

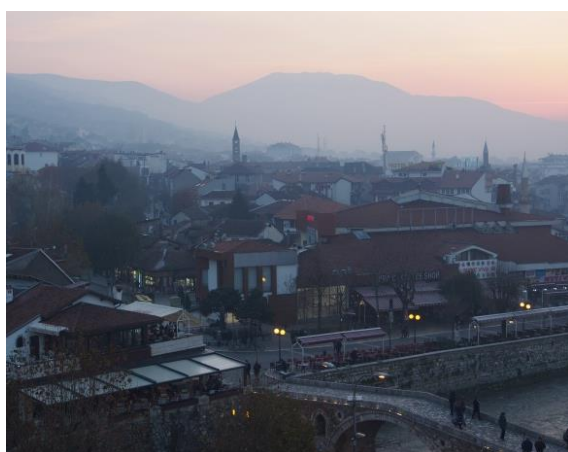
Practitioners' Encounter on Geographical Indications in Western Balkan Countries

BiodivBalkans Project - Prizren, Kosovo - November 2016



DEBRIEFING DOCUMENT

DECEMBER 2016



INTRODUCTION

This first regional Practitioners' encounter on Geographical Indications in Western Balkan countries was organized in Prizren, Kosovo, on November 22nd and 23rd, 2016.

CONTEXT

It was the result of a joint action led by **BiodivBalkans** program, a research-action project, working in the Balkans since 2012, along with **Adecia** - the French network of public agricultural expertise, food and rural development - and with the support of Partners of the project in the region: **French Embassies** in Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina, and the **Kosovo Institute of Intellectual Property** (KIIP).

BiodivBalkans project is funded by the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM). The overall objective of the project is to combine biodiversity preservation and sustainable economic development by enhancing and showcasing local products of the Balkan Mountains. The main hypothesis is that Signs of quality and origin (SIQO) can be used as a tool to combine objectives of economic development and environmental preservation in rural areas. Mainly experimented in Albania the project has also a regional dimension and this "Practitioners' Encounter" is one of the BiodivBalkans networking actions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this "Practitioners' Encounter" was to share grassroots and institutional experiences on building Geographical Indications (GI). The aim of these exchanges was to increase the stakeholders' involvement and understanding through the comparisons of different learning processes experimented both at local and national levels in candidate countries. This regional **Practitioners' Encounter** provided space, time and resources, to extensively discuss with the same round table, GI practical, institutional and strategic issues.

SCOPE

Participants from invited countries of the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, FYROM and Bosnia & Herzegovina) were represented by "delegations" composed of civil servants, local authorities, producer associations, universities, development catalyzers and knowledge brokers.

The aim was to cross visions, objectives and practical challenges to build a functional legislative and institutional framework – in line with EU standards - and to support an effective collective action at local level. Practical case studies (at least, one by country) were presented and extensively discussed.

WELCOMING SESSION

Mr. Didier Chabert, French Ambassador in Kosovo emphasized that the French Embassy was happy to support such initiatives, especially initiatives where regional countries are involved. He highlighted that France was very experienced with GIs, therefore, France will continue to support the region in developing GIs as a tool to foster regional cooperation, support the local and regional economic development as well as rural development. GIs have also helped to protect the environment. That is also why Geographical Indications have become an important part of the EU “*acquis*”.

“Countries of this region are all on their EU path and need to build their capacities in this field. They are known for the quality of their traditional products and food production know-how. Therefore, it is the right time to start protecting these products and use them as a tool of sustainable socio-economic development. In Kosovo, France and French experts from INAO have been working since 2013 with the help of the EU Commission (the TAIEX instrument) hands in hands with the Kosovo authorities and producers on the ground to protect the first geographical indication, the Sharri cheese and develop tools necessary to make the system operational and implement effectively the law. It has been a great success so far, and we can soon expect other products like wine, wild berries or honey to follow this path.”

Mr. Vezir Januzi, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo, welcomed the participants and shared the policies of this Ministry towards supporting Geographical Indications in Kosovo. He mentioned that the Ministry, in coordination with other institutions, will work closely in order to make sure that Sharri Cheese to be a product that will be used as a model for other products that can be protected by Geographical Indications. Ministry of Agriculture is also working on the wines to be protected by GIs. On behalf of the Minister, the Deputy Minister thanked the participants from the regional countries.

Mr. Veli Hoti, Director of the Kosovo Institute of Intellectual Property (KIIP), made a presentation on the current Kosovo's legal framework covering the Geographical Indications. Additionally, he made a brief introduction on the roles of the authorities covering the three main pillars of the GIs such as the Certification, Registration and Controlling authorities. He emphasized the friendly approach of the Kosovo GI law as regards to the Trans-border GIs. This is certainly in line with the EU Regulation and practices. Mr. Hoti thanked the French Ambassador, the French Embassy in general, for the continuous support towards establishing and strengthening the Geographical Indications in Kosovo. Additionally, the financial support and the expertise of the BiodivBalkans Project for this event and previous activities are very much appreciated and he hopes to continue this cooperation.

Mr. François Lerin, Program Coordinator at CIHEAM-IAMM, welcomed all the national delegations and guest speakers on the behalf of the Franco-Albanian coordination team of BiodivBalkans Project. He thanked ADECIA, the French Embassy in Kosovo, KIIP and the all regional Partners, who made this first “Regional encounter on GI” possible. **Mr. Roland Bardhi**, in charge of BiodivBalkans project at the Mountain Area Development Agency (Albania) mentioned the current activities carried out by the Agency in the frame of BiodivBalkans project to build PGI on three products in Albania: wild blueberries, chestnuts and chestnuts honey and Hasi kid goat meat – for the last one presented in depth during the Encounter.

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. OPENING SESSION

François Lerin,

Coordinator of the “reflexive pole¹” of the BiodivBalkans Project (CIHEAM-IAMM²)

Geographical Indications (from now on GI, including both: Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) & Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)) can be considered at the same time - but with variable intensity – as: market instruments; rural or territorial development tools; and/or as environmental incentives. Above all, GI are always original and specific “devices” (*dispositifs*), even if they show some “regularities” (common aspects) stemming from a common “régime³” (notably the legislative framework) partly defined by the *Community acquis*.

In other words, those three “layers” or aspects of the GI issue, discussed at the European (and international levels) are today combined in each GI, according to the specificities of each national and local context. This is the reason why, GI can be interpreted as “glocal⁴ devices”, which integrate both international and European elements while translating and adapting them to national and local contexts.

But it is worth noticing that these three layers are - in a large extent - also linked to the genealogy of the issue. It means that GI were first conceived as market instruments and only in a second phase interpreted and used as rural territorial tool and finally, much more recently as a challenging incentive for sustainable development and environmental-friendly guide for innovation and action. This last challenge (i.e. GI as an environmental incentive) is an essential one for the BiodivBalkans Project due to the nature and charter of its funding agency (FFEM).

In the context of this short “opening session” the idea was to “warm up” the audience and the collective work with some aspects of the GI framework at large.

¹ The reflexive pole is an innovative feature of BiodivBalkans project. It designates an embedded research perspective in a “development project”, with the objective to build, from inside, an environmental strategic line of action, in discussion with all stakeholders.

² Created in 1962, the CIHEAM is a Mediterranean inter-governmental organization which works for improving sustainable agriculture and fisheries, for ensuring food and nutrition security and for development rural and coastal territories. The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier (IAMM) is one for the four institutes of the CIHEAM. It is specialized in management of agriculture and territories, project engineering, public policies for agriculture, environment, food and rural development as well as agri-food systems and agri-logistics.

³ A regime is defined by Stephen D. Krasner as a set of explicit or implicit “*principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area*”. Krasner, S. D., Ed. (1983). *International Regimes*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press.

⁴ «Glocal » is a contraction of global and local.

- **GI as Market Instrument**

Regarding this layer we underlined two aspects: the first one indicating GI as object of an international controversy on Intellectual property rights and protection and the second enumerating some important aspects of the GI as market instrument.

GI are controversial issues for international trade regime (WTO TRIPS agreements, WIPO Lisbon agreement, TIPP, CETA...). Recently⁵ there was a shift of the balance of power in favor of pro GI coalition at the international level and the « *War on terroir* » (as humorously appointed by T. Joslin) has to come to an end *“in the interest of the environment and society worldwide, as well as consumers and producers”*.

Other important aspects of the market GI issue can be underlined: the economics of quality and origin (labels and certifications), the specification versus competitiveness issues, the value chain management and the added value repartition, and finally the question of the “premium” that is to say the willingness of the producer to pay more for an “originated” product and the effort made by producers and transformers to give proof of the quality and the origin and enforced a traceability process.

- **GI as Territorial Development Tools**

Claire Durand,

Associated fellow at the Mixed Research Unit on Innovation, CIRAD (Montpellier-France)

The presentation focused on the potential interactions between GIs and territorial development. Based on the very large definition of “territory” as *“a form of organization built on coordination among stakeholders”*, the presentation showed that coordination can reinforce the capacity of collective action and eventually strengthen the on-going processes of development.

The “GI systems” (national frameworks and local institutional devices of GIs) are very diverse from one country to another; they are also evolving though time. Recent field work indicate that it is important to identify a “Common Strategy for GIs” when the implementation of GI protection is targeted. Its objective is to identify, collectively, at national and local levels, the main transversal objectives assigned to GIs in order to orient their construction and management in a feasible way.

This Common Strategy for GIs should be identified by taking into account the stakeholders’ priorities, the necessity of collective action in GIs dynamics, the reproduction and valorization of local territorial resources, and the important expected effect of territorial development.

- **GI as Environmental Incentive**

The link between GI and environment is increasingly used in a practical perspective to protect and promote biodiversity that is linked to anthropic practices and know-how included in the product (though the process of production). Indeed, local knowledges and practices that are mentioned and

⁵ As it is mentioned in the recent book (2016) published at Cambridge Scholars Publishing: *Intellectual Property Rights for Geographical Indications. What is at stake in the TTIP*.

valorized through the “Code of practice” often refer to “traditional”, extensive, or long lasting practices, that have shaped both the product and the territory - as opposed to production and transformation processes that are more intensive, industrial, standardized and indifferent to a territorial dimension. However, the positive environmental impact of GI is far from being established or even proved. Numerous case studies are even demonstrating an adverse effect of GI on biodiversity. Sectorial negotiations (pushing toward a very inclusive definition), legal and market trade-offs (pushing toward practice standardization), or farms and product economy (maximization of the production to benefit of the market premium), if not regulated by a strong territorial project, can be detrimental and destroy biodiversity under the cover of “nice” label of origin.

The point highlighted in the presentation is that the different uses of GI that can be differentiated and tackle separately, through various angles and approaches, are at the end, arbitrated and combined in specific and localized settings. Therefore, understanding GI as “devices”, is a way to include different scales and layers of incentives, while paying particular attention to the different dimensions of each specific arrangements of actors, norms, historical background, territorial context, institutional paths (and dependencies), etc.

- **GI as “Glocal Devices”: Making Choices**

Finally, the GI generic format is shaping a space for collective action, which has to answer standard requisites, but at the same time, adapt to specific needs and questions arising from each context. From previous experiences on GI building through BiodivBalkans project, we proposed to identify five key strategic issues⁶. These key issues are technically necessary to comply with EU requirements and strategically important for the territories and communities considered.

- ✓ **Product definition** is central to build a GI. For a single product, the definition can vary from embracive to exclusive according the specification criteria that are chosen: production and/or transformation process, organoleptic characteristics, raw material provenance, seasonality, history, etc.
- ✓ **Territory delimitation:** a GI must identify a product as originating from a given place. The designation of the original place of production can be based on “identities” criteria, geographical characteristics (altitude, land use, etc.), and places of production and/or transformation.
- ✓ **Collective action:** GI building is not only an issue for producers (shareholders) but also a wide range of other actors can possibly be involved (stakeholders) - depending on the situation and the local/national dynamics. Existing professional organizations, divergent or convergent interests and visions are important elements to be identified to better understand the consequences of the choices made in term of products and territory.

⁶ See : Cassu M., Chauveau A., Haslé de Barral A., Le Doré Y., Legraverant Y., Rostaing J.-B., Staquet A., Vallé A., Viard L., Nicolle S. (dir.), Leroy M. (dir.), Bernard-Mongin C. (dir.), Lerin F. (dir.). (2016). ***Building Geographical Indications in Western Balkans: countries case studies from Kosovo and Montenegro on Sharri and Pljevlja cheese***. Montpellier (France) : CIHEAM-IAMM. 134 p. Collective report of the Advanced Master “Forest, Nature & Society” Option “Nature and Society Management at an International level”. Teaching module “Environmental assessment of international projects on natural resource management” from 22nd of February to 27th of March 2016.

http://www.iamm.ciheam.org/ressources/opac_css/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=36803

- ✓ **Match and combinations:** as a market instrument, GI operates a differentiation on a market segment, based on the product's specificities linked to its origin. However, different GI labels are possible (PDO, PGI) according to the market situation and opportunities. Additional specification to the GI label can be added. Moreover, combinations of quality and origin labels are also possible (GI + organic label, or umbrella brand, etc.).

- ✓ **GI building process and legal framework:** choices made regarding the "key strategic issues" identified need also to be contemplated vis-à-vis the actual state of maturity the legal and institutional framework (conformity of national law and decrees with EU standards, designations of registration and control bodies and procedures).

2. CROSS ROADS

The added value of this Encounter relied on the active participation of key people involved in the GI building process at different levels in their respective country.



This session was designed to provide special time to share common features and challenges of the EU convergence process on GI, but also to harvest the potential of each national and local experience using GI in their trajectories toward more sustainable territorial development. These Cross roads were aiming at four specific objectives:

- **Share** grassroots and institutional experiences on GI building process
- **Exchange** on choices faced at local and national levels
- **Increase** collective understanding of common challenges through the comparison of different but comparable cases studies
- **Build** a common basis to promote pastoral products

They were organized according three principles:

1. **In depth presentation and discussion of practical case studies from WB Countries.** To ensure a technical common basis and also because of their environmental importance for Balkan countries – and beyond – the focus was put on livestock and pastoral based products.



Presentation and discussion of practical case studies on pastoral products:

1. Pljevaljski Cheese (Montenegro)
2. Sharri Cheese (Kosovo)
3. Hasi Kid Goat Meat (Albania)
4. Bistra Kashkaval (FYROM)

2. **Each case study introduced by a “delegation” is composed in a multi-actor perspective**, to cover the different aspects of each GI building process. Both difficulties and promises of these learning processes were discussed and commented, for different standpoints: local and territorial authorities, producers associations, national authorities, Universities and knowledge brokers, civil society association, rural development catalyzers.
3. **All discussions were organized around five key strategic issues (defined in the opening session).** These issues are common to all GI building processes. They designated key areas where choices have to be made, while answering a set of constraints that are specific to each context. How to make them explicit and discuss their potential consequences on territorial development, repartition of the added value along the chain, environmental impacts, collective action dynamics, etc. were the main objectives of this session.

PLJEVALJSKI CHEESE



Pljevlja municipality,
Montenegro

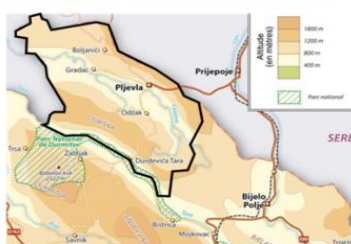


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2016

TERRITORY



- Natural conditions in the area of production, coupled with semi-extensive cattle breeding system through utilization of mainly natural pastures highly influences the quality of Pljevaljski cheese.



- Pljevaljski cheese is produced on the territory of Pljevlja municipality. It is produced within geographical area with specific climate and natural conditions suitable for the development of desirable characteristics of the final products such as specific taste due to the metabolic activity of indigenous microorganisms developed during cheese maturation.
- Relative uniformity of the region: large plateaux and narrow valleys. All Pljevlja territory is above 700m. Climate conditions are characterized by cool short summer and severe winter with abundant snow.
- Pljevlja territory is characterized by a mosaic of forests (50% - 70 000 ha) and agricultural lands (38%), with a high level of biodiversity. Pastures represent 11% and urban areas 1%.
- The Durmitor National Park (6 000 ha of the territory) and the Tara river basin are both recognized as important sites by UNESCO (World heritage site and Biosphere Reserve).

- Strong rural exodus, transfer of rural population to industry and non-agricultural activities → decreasing of the farms number (30% between 1960 and 2010), decline of livestock.
- Undergrazing situation, closing landscape dynamic, which could reduce the ecological value of the alpine grasslands.
- Mainly 2 farming systems:
 - Sheep for meat only (system in decline)
 - Cow for meat, milk and cheese (perdurant system).



PRODUCT

- Pljevaljski cheese is a full fat white cheese belonging to the group of soft cheeses. It is produced from cows milk.
- In 1880 Pljevlja become the significant trade center of the Turkish region on Balkans.
- It is well known that Pljevaljski cheese in Montenegro represents the synonym for full fat brine cheeses.
- Apart from specific production technology, the quality of cheese is highly influenced by the quality of milk and specific indigenous microflora that contributes to the development of the specific taste of the product.
- Pljevaljski cheese can be found on markets, retails, restaurants and hotels throughout Montenegro.

A typical way of keeping cows on pastures



Pljevaljski cheese can be found as a soft cheese

PRACTICES

Cheese making process

- Pljevaljski cheese is produced out of raw cow or sheep milk originating from the animals grown on natural pastures.
 - The milk is filtered through cheese cloth and rennet is added.
 - The formed curd is collected into the cloth and pressed 4-6 hours.
 - After pressing, the curd is cut into regular slices and put into the wooden pots for maturing.
 - Pljevaljski cheese is matured for at least 30 days.
- Same criteria are defined within the CoP for Pljevaljski cheese.



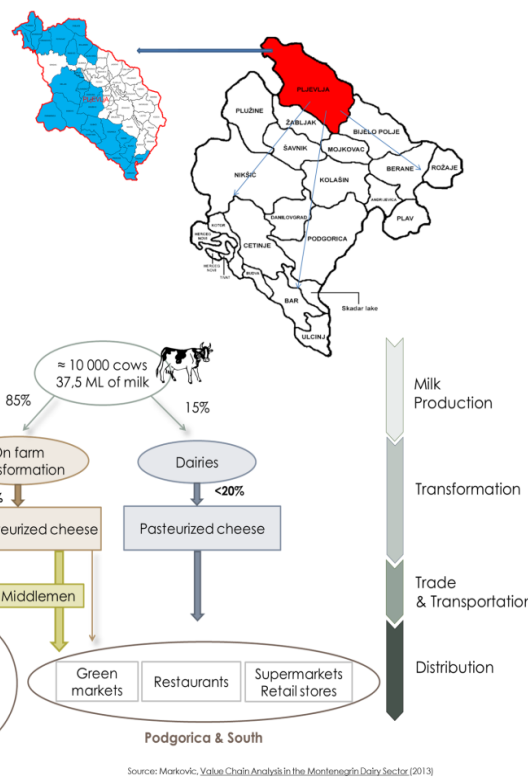
MARKET

Production

- There are more than 30 producers gathered in the Association.
- In 2010, about 10 600 bovine heads (7 000 dairy cows) and 31 500 ovine heads (15 000 ewes for milk) was bred in Pljevlja municipality.
- Most of the producers are breeding the animals for the milk production.

Market

- National market
- Cheese is produced throughout the year
- Price of the Pljevaljski cheese is similar to the other cheeses of the same type in the municipality. Outside of Pljevlja municipality cheese has a higher price due to its reputation.
- Two main production channels: on farm or dairy production. Mainly unpasteurized milk is used.
- Production and transformation have to be made on the GI area.
- Marketing channels targeted by the producers association to sell Pljevaljski cheese have to be developed.
 - For the time being: green markets, retail stores, restaurants and hotels.
 - Target: wholesale channels, hotels at the coastal area, regional sales.



EXPECTED RESULTS

- Give support and visibility to local agriculture and local specialities.
- Promote food quality.
- Improve sanitary criterias.
- Increase of the cheese price → increase of the agricultural income.
- Give a new dynamism to a rural declining region.
- Preservation of pasture lands through pastoral practices conservation (transhumance, outdoor grazing, etc.).



GI BUILDING PROCESS

GI registration

- Starting date: December 2016
- GI registering in process

Institutional and legislative frame

- Certification body: *Monteorganica*
 - Control body: *Montenegrin Accreditation Body*
 - Code of practices: *In construction*
- The Code of Practices has been drafted and will be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development by the end of 2016 for GI registration

Collective action

- Producer Association: Association of the Pljevaljski cheese producers (approx 30 producers)
- Stakeholders:
 - Farmers
 - Dairies
 - Supermarkets and stores
 - Restaurants
 - Middlemen
 - Municipality
 - Ministry of Agriculture
 - Sanitary services



Presentation by the Montenegrin Delegation of the Pljevaljski Cheese case study.



From the left to the right: Mr. Ilija GRBOVIC (Cheese producers representative), Mrs. Jovana DROBJNAK (Coordinator Donja Gorica University, Faculty of Food and Technology, Food Safety and Ecology), Mrs. Merisa CEKIC (Head of the Dpt for Quality Schemes MINAGRI), Mr. Igor VUJOVIC (International Cooperation Sector MINAGRI).

SHARRI CHEESE

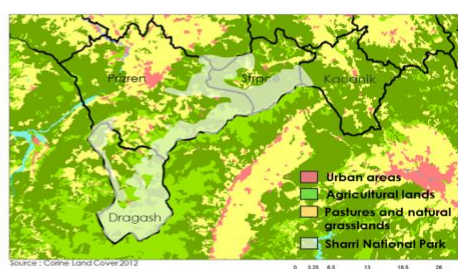


V. B. Holi (veliholi@gmail.com), A. Garnier (algarnier@iamm.fr)
 Based on the work co-organized by the Kosovo Institute of Intellectual Property and BiodivBalkans, with the support of Agro Paris Tech Montpellier 2016

TERRITORY

The Sharr cheese originates from the south of the country, in the Sharr region.

- Sharr mountains : 1600 km² (Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania). One of the highest mountain of the Balkans : 15 peaks > 2500m.
- Mainly covered by forest and pastures.
- Shift from sheep towards cow rearing (post-war reconstruction context).



A high biodiversity...

- **Very high biodiversity**, inherited from agro-sylvo-pastoral practices. It is extremely rich on endemic, rare and threatened fauna and flora, which ranks it among the richest region of biodiversity in Balkan and Europe.
- **Sharr National Park (SNP)**, created in 1986 and extended in 2012, is the Kosovan most important conservation area (53 469 ha).
- Sharr Mountains present a landscape mosaic with high quality agro sylvo pastoral ecosystems.

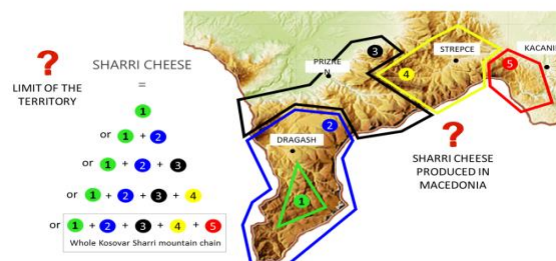
... but threatened

- Major rural exodus after the war, significant decrease of livestock.
- Farmland abandonment, diminution of livestock pressure though transhumant grazing.
- Landscape closure, reforestation and biodiversity loss.
- Fauna under permanent protection (species in danger – IUCN list).

Which territory?

- Sharr Cheese producers have different visions of the product territory, mobilizing different arguments: cultural, geographical, identity.

- A definition of the territory still have to be done, based on:
 - Farm localization
 - Grazing area
 - Cheese transformation area



PRODUCT

Sharr Cheese is an emblematic product, known all over the country and traditionally produced in the Sharr mountains. Transhumant grazing system has shaped its specificities: hard brined cheese, made in summer pastures, suitable for long term conservation, consumed all over the year.

A first GI in Kosovo

The Ministry of Industry aims at launching a GI on specific products of Kosovo, following the new law on GI voted in 2016. Sharr Cheese has been selected as a pilot product for implementing a first GI in Kosovo.



Sharr Cheese

- Cheese made out of sheep or cow milk from the region of Sharr mountains.
- Different products called « Sharr cheese » can be identified, ranging from:
 - ➔ **Traditional sheep Sharr cheese**: hard, raw sheep cheese, made on farm.
 - ➔ **Farm cow Sharr cheese**: hard, raw cow cheese, made on farm.
 - ➔ **Industrial Sharr cheese**: hard and brinded cow or mixt cheese, dairy made.
- It can be sold under different forms at different places:



Jar of Sharr cheese ready to eat
➢ supermarkets



Block (pieces of cheese) or bread (whole cheese)
➢ Greenmarkets, farms

- The « Sharr Cheese » name designates different products and different processes. Protecting the name would imply that cheese producers agree more precisely on what can be called « Sharr Cheese ».

PRACTICES

Grazing practices

- Mainly transhumant grazing system (mountain pastures in summertime, farm land pastures and feeding in winter).
 - ➔ Probably an influence on the taste of cheese.
 - ➔ A way to maintain open landscapes (environmental stake).
- Currently, rapid evolution of grazing practices. Two main tendencies:
 - From sheep to cow production (decrease of large sheep transhumant flocks).
 - From transhumant system to flocks settlement.
- ➔ Grazing practices remain pastoral but there is a reducing of the spatial extension of livestock grazing.

- The book of requirement should insist on the importance of high altitude summer grazing practices, and support the maintenance of sheep and cow flocks in the mountains.

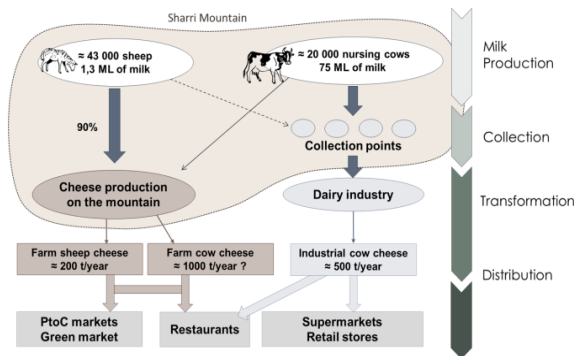
Sharr Cheese making process

- The Sharr Cheese making process is exactly similar from one community to another (Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Goran).
- However, some differences can be noticed on between farm and semi-industrial transformation: (1) sanitary control on raw milk, (2) milk pasteurization, (3) brining of the cheese.
- Nature of the milk used:
 - Sheep/cow/mixed?
 - From animal fed on pastures? Transhumant system?
- Transformation:
 - Farm product / industrial transformation?
- Process:
 - Pasteurizing/not?
 - Transformation process?
 - Final aspect?

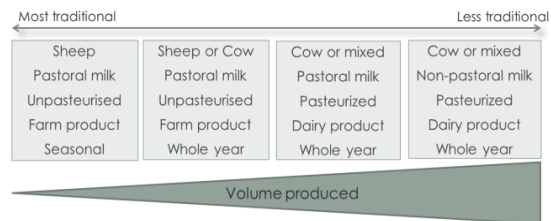
MARKET

Marketing channels

- Two main production channels:
- On farm cheese production channels: sheep or cow milk.
- Dairy production channels: pasteurized cow milk.



- 3 products are competing for the same name: two hard cheeses, on farm made, out of raw milk, and one semi-industrial product made on dairies, out of pasteurized milk.
- These products are sold on different distribution channels under different packagings:
 - Breads of hard Sharri Cheese are sold through short value chains and informal markets, characterizing on farm made Sharri Cheese.
 - Industrial hard and brined Sharri Cheese is sold bottles, ready to be consumed, in supermarkets and shops all over the country.



Production in the Sharri region (4 municipalities):

- Around 43 000 sheeps, producing 2,3 million liters yearly.
- More than 20 000 nursing cows, producing 75 million liters annually.

Reputation

Sharri Cheese made out of sheep milk is recognize as a traditional genuine product. Its good reputation helps to maintain a good price, equivalent or superior to Sharri Cheese made out of cow milk. Sheep Sharri Cheese can be considered, to a certain extend, as of a premium product.

Therefore, depending on the product definition adopted in the Code of Practice two different production channels and related players will be able to take advantage of the added economic value expected from a GI.

Expected economic impacts of a GI on Sharri cheese:

- Creating a price premium market.
- Opening new markets defending Sharri cheese reputation at national/regional level.

EXPECTED RESULTS

➤ Many choices remain to be made. But they will favour different kind of products, people and practices, and have different impacts.

- Territorial rural development
- Maintain pastoral activities
- Keep traditional cheese making processes
- Support the small scale producers
- The first Kosovan product to benefit from a GI → a way to validate the law
- Improvement of sanitary conditions, to get closer to the EU sanitary standards



Sharri dogs are trained as guard dogs for livestock. It is a breed very well adapted to harsh mountainous conditions.

GI BUILDING PROCESS

GI registration

- GI registering in project, Work in progress

Institutional and legislative frame

- Certification body: *Notwithstanding, the Livestock department in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Rural Development has been temporarily chosen as the certification body as a remedy of the lack of a private operator accredited by the IPA.*
- Control body: Currently embodied by the Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA)
- Code of practices: No

Collective action

- No local association/institution dedicated to build and manage a GI on Sharri cheese.
- Principal stakeholders should be:
 - Producers (to be defined)
 - Transformers
 - IPA
 - Ministry of Agriculture
 - Veterinary Agencies
 - ARDA
 - National Park
 - International coopération (GIZ, USAID)



GI building process is still at an embryonic stage in Kosovo. Even if the legal framework is ready, it still needs to be validated by a successful implementation and the registration of products as GI products.

Sharri cheese could be one of those products. Nevertheless, if it gathers some of the required characteristics like the traditional aspect and a localized production, many parameters remain to be defined: territory, product and collective action.

Presentation by the Kosovan Delegation of the Sharri Cheese case study.



From the left to the right: Mr. Veli HALIMI (Dairy “Sharri Cheese” in Prizren), Mrs. Stephanie DUCHET (INAO), Mr. Isah Rudaku (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development), Mr. Veli HOTI (Kosovo Institute of Intellectual Property), Mr. Faton Xhabale (AFION), Mr. Ylber Kuqi (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development).

HASI KID GOAT MEAT

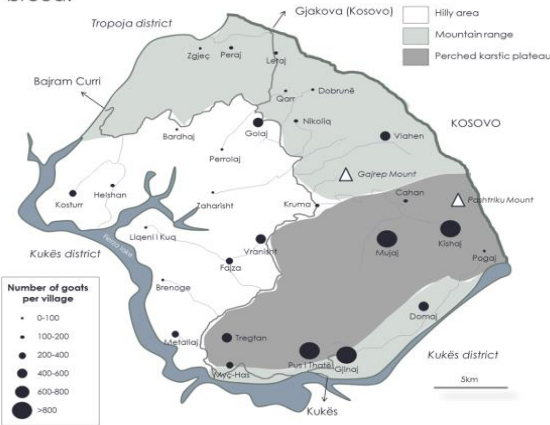


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2016

TERRITORY

Hasi goat: mainly on the Hasi region

The Hasi goat breed is mainly located on the Albanian part of the Hasi region. The Hasi region is an ethno-geographic area, separated in two parts by the Albanian-Kosovan border. The goat breeding tradition has persisted in the Albanian part, whereas it has almost disappeared in the Kosovan territory. The Albanian Hasi region (440 km²) – a territory with an important rural exodus – is the area where most of pure Hasi goat flocks are located. There are around 9000 goats in the Hasi region, almost entirely from Hasi goat breed.



... especially on the karstic plateau

The Albanian Hasi area can be divided in 3 sub-regions:

- **Hilly area** (300-800m): Fertile plains, fallow and shrubs adapted to sheep and cattle grazing.
- **Mountain range** (700-1200m): Chrome and ferronickel mining. Low agricultural production, cattle and goat breeding on deciduous forests and scrublands.
- **Perched karstic plateau** (1000-1500m): Limestone sub-soil (middle Cretaceous) and karstic formations (mainly typical sinkholes). Water scarcity, low agricultural production. Large stretches of rangelands and oak forests. → **Particularly suitable for Hasi goat breeding.**

More than half of the Hasi goat flocks are located on the « perched karstic plateau », where pastures and fodder oak forests are well-adapted to Hasi goat farming.



Hasi region is characterized by a harsh mountainous Mediterranean climate with snow in winter. The goats came out to the pastures despite the snow (up to 50 cm) thanks to their long legs.



Criteria for the GI:

- ▶ The territory of Hasi kid goat breeding includes all the Hasi region.
- ▶ Goats have to graze/ browse in the karstic plateau and/or the Pashtriku Mount.

PRACTICES

Breeding practices

Farmers traditionally select this breed according to common criteria, creating a homogeneous and very recognizable breed. But **there is no herd book** - however necessary for the breed conservation -, that is why the GI building process definitely includes the production of a herd book.

- ▶ Goats kids should be born of goats from Hasi goat breed in the territory defined by the GI. They have to be raised only on the Hasi territory.

Grazing practices

The pastoral system in the Hasi region is based on pastures offered by mountainsides, uncultivated lands and meadows, and also on the use of forest resources. Pastoralism rate is high, producing strong positive environmental externalities. The book of requirements therefore includes specifications about grazing conditions.



Most of the pastoral areas are commons, hence the necessity of a users' dialogue. The latter already exists, but it is strengthened by the collective action around a shared project. For instance the first step of the book of requirements building was a real moment of discussion about pastoral practices and management of the commons.

- ▶ Goats should be kept on natural pastures for at least 310 days a year.
- ▶ During winter period they could be fed on stable but the use of pasture is highly recommended. The maximum allowed total time in stable feeding could not exceed 60 days.
- ▶ Oak leaves should be an important part of goat diet. Not less than 50% of the roughage should be dried oak leaves.
- ▶ There is no specification about transformation, way of cooking, etc.

PRODUCT

The Hasi goat is recognized as an endemic breed from the Albanian Hasi region (North-East). It is particularly well-liked for the quality of its meat.

Hasi goat breed:

The Hasi goat has a reddish coloured hair, a well-developed body with long and strong legs, and well developed udder. It is a rustic breed, adapted to harsh environments.

This goat is raised both for milk and meat, but only the kid meat has been selected for the GI as a differentiated product.



Hasi goat kid meat:

Hasi meat products are nationally known for their high quality and taste.

- ▶ The GI relates to the fresh meat from goat kids aged 3 to 6 months.
- ▶ Carcasses weigh 10-18 kg.
- ▶ The carcass should be covered with a thin layer of fat mostly white color.
- ▶ The meat should have a reddish light color, without excessive fat. It should not have the strong characteristic smell of goats.
- ▶ **Production period:** kidding in March, selling from June to September.



MARKET

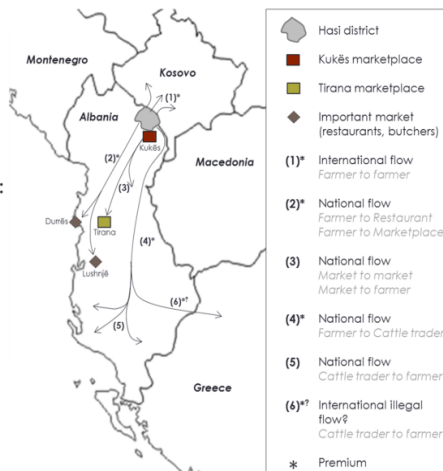
Production

- **144 producers in the Hasi region.**
- **29 breeders in the association.**
- ~ 2630 goat kids available for the market each season.
- ~ 64 510 kg: the total of live weight of goat kids available for the market each year.

Number of goat farms in the Hasi region:

Size of the flock (number of goats)	Number of farms
≤ 10	41
]10-50]	48
]50-100[34
≥100	21
Total:	144

Marketing channels for Hasi kid goats



When they are not locally consumed, kids are largely sold outside of the region, through small market channels:

- **Cattle traders:**
 - They come directly to the Hasi region to bulk-buy kids, especially on the perched karstic plateau
 - National market
 - Safe outlet, suitable prices
- **Direct sale (Restaurants, butchers, consumers):**
 - Selling around the Hasi region, Tirana, Durrës
 - The most favourable prices for farmers
- **Livestock market places:**
 - Farmers not connected to cattle-traders nor concerned by direct sale
 - Insecure sale, lowered prices, high costs

Most of the kids are sold between May and September, when they are 3-6 months old.

Slaughter for Hasi kids is done at the end of the marketing channel, rarely on authorized slaughterhouse but rather informally by butchers, restaurants or consumers themselves. The shareholders of the GI building think about the potential restoration of the unused Hasi slaughterhouse and the investment on a refrigerated truck.

The Hasi goat breeders association is working to establish sustainable value chains for goat kid meat. Some of the steps are: ear tag all goat kids to build traceability, produce labels for slaughtered carcasses, strengthen marketing and promotion, etc. There are two possible channels to develop - requiring further study: (1) sell to supermarkets and work on ensuring traceability, (2) supply restaurants and promote it using wooden carved emblems.

Reputation - premium

In Albania, Hasi kid goat meat has a specific well establish consumer reputation for its quality and remarkable taste. It benefits from a preference regarding kids from other breeds. Cattle traders are able to pay a kid from pure Hasi breed more than a kid from another breed, and butchers, restaurants or consumers also search for goat kids from Hasi breed preferentially. This price premium doesn't occur on the marketplace of Kukës where Hasi goat kids are sold at almost the same price than other breeds.

To consolidate this premium and the GI, a sound meat traceability system has to be invented (herd book, genetic improvement, electronic registration, etc.). Strategically cattle traders have to be involved in the GI cluster. Premium enhancement and repartition along the value chain have to be defined and discussed by this same GI cluster (along with value chain support action asked to the Ministry of Agriculture and agencies).

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Local breed conservation
- Maintenance of pastoral activities
- Increase of the agricultural income
- Improvement of living standards
- Social fabric creation (by collective action)
- Decrease of rural exodus
- Preservation of traditional practices of grazing and management of pastures
- Landscape mosaic creation
- Maintenance of open pastoral habitats
- Biodiversity preservation
- Maintenance of a particular and outstanding pastoral landscape
- Valorisation of a High Nature Value farming system
- Promotion of a high quality production



Hasi goats and the particular karstic landscape.

GI BUILDING PROCESS

GI registration

- Starting date: 2013
- GI registering in process

Institutional and legislative frame

- Certification body: No
- Control body: No
- Code of practices: Completed

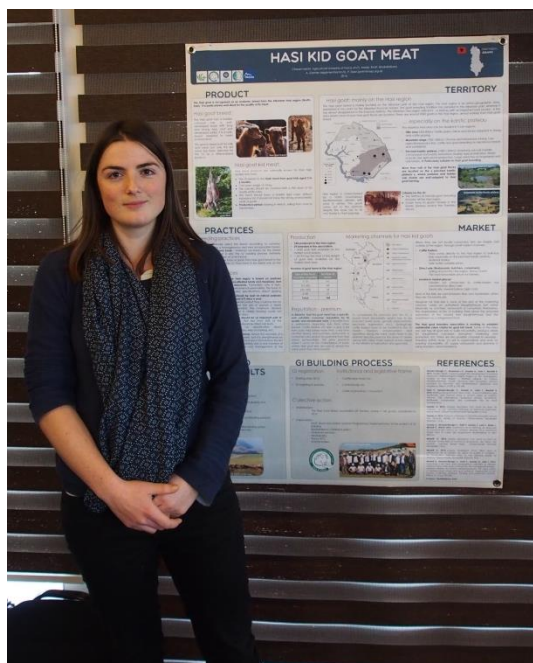
Collective action

- Shareholders:
 - The Hasi Goat Breed Association (29 farmers, mainly > 100 goats), established in 2015
- Stakeholders:
 - RASP (Rural Association Support Programme): implementation of the project of GI building
 - BiodivBalkans: « Reflexive pôle »
 - Veterinary services
 - Municipality
 - Korça ATC
 - Animal traders



The Hasi goat Association

Presentation by the Albanian delegation of the Hasi Kid goat meat case study.



From the left to the right: Mrs. Alice GARNIER (CIHEAM-IAMM), Mr. Petrit DOBI (RASP), Mr. Roland BARDHI (MADA).

BISTRA KASHKAVAL



Bистра region,
Macedonia



Slow Food Bitola
E.Karovska (elena.k@slowfood.mk)
2016

TERRITORY

Delimitation

- The development of the **chasmophytic vegetation** on the mountain Bistra, which includes relict species, Western endemic and relict species (Micevski, 1994) originating from the glacial epoch gives special importance to the vegetation, which in directly affects the design of the specific quality of the dairy products.
- The organoleptic characteristics which differentiate this raw milk from the milk of other geographical regions, are based on the specificity of the area, the characteristic of the climate conditions, **land with limestone composition** and land on which high quality forage grasses and medicinal and **aromatic plants grow from 5-30%**, and **spring waters** with excellent quality are key factors for the specificity of the Bistra kashkaval. The rich floristic composition of vegetation influence in the formation of the specific aroma of the kashkaval.



The area of Mavrovo national park gets very cold in winter, with temperatures reaching up to -40 degrees, though the average winter temperature is -10°, with snow up to 1,5 metres. the maximum temperature in summer is 35°

The Bistra is a massif that has several summits higher than 2,000 metres, with the highest being Medenica at 2,163 metres above sea level. Limestone erosion on the mountain has created limestone fields. In the limestone region of the Bistra, there are fourteen limestone fields. Much of the mountain's area lies within the boundaries of the Mavrovo National Park.



PRODUCT

Characteristics

- loaf-shaped;
- diameter of 30 cm;
- height of 8-10 cm;
- weighing 7-8 kg;
- crust - smooth, elastic, moderately soft and oily;
- texture of the curdling dough - hard, elastic, compact, no holes;
- Structure - specific layered structure which is significantly oily
- colour of the curdling dough - straw yellow
- colour of the surface - darker shade of straw yellow



Main raw material for the production of Kashkaval is raw sheep milk, supplied during June, July and mid August, because of the specific flora in this period of the year (enriched with bioactive ingredients and essential oils) and milk quality that has a higher percentage of dry matter.

History

- Graorkoski (2010) states that the first factory for the production of cheese in the Balkans was exactly in Galicnik led by cousins Jovan and Dragan Muratovski in 1923. At the end of the 18th century in Galicnik were breed between 100 - 120.000 sheep, from which milk the famous Galicki kashkaval was produced and than exported overseas. Yugoslavian newspaper "Politika" from 1931 was noted that 80 tons of Galicki kashkaval were exported to New York.
- Galicki Kashkaval used to bear special qualities and was a product intended only for the high-class society. Even today, the tradition of producing this type of Kashkaval is maintained while all technological operations are manual and represent a true art of the cheese-making.

PRACTICES

- Not by accident the production of Kashkaval is connected to the Balkans and Macedonia. This region has dry and warm climate and specific terrain configuration which enables nomad-like sheep keeping.
- Milk is obtained from local breed of sheep Pramenka Ovchepolka and Sharplaninka.
- The grazing around the sheepfolds is traditional as well as the processing of milk. Wood is the main material in the equipment for processing of sheep milk.



- After cutting "baskija" is undergoing a process of infusion with heated solution of salted water (0.5% salt) on 72-75°C, and stays like that for about 2-3 min. The processing in the salted water takes about 5 minutes with gentle stirring with a long wooden tool. After that the water from the cheese curd is drained, and starts the manual squeezing and stretching of the curd. This process place Kashkaval in the group of Pasta Filata cheeses.
- The milk must be whole, with at least 6% milk fat.
- In the production process of kashkaval the use (addition) of milk powder, condensed milk, milk protein, casein or caseinates, colours or other preservatives is prohibited.

Production

- 70 people care for the livestock.
- 60 of these workers are responsible for the animals and the manual milking, while the remaining
- 10 deal with other activities linked to animal husbandry.
- 8 people are involved in the dairy work.
- There is a total of 8000 animals divided in slots of 2000 cared amongst the 60 people

Galicki kashkaval

Year	2012
Number of sheep in lactation	6 721
Milk	59 292
Litter per sheep	8.82
Kashkaval	4 480

Lazaropole kashkaval

Year	2012
Number of sheep in lactation	2 400
Milk	36 150
Litter per sheep	15.06
Kashkaval	4 140

- There are only three producers of traditional kashkaval left in the whole of Macedonia, two located in the Mavrovo Region and one in the eastern part of the Country. Lazaropole and Galicki Kashkaval combined together can be named under one name – Bistra Kashkaval, since they are located on the same mountain and have very similar characteristics regarding flavor and techniques of production.
- The mandra for production of Galicki kashkaval is registered as a facility for producing cheese with traditional characteristics and that way the sales are made at national level. Anyway the sales in this case can be defined as short chain, since the company is distributing its own product. Seasonality is not a key factor regarding sales and that way it does not influence the price. On the other hand, Lazaropole kashkaval is sold through direct sales. Slow Food Macedonia is helping the sales and promotion by diverse events and fairs on national and international level.
- Consumers and the people from the local communities from this region recognize the link between the name of the kashkaval and the territory.
- Today, artisan kashkaval is sold at 20€ per kilo, while the industrial one is sold at €10 per kilo.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Preservation of traditional cheese making techniques
- Established protocol of production
- Biodiversity preservation
- Maintenance of traditional practices of grazing
- Improved pastures' and landscapes' management
- Promotion of a high quality production
- Promoted rural areas and created new touristic offers
- Increase in the income of local population

GI BUILDING PROCESS

GI registration

- Starting date: 2013
- GI Registering in process

Institutional and legal frame

- Certification body: No
- Control body: No
- Code of practice: *in construction*

Collective action

- Shareholders
 - Producers from the Presidium Mavrovo-Reka Mountain Pasture Cheeses
 - Regional Association of sheep breeders in Western Macedonia
- Stakeholders
 - Food and Veterinary Agency
 - PE for pastures management
 - Municipalities

Presentation of the Bistra Kashkaval case study, by the Macedonian delegation.



From the left to the right: Mrs. Elena TAPANDZIOSKA (Department of Marketing and Quality products, MINAGRI), Mrs Nataša MATEVA (Institute of Animal Science), Mrs Elena KAROVSKA (SlowFood Bitola), Mr. Nikolce NIKOLOVSKI (SlowFood Bitola), Mrs. Daniela LAZAROVSKA (Department of Marketing and Quality products, MINAGRI).

3. ROUND TABLES

Another objective of this "Practitioners' Encounter" was to tackle specific and technical issues that are arising from the on-going GI building process in each country. Representatives of administrative bodies, local authorities, producers and their association are invited to exchange on practical issues on the GI building process.

Two French experts on GI from the French instate for GI management "INAO", were present to answer questions and to lead technical discussions, on transversal issues that have been arising during the previous session.

- **Legislative and regulatory framework**

Because of their status of "candidate" or "potential candidate" to the European Union and, because of the willingness of the stakeholders present or represented to register GIs at the European level, all Balkan countries which participated to this Encounter have to adopt the "Community acquis" in their respective legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Thus, the specific regulations per GIs' sectors were recalled.

∅ Advice n°1: Ensure the conformity of national Law(s) with EU Regulations.

The organizations between the different structures of the French Competent Authorities which have to implement and control the EU regulations on GI products were presented. The main assignments of INAO were explained too.

A complementary expertise by INAO is possible on this topic, or a legal technical assistance.

∅ Advice n°2: Organize GI governance, define the roles of the public authorities and specify ad-hoc procedures for GI application and registration (regulations, circulars...).

A complementary expertise by INAO is possible on this topic, or a legal technical assistance.

Along with the technical and organizational constraints, the benefits of the GI regulation were also discussed. With regard to the marketing, there is no doubt that a GI product has obvious economic interests: higher prices for GI products are noticed, the production, a better and a fairly value distribution is observed between the producers, and GI facilitates export of the product (in particular in EU). A concrete case of a French goat cheese in PDO ("Banon") was presented.

Its characteristics are similar to those of the products studied and identified as potential PDOs or PGIs (pastoral and mountain product, specific know-how, rural development, maintains economic activity in a difficult area). Based on the discussions, it's important to bear in mind that a GI is a right of use: it protects the producers, the consumers and the name registered. A GI is guaranteed by public authorities responsible for the recognition, the control and the protection of the GIs.

- **Food Safety Issues**

Throughout the exchanges among participants, the question of safe food products was discussed.

Ø Advice n°3: Using raw milk and industrial methods are compatible and may comply with the food safety.

Even if a GI protects traditional practices, considerable improvement on health and hygiene practices by producers are often noticed. For example, a lot of French cheeses in PDO are made of raw milk, not only by farmers but also by dairies and industrial dairies. The importance of the control was emphasized, as regards to the given credibility to the whole GI system (protection of the producers against unfair competition, and protection of the consumers to provide quality products expected).

Ø Advice n°4: The GI control system must be set up in a transverse and global way in parallel of the creation of GI registration procedures.

It is not necessary to carry out several controls on one producer. The quality of the control is most important than the number of controls in order to have a reliable and an effective control.

A complementary expertise by INAO is possible on this topic, or a legal technical assistance.

Ø Advice n°5: Producers, supported by experts and technicians, have to specify the organoleptic characteristics of the products collectively, through a “sensory tasting commission”.

The best type of control is the one which is the closest to the consumer's plate: the control of the organoleptic specificities is a fundamental control. It requires to work from the beginning of the application, on defining the specific organoleptic characteristics of the GI product. It could be difficult and it could take a long time because a GI product is not a standard product and it allows diversity and variability. The results of this work can add value on the delimitation work to define the GI geographical area.

INAO expertise and technical assistance are practicable on tasting and delimitation.

Ø Advice n°6: Organize a GI clear governance at territorial level.

Even if the GI building process can be initiated by public authorities or development brokers (NGOs, associations ...), it is necessary to build of a collective organization that includes all the stakeholders. The producer group has to hold the GI application and is the guarantor of the reproduction of these sustainability system, preservation & enhancement of the territory.

INAO expertise and study visits to meet some producer groups in France are practicable under TAIEX.

▪ **Trans-border and Homonymous GI**

Finally, some cases of trans-border and homonymous GIs were presented.

Ø Advice n°7: Work on draft specification regarding trans-border GI and cooperate with bordering countries.

Some national Laws on GI already contain some specification on that matter, in line with EU regulation (e.g.: Kosovo GI law). Based on existing examples through Europe, it was advised that each country works on a draft specification and then, that meetings are organized with representatives from each board in order to discuss their respective work and to build, maybe, a trans-border GI. Anyway, each GI registration procedure must provide an opposition period before registration for third parties, as another country.

4. WRAP UP SESSION

The final session aimed at summarizing the main insights and conclusions gained through the different exchanges, debates and technical discussions. Based on this collective understanding of the possible uses of Geographical Indications, the wrap up session wanted to foster a dialogue on what type of regional coordination could be operational in the future years to support an inclusive and sustainable rural development in the region.

Mr. François Lerin, Ciheam-IAMM, started the session with three introductory remarks, to draw the general framework of future cooperation and coordination under this “Practitioners’ network”.

- **Multi-stakeholder setting** is a now a requirement, in the frame of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and EU support schemes for innovation in the agricultural sector.
- **Learning Process:** who is learning? Multiscale and multilevel process.
- **Knowledge brokering** is a core activity of each learning process to inform stakeholder discussions on strategic choices. A strong diagnosis is central to build robust collective choices in a long term perspective.

Mr. Veli Hoti, KIIP, appreciated the experience shared by the representatives of the regional countries and mentioned that this is the first regional meeting of this kind and we should be committed to mobilize for future ways of cooperation. TAIEX requests are a nice tool for calling such meetings.

Mr. Nikolce Nikolovski, from Slow Food Bitola, presented the “presidium” as an interesting and flexible setting used by Slow Food as a basis for cooperation among local communities around a product. It can be used to start building a GI and help to agree on a “protocol” signed by all farmers, that is a first step in the product specification. Slow Food Bitola is networking currently 5 presidia, gathering around 500 producers in FYROM.

Mr. Petrit Dobi, from RASP (Albania) was highlighting the central function of local NGOs, acting as territorial catalyzers, to ensure a continuity of action, support and financing, as developing a GI is a long process (from five to ten years according other EU experiences). He proposed to use “IPA Cross Border programs” as a tool to support cooperation amongst the participants, on rural development projects, with a product based approach.

Mrs. Merisa Cekic, from the Ministry of Agriculture in Montenegro, pointed out TAIEX instruments as appropriate tools to organize further regional meetings, which are crucial to expand collaboration and information exchanges between different stakeholders. From her side, the added value of such encounters is to provide Ministries and national institutions with practical information to better shape public policies and regulations. She also identified trans-border cooperation on GI as a central point for further collective action.

Mr. Veli Halimi, from the dairy “Sharri” milk (Kosovo) expressed the willingness to pursue a collective action on building a GI on Sharri Cheese. In the name of Kosovan producers, he advocated for further cooperation activities, through knowledge and technological exchanges with other practitioners.

Mr. Albani Ibraliu, from the Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania), highlighted some results obtained while promoting wild blueberries, through marketing and value chain improvement, in northern regions of Albania.

Mr. Roland Bardhi, from MADA (Albania), suggested that Local Action Groups (LAG) that are starting to develop in Candidate countries, under the LEADER framework, could be contemplated as a tool to further sustain GI initiatives, as a part of Local development strategies. He shared also the good results of IPA Cross Border projects, to support product based strategies in rural areas of Kukës.

Operational conclusion

All participants should consider themselves as the members of a working group to come up with projects that will foster regional cooperation.

The idea is established ad-hoc “Operational Groups”, dedicated to solve specific and identified issues related to Geographical Indication, and more largely to rural development in a sustainable, long-term perspective. EU welcomes any types of initiatives where politics is not involved.

Therefore, let’s use this opportunity to apply for funding through the different tools that have been identified during the discussion and strengthen our GIs systems, proposing ourselves as action and result-oriented groups. This way our countries can promote tourism, environment, and help local and rural development.

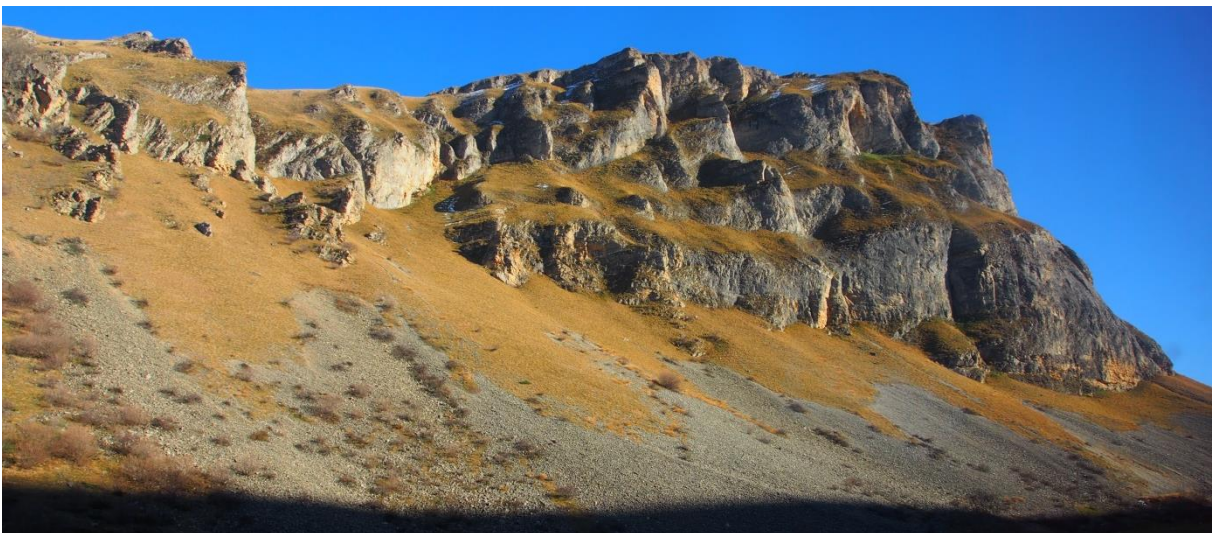
5. FIELD VISIT

Next door to Prizren, the Sharri Mountains and their high summer pastures are stretching over three countries Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania and multiple communities. On that territory, an identification and registration process for the renowned hard brined cheese called “Sharri Cheese” is undergoing. This field visit field study shall shortly present actors, product and landscape of this remarkable pastoral product.

Visit of two farms producing milk for Sharri cheese.







Village of Brod (Draggash Municipality), alt. of 1695 m, next door to the Sharri summer pastures.

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