



# REPORT ON AREPO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD VIRTUAL MEETING

29 January 2021

## List of participants:

### Members of the Executive Board

- Eirini Choudetsanaki, President of AREPO;
- Riccardo Deserti, representing AREPO Vice-Presidency and Director of the Consortium of Parmigiano-Reggiano;
- Joan Godia Tresanchez, Treasurer of AREPO and Vice-Director of Agrifood Quality, Generalitat de Catalunya;

### Other participants

- Laurent Gomez, Secretary General of AREPO;
- Charalampos-Nikolaos Piteris, Training Director VTCRRU-REGION OF CRETE;
- Delia Colomer Bosch, Head of Promotion and Agrifood Quality of the Generalitat de Catalunya;
- Giulia Scaglioni, Policy Officer of AREPO;
- Francesca Alampi, Policy Officer of AREPO.

AREPO's Executive Board meeting was held on the morning of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the members of the Board participated via videoconference.** Interpretation has been provided through Zoom platform.

The President, Ms Eirini Choudetsanaki, introduced the meeting welcoming all the participants and congratulating on the **successful outcome of the national meetings held during the month of October**. Members have actively participated and contributed to the exchange, showing great appreciation for the results achieved as well as for the virtual format chose for involving them in AREPO's activities. Their satisfaction and trust have been proved by the fact that, despite the very hard sanitary and economic crisis, **AREPO received 30 membership fees in 2020**, its absolute record since its creation in 2004.

Then, she presented the **agenda of the meeting**, which was made up as follows:

- Discussion on the **modalities for renewing the composition of the Executive Board** (Presidency, Vice-Presidency, Treasurer) and on **the organisation of the 2021 General Assemblies**. Proposal of the Secretary General: virtual GA in spring and elective GA in September.
- Update on the **state of the 2020 accounts**
- Discussion on **how to spend the 2020 budget surplus on an event or any other relevant action**. Proposal from the Secretary General to be discussed: a European event on the education of the public, communication, promotion, rather than oversimplification with colours that disempowers consumers and goes against the aims of the EU rural development and health policy.
- Updates on AREPO actions and activities

## 1. DISCUSSION ON THE MODALITIES FOR RENEWING THE COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ON THE ORGANISATION OF THE 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

Under the current exceptional circumstances caused by Covid-19 epidemic, **the Secretary General proposed to hold another virtual General Assembly in spring 2021 and to extend the term of the current Board until September 2021, when an elective General Assembly should take place.**

The Board members gave their availability for an extension of their mandate, in the view of assuring stability to the Association during this unprecedented situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, they asked to **set the month of September as final deadline for the renewal of AREPO's Board in order to respect the principle of democratic elections.** The Secretary General stressed that this is not the first time that, due to exceptional circumstances, the mandate of an Executive Board is extended by one year, since it has happened during the presidency of the Emilia-Romagna Region.

As a result, all AREPO Members will be informed about this proposal and the extension of the mandate will be **subject to the vote in occasion of the next virtual General Assembly in spring.**

## 2. UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE 2020 ACCOUNTS

Then, the Secretary General presented the state of the financial accounts of the association in 2020. As expected, the year concluded with a **positive result of + € 68.000**, explained by the absence of travel costs due to COVID-19 travel restrictions; the historic record of membership fees received in 2020 (30 paying members); the advance payment of the Horizon2020 Moving project (+ € 40,000; personnel and consulting costs paid for at 100%).

The main voices of expenditure were:

- € 12.000 for the interpretation services arranged for the online GA and the national meetings held in October 2020;
- Integration of Francesca Alampi into the staff of AREPO (salaries and social contributions: + € 30.000).

Out of prudence, given the continuing COVID crisis, the Secretary General **proposed to allocate only € 40.000 of the budget surplus** to the organisation of a strong action by AREPO in favour of quality products from its member regions, perhaps in cooperation with other organisations.

## 3. DISCUSSION ON HOW TO SPEND THE 2020 BUDGET SURPLUS ON AN EVENT OR ANY OTHER RELEVANT ACTION

The Board examined and discussed several proposals concerning how to spend the 2020 budget surplus on an event or any other relevant action:

1. Considering the ongoing talks at EU level about the introduction of a Front of pack nutrition labelling, the Secretary General proposed the organisation of a European event whose main aim should be **to communicate on nutrition education and the importance of an active lifestyle.**
2. AREPO Policy Officer, Giulia Scaglioni, reminded the possibility to organise **an event in Brussels on the Farm to fork strategy together with oriGIn.**
3. AREPO Treasurer, Joan Godia Tresanchez, proposed to prepare **some common informative material on EU Geographical Indications, in line with the priorities of the EU Farm to fork strategy**, e.g. the advantages of GIs in relation to the main objectives and aims of Farm to fork. Such material should be diffused in AREPO regions also at school level.

4. AREPO Treasurer reminded as well that the **UN General Assembly designated 2021 the [International Year of Fruits and Vegetables \(IYFV\)](#)** and that FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the year in collaboration with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. As a consequence, Mr Godia Tresanchez **proposed to work on PDO and PGI fruits and to promote them within this framework.**
5. Mentioning that the region of Catalunya is working on a law on Public Food Procurement that intends to make mandatory the use of local products and PDOs and PGIs in public menus, AREPO Treasurer also presented the idea of organising a public debate or conference on the topic, involving AREPO regions, to explore how to promote this initiative and encourage especially public administrations to include PDO and PGI products in the menus they propose, with the ultimate aim of facilitating the consumption and improving consumers recognition.
6. Then, Mr Deserti, representing AREPO Vice-Presidency, suggested to **give priority to the link between PDOs/PGIs and their territories of origin, focusing on tourism.** At weekends, we could **launch the “Day of PDOs and PGIs”**: producers from different AREPO regions will open the doors of their factories to consumers, thus allowing them to know more about the production and characteristics of the products. Commenting on this proposal, the Secretary General recalled a study carried out in the past on the touristic flux of AREPO regions, adding that **AREPO could resume its strategic cooperation with [Necstour](#).**
7. To conclude, **AREPO President supported the option of publishing informative materials** (leaflets targeting different ages) to further improve consumers understanding and recognition of PDOs, PGIs and STGs logos.

With regards to the possibility of publishing and diffusing leaflets and other type of written material on GIs, the Secretary General recommended **to work on this task with the support of a paid intern.**

To sum up, **it has been agreed that the Secretary General and the AREPO team in Brussels will set out several proposals that will be shared with the Board together with the report of this meeting,** thus to be able to reach an agreement on the type of action to put in place.

#### 4. UPDATES ON AREPO ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

AREPO Policy Officers updated the members of the Executive Board on the following topics. Further details in the [PowerPoint presentation](#) delivered during the meeting.

##### EU QUALITY POLICY

Following the evaluation of EU Quality Policy, carried out all along 2020 (click here to consult AREPO [position paper](#) submitted to the public consultation), the Commission has now set into motion the process that should lead, by the end of 2021, to a **proposal for the revision of EU quality policy**, accompanied by an **Impact Assessment**, based on the results of the ongoing [Public consultation on the Revision of EU geographical indications scheme](#).

AREPO policy officer, Giulia Scaglioni, presented the strategy adopted to consult AREPO members and submit a position addressing the proposals and objectives of the consultation. She reminded as well the main points and proposals of AREPO position.

##### FARM TO FORK STRATEGY - FRONT OF PACKAGE NUTRITION LABELLING INITIATIVE (FOPNL)

Following up on the Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission has recently published two roadmaps concerning some actions in the field of information to consumers in order to **empower them making healthy food choices**:

1) [Roadmap on Food labelling - revision of rules on information provided to consumers](#), which includes the following proposals:

- to introduce standardised **mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling**
- to extend mandatory origin or provenance information for certain products
- to revise the rules on date marking ('use by' and 'best before' dates).

2) [Roadmap on Facilitating healthier food choices – establishing nutrient profiles](#), in order to restrict nutrition and health claims, thus preventing a positive health message on foods with a non-healthy profile.

The European Commission will prepare an **impact assessment** in 2021 and plans **to adopt its proposal on these subjects by the end of 2022**.

AREPO Policy Officer, Francesca Alampi, presented the analysis carried out by AREPO and the main messages of the position that will be submitted to respond to the roadmap. It has been reminded as well that a **meeting of the AREPO Board of producers** will be organised in order to discuss AREPO position on the **FOPNL**.

Ms Choudetsanaki promised to contribute to the internal discussion on this topic, providing a study carried out by Greek experts.

#### UPDATE ON CAP POST 2020

The Executive Board received an update on the ongoing trilogues between the European Commission, Council and European Parliament on the future CAP.

Furthermore, a future internal activity, resulted from the meeting with AREPO Italian members, has been presented: AREPO will set-up specific working groups on the “types of measures” allowed under Article 71 of Regulation on CAP Strategic Plans dedicated to “cooperation”, in order to identify which types of interventions should be included and propose a common draft of these interventions.

To conclude the presentation on this theme, the **AREPO-oriGIn amendments included in the final text adopted by the European Parliament** have been reminded.

#### BREXIT

The Executive Board has been informed on the latest developments concerning Brexit, especially on the **EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement**.

The type of protection granted to EU GIs through the Withdrawal Agreement has been presented, as well as the conditions required to apply for the protection under the new UK GI Schemes.

#### GIS AND PUBLIC GOODS: EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On 16 November 2020 a virtual conference was organised in collaboration with Strength2food, in order to discuss with AREPO members and other GI stakeholders and policy makers the results and recommendations delivered by the Strength2food project.

**This represented a strategic moment, since** Commission was concluding its evaluation process on quality policy. The main aim of the discussion was to elaborate policy recommendations on EU quality policy with AREPO members and scientific committee.

#### SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

The definition of the **three-level governance structure** has been recalled. In addition, the Policy Officer presented the strategy adopted to expand the geographic coverage of AREPO Scientific Council.

AREPO President committed to share soon names of Greek experts willing to join AREPO Scientific Council.

#### AREPO STUDIES

The members of the Executive Board have been informed on the state of the work concerning the studies commissioned in 2020.

1. **GIs as ingredient in processed food:** The report is about to be finalised. Following the translation in the four AREPO working languages, we should be able to publish it by the first semester of 2021.
2. **Problems and needs of small GIs:** The study is still ongoing. The student has so far realised a database including all GIs represented in AREPO and has set the criteria to define small and medium GIs. A survey should be submitted to AREPO Regions and producers in order to collect information for the study and to elaborate recommendations.

#### CONCLUSIONS

AREPO President concluded thanking the rest of the Board for their participation and the proposals presented. She thanked as well the AREPO team for its work and the organisation of the meeting.

Here's the main conclusions of the meeting:

- All AREPO Members will be informed about the proposal of extending the mandate of the Executive Board until an elective General Assembly in September 2021. This proposal will be **subject to the vote in occasion of the next virtual General Assembly in spring.**
- Only **€ 40.000 of the budget surplus** (€ 68.000) will be destined to the organisation of a strong action by AREPO in favour of quality products from its member regions.
- The Secretary General and the AREPO team in Brussels **will set out several proposals that will be shared with the Board together with the report of this meeting**, thus to be able to reach an agreement on the type of action, among those proposed, to put in place.

**Eirini Choudetsanaki,**  
President of AREPO

**P/O Laurent Gomez**  
Secretary General of AREPO