The development of geographical indications in Moldova is stagnant due to the lack of a certification authority

The current situation in the field of geographical indications in the Republic of Moldova, the barriers for promoting the products with geographical indications, but also the recommended solutions for the development of this system were discussed at the High-level meeting, held on February 6th.

The event, organized with the support of the EU project „Support to enforcement of the intellectual property rights", gathered representatives of the beneficiary authority, as well as the team of experts responsible for the project.

“We continue to move quite efficiently to resolve a gap in the functioning of the protection of national geographical indications system, namely certification and control of geographical indications products. Unfortunately, it is not clearly stipulated in the legislation which institution should have these attributions, especially in the context of reforming the central public administration. The solution is at the limit of several areas of competence. Either we motivate the business environment to develop its competencies for certification, or we offer these skills to an institution that is closer to what certification and control of agro-food products”, declared the Director of the AGEPI, Lilia Bolocan, as the main beneficiary of the project.

“*The objective of our project is to increase the opportunities for Moldova's economy in the protection and export of products with geographical indications. This area is very well developed in the EU countries and brings substantial incomes compared to other agricultural products. These activities can also be carried out in the Republic of Moldova, but the lack of a certifying authority and the high costs do not allow this. If we continue to look for solutions, we will miss some opportunities that we have today”*, mentioned Yuriy Kapitsa, expert of the EU project.

During the meeting, the international expert Dariusz Goszczyński spoke about the policies and practices of developing the geographical indication system based on Polish experience and provided recommendations on how to implement them in our country: "*Poland's geographical indications system is based on trust, particularly on citizens' trust in the products they consume. That is why these products must be controlled at different levels”*. According to the expert, verification of the conformity of products with geographical indications in the Polish state is carried out either by the private authorities (which must be accredited and have expertise), by the public authorities (which must guarantee impartiality and do not need accreditation) or by using a mixed verification mechanism.

Thus, in order to develop the geographical indication system in Moldova, the participants at the High-Level Meeting formulated several solutions regarding the functioning of the geographical indications system and the procedure for checking the compliance of the products with geographical indications, which, according to Law no. 66 of 27.03.2008, „shall be ensured by the competent authority designated by the Government”. Thus, on one side, representatives from the National Agency for Food Safety stated that the institution is ready to become a certification boby as it has the necessary infrastructure and specialists who can be trained. On other side, Vasile Luca, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, believes that the lack of a certification body is not the most serious problem. According to him, the Center for Applied Metrology and Certification (CMAC) and the Republican Center for Veterinary Diagnosis (CRDV), which have the necessary accreditation can extend their attributions to issue conformity certificates to geographical indications products. The official also believes that the the experience with wines with geographical indications for the other products.

"*Local produces need to be aware of the importance of this certificate of compliance, because that will increase their revenue. And consumers pay more when it comes to an original product than a copy. We have to convince our producers that certification is not an exercise for the Government but for their benefits. The experts of our project are open supporting the authorities in developing*

certification forms, training inspectors or developing the procedure", said Maximilian Foedinger, Team Leader of the project „Support to enforcement of the intellectual property rights".

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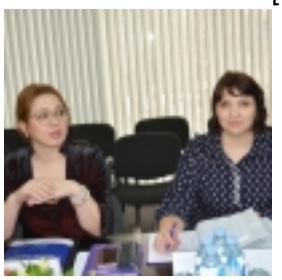
The following Geographical Indications and Appellations of Origin are registered in Moldova: Divine GI, Stefan Voda GI, Trajan's Tide wine and Codru wine, Zabriceni GI for dry plants and fruits, Calarasi roses jam GI, Nimoreni apricot brandy GI, AO Ciumai for sweet red and naturally red dessert wine,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

The technical assistance project EuropeAid/137467/DH/SER/MD "Support to enforcement of the intellectual property rights" was launched in November 2016, with a two-year implementation period, one of the basic objectives being the improvevement of the geographical indication system in the Republic of Moldova.

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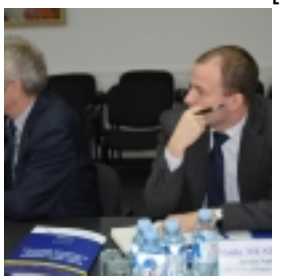

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