

Newsletter MQP

Adding value to Mountain Quality Products in Europe: a strategic mission

The project on Mountain Quality Food Products, achieved by Euromontana and managed together with 14 partners from various mountain areas of geographical Europe, has worked during last winter on the overall methodology of data collection in the 10 study areas and also its strategy as regards the ambitions the programme might most usefully address.

This project constitutes for Euromontana the outcome of more than 3 years of reflection on the mission to achieve for mountain territories, better characterisation and European

mountain products.

Fortified by its wide European scale, the project on Mountain Quality products will bring strategic tools to professionals from various quality commodity chains.

Therefore, their second meeting (16-18 June 2003 in Brussels), enabled of the Steering Committee to refine the work programme for the second stage of the project with particular reference to:

1/ The setting up of a **Strategic Information System** (on Internet and CD-Rom), for diverse users that will be seen as a real

tool for the development of mountain quality products (for technicians, researchers, professionals and consumers);

2/ The establishment of **recommendations on a European scale** from the study programme results on various points (legislation, product protection, trading, European initiatives project, ...).

That component will rely on the achievement of a **first characterisation of Mountain Quality Products** (in accordance with the field study results).

Summary:

Reminder of the ambition of the MQP project

The MQP project Seminars

Partners and study areas of the MQP project

The first wave of enquiries: elements of information

Preparation of the second wave of enquiries

Last news

Scientific Seminar and final Conference of the project

Two seminars will be organised within the framework of the project process.

A **scientific seminar will take place in February 2004**. Its aim is to present and validate in consultation with a limited public the first results of the project on

mountain quality products (characterisation, strength and weaknesses, opportunities and threats). The workshops will identify the types of tools and strategies to develop (information dissemination, European common strategies and policy recommendations).

The **final Conference will take place in June 2004**, in Andalusia (to be confirmed). A wider public will be concerted and the overall results and proposals for actions will be validated.



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Organisation of study areas and field enquiries

The project is based on the study of 10 mountain territories in Europe (see map on page 3). In each of those areas, a partner is responsible for the collection of local data.

Two waves of information collection are planned. The methodological guide for each enquiry is drawn up by the overall steering committee members of the project.

The first enquiry wave, that began in the field on the 1st February is presently ending and in this framework, more than 110 products have been studied with regard

to various aspects of their quality (see the following chapter).

This information has to be analysed again so as to identify its common values and common points. The whole collected data on mountain quality products will be integrated and disseminated through the Information System, that will be established at the end of the project (October 2004).

The second enquiry wave, planned from August to January 2004, will take the form of case studies (about 20). Its main aim is to identify

on the basis of studied products the conditions associated with success and failure in different fields of development of sustainable mountain products (production, trade, communication, ...).

Finally, the project will take stock of aid and promotion policies dealing with quality products and/or mountain products not only in the different countries involved in the partnership but also at the European Union level.

The first field enquiry has collected information on more than 110 products across the 10 study areas in Europe.

First enquiry: elements of information

Each partner responsible for local information collection has identified, in accordance with accurate criteria, the following points:

1/ The study area delimitation and identification. In most of the European Union countries, the LFA definition has been used.

2/ The studied products (food and beverage), must have a strong connection with the territory either through the link of the product with its local environment, or through economic and territorial impact it has on its area.

3/ Studied products have to

show a quality or quality management system by virtue of being :

* official quality registered by public authorities (the product list has to be exhaustive as far as possible)

* products with specifications (public or private), (this list has to be as representative as possible)

* products under individual brand with a recognized qualitative potential, but without formal quality management system.

The first enquiry gave useful information on:

1/ Types of quality identification to consumers

2/ Mountain product characteristics, their production types and know-how ;

3/ The geographical location of the different steps of the commodity chain (from the production to transformation) ;

4/ Impacts of mountain natural conditions on product, production and know-how.

5/ Types of consumption of the studied products ;

6/ Commodity chains and their market.

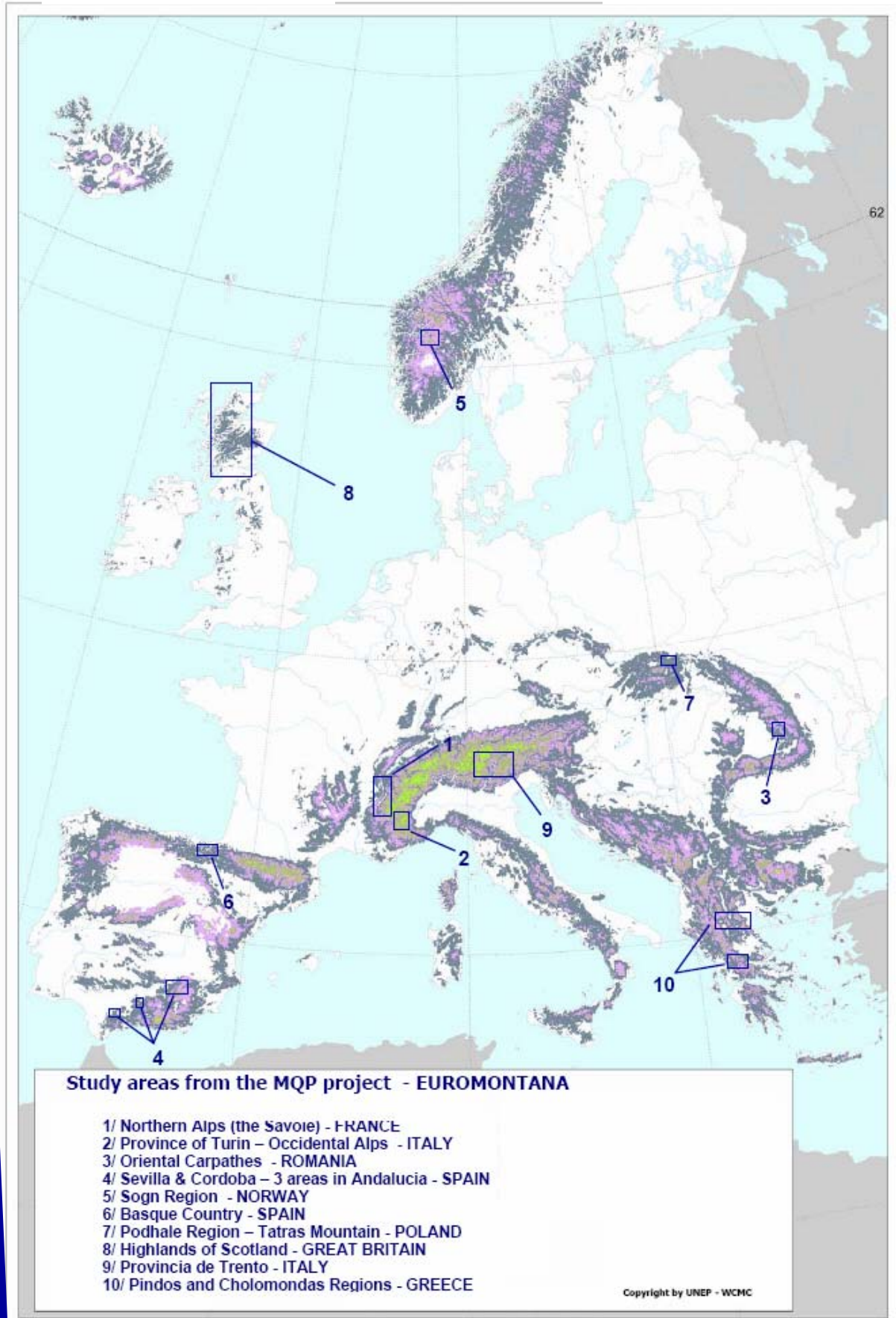
Second enquiry: main orientations

The second enquiry will answer the following questions :

1/ What conditions make a mountain quality product economically sustainable?

2/ What are the systems (local, national, European) that enforce those product developments and maintain and optimise their qualities?

3/ What elements limit or develop the access to certification tools, the increasing and widening of markets, and the access to consumers?



Conference and meeting participation

The project was presented at Cairo January 2003 within the framework of an International Conference on "Strategies to improve quality and promotion of Mediterranean agricultural products" organised by research centres from

France, Greece and Egypt.

There have been two presentations in France: once to the Mountain Commission of the CNIEL (Inter-professional National Centre of Dairy

Economy) and also to the Mountain group of the FNSEA (French Agricultural National Union), and member of Euromontana.

Coming events :

- ✓ 6 – 7 October 2003: Participation in the Final Conference of the research programme DOLPHINS (on the origin labelled products) in Parma (Italy)
- ✓ 23 – 26 October 2003: Participation in the Olympiads of Mountain Cheeses in the Rouses (France) organised by the Association Caseus Montanus.
- ✓ 25 – 26 November 2003: The 3rd meeting of the Steering Committee of the project in Brussels.

Project partners



Thanks :

The project and the whole of the partners wish to thank ISARA Lyon for having achieved an internet work space for the MQP project.