

Extended Networking Meeting – "FOCUS on Organic and Traditional FOOD consumers in the Balkans"



Geographical Indications in Western Balkans Countries



Podgorica, 7 Juin 2011

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Background of GIs in the WBC

- Historically Yugoslavia and before its existence, its predecessor States have been among the most proactive countries at international level to protect sources and appellations of origin:
 - Paris Convention (1883);
 - the Madrid Agreement (1891) and
 - the Lisbon Agreement (1958)

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Background of GIs in the WBC

- During the Yugoslavian era, the protection of Geographical Indications was perceived exclusively as Intellectual Property tool
- In the 90's, the new states start to reform their system

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Nature of reforms

- Reform driven by EU integration
- GIs become a tool for RD and quality
 - Ministries of Agriculture competence ↗
 - Intellectual Property Office competence ↘
 - The registration and protection are not anymore the ultimate goal, but many do not understand the implication of this shift
- But still top-down approach → Resistance to put the producers at the center of process and lack of transparency:
 - Code of practices not public or not easily accessible
 - No objection procedure
 - No obligation for having producer organisations registering GIs

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WBC international cooperation in the field of GIs

- Bi-lateral assistance project in BiH (Livanjski Sir I Sir iz Mijeha)
- FAO Case studies (see <http://www.foodquality-origin.org>)
- Research projects in Serbia and Macedonia
- Technical assistance projects in Serbia and in Croatia
 1. Institutions capacity building (legal framework, certification)
 2. Support to selected GI producers

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FAO Case Studies: Diagnosis

- Top-down approach, no need for collective approach and producers organization (CoP, authorized users)
- Normative approach: quality labels perceived as tools to access international markets and organize/control productions as well for implement food safety standards
- Transitional stage as it is emerging interest for rural development and involvement of ministries of Agriculture

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FAO Case Studies: Needs

- Clarification of legal status and roles of institutions
- Networking, coordination between institutions
- Implementation of certification and control to increase GI credibility
- Official seals
- Information and promotion to consumers

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Guide Linking People, Places and Products



- **FAO/SINER-GI**
- **Road map** for activating a local sustainable process in which GI can play a role for economic development and social/environmental preservation
- Step by step approach
- Soon available in Serbian and Croatian versions

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Protection and valorisation of traditional cheeses in Herzegovina, *UCODEP*

- Activate, protect local resources (sensibilization of the producers and other stakeholders)
- Qualify a product (definition of technical specification of the product, certification, etc.)
- Commercialization (promotion, education on food, events, fairs, etc..)
- Integration with the territory (gastronomic itineraries, inclusion in regional brand, etc.)

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Protection and valorisation of traditional cheeses in Herzegovina

- Bottom-up approach
- Investment support to on-farm processing
- Marketing mix
- Important lobby of the project on state and entities authorities to enact coherent policies
- **Long-term project (>7 years)**



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Support to GI implementation in Serbia and Croatia SEEDEV, REDD and the Swiss Institute for Intellectual Property

2 different projects

- Support to different State Institutions and service providers (advisors and Certification bodies)
- Support to groups of GI producers in form of training and process facilitation (2 products in Croatia, 5 in Serbia)
- In Serbia, reform of the legal framework to align it on EC directives
- Funded by FAO, EBRD (Croatia) and Swiss government

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Conclusions

- Different of stages of reform process from country to country
- Progressive increase of Ministries of Agriculture to include Rural development dimension implies an increased role of the institutions in charge of RD and food quality (e.g. MinAgri)
- In all countries except Croatia and Slovenia, all will to further reform the legal FW
- Though a large number of GI registered in the WBC no major economic impacts:
 - Lack of enforcement (certification and control)
 - Absence of strong producer organisations

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Thanks for your attention