



## EuroMARC — Mountain Agrofood products in Europe, their consumers, retailers and local initiatives



### Executive summary

## WP1: Perception of mountain quality-food products by consumers

WP1 which measures the interest, perception and expectations of European consumers towards quality food products coming from mountain areas. The consumer survey has been done within the theoretical framework of marketing and socio-economic sciences, also including cultural research perspectives. Consumer surveys have been conducted in Austria, France, Norway, Romania, Scotland and Slovenia.

The work done aimed at comprehending how consumers perceive or expect mountain quality food from several different angles via several complementary data sets: qualitative data, a quantitative survey, a conjoint analysis expressed through different types of analysis from a conventional interpretation built on univariate, cross tabulation and preference mapping. Last, but not least, we propose a “convention theoretical” perspective, based on both orders of justification and possible worlds of perception. The analysis of the data set focuses on both divergences and similarities in the six countries. For example, Austrian and French respondents seem to have a common understanding of the concept of mountain quality food product (MQFP), focusing on the fact that the products are local, while respondents in the other countries accept that mountain products can also be foreign. On the other hand, even though most of the respondents make their regular food purchases in supermarkets, they expect to find MQFP in non-conventional channels, for example at a farm. This indicates that customers do believe that there is something special about these products, although they have difficulties with expressing their views and giving examples of products.

In most of the countries, most respondents answered that they would use MQFP when they want to try something new or when they visit a mountain area. This, compared with the previous point, may indicate that marketing and sales of MQFP should focus on tourists, second home owners etc. When it comes to the attributes that the respondents linked to MQFP, they all answered high quality in terms of

hygienic and cultural products. In general, MQFP comprises many different dimensions, such as food, mountain, nature, market product, local production or nostalgia, and its specificity is situated in the interrelationship between the different values. Moreover, eating, considering, expecting or perceiving MQFP are directly connected to their situated consumption. One individual do not have the same opinion about, or expectation of, MQFP in different situations, which makes the consideration of “European consumers” as a group difficult. If we follow our informants’ words and expressions, we can find new groups - such as eaters, buyers, tourists, local people - that permit better understanding of the “consumers”. Each group is a part of a quite precise context, highlighting the central role played by contextualisation in the perception or expectation of MQFP.

The “convention theoretical” perspective shows that our informants used arguments connected to many different orders of justification when they discussed the food products we ate together, and that we defined as “mountain quality food products”. Yet the most interesting remarks were often situated between two, or more, orders of justification. In other words, mountain food products include different dimensions such as food, mountain, nature, market product, local production or nostalgia, and their specificity is situated in the interrelationships between the different values.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

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