- A complete inhibition against pathogenic moulds (*Aspergillus flavus*, *A. niger*, *Fusarium graminearum*, *Trichoderma viride* and *Penicillium claviforme*).

E.Lukach, Y. Evstatieva, D. Nikolova, D. Dimitrova, T. Ivanova, R. Tropcheva\* (2016)



# Future Steps

- Preparation of applications for PDO/PGI;
- Promotion of producers and products in Bulgaria and abroad;
- Amendments in the national legal framework in favour of GI production;
- Networking among stakeholders for sustainable production of PDO/PGI;
- Public awareness on advantages and challenges of GI production.



# (IM)POSSIBLE BENEFITS?



## **Economic benefits**

- Fair food prices;
- Income for local economies;
- Higher life standard;
- Local markets of farm food;
- Synergies with relevant local business;
- Diversification of rural tourism;
- Effective and balanced use of EU funds.

## **Social benefits**

- Employment and education at local level;
- Decrease of depopulation and consolidation of local communities;
- Diversification of local social services;
- Strengthening the contacts between urban and rural population;
- Access to fresh and healthy food.

## **Ecological benefits**

- Preservation of genetic resources and related knowledge;
- Preservation of nature-friendly traditional agriculture;
- Decrease of green gases and mitigation of climate change;
- Preservation of soil fertility;
- Preservation and diversification of ecosystem goods and services;
- Preservation of wild species and habitats and sustainability of Natura 2000 network.



**Thank you for your attention!**

