

INTERNATIONAL THEMATIC CONFERENCE

„The Quality Mountain Product - challenge and opportunity for harnessing the potential of mountain areas”

20 – 21 May 2015, Bucharest – ROMANIA



At the initiative of ROMONTANA - National Association for Mountains Rural Development and its partner organizations (members of EUROMONTANA), with the support of the National Rural Development Network (RNDR), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development from Romania (MADR) and the Compartment for Sustainable Development (Chancellery of the Prime Minister – Government of Romania), on the 20th and 21st May 2015 at Phoenicia Grand Hotel in Bucharest, was held the international thematic conference **"The quality mountain product - challenge and opportunity for harnessing the potential of mountain areas"**.

The goal of the conference was to create cohesion among the Romanian stakeholders interested in the quality mountain product, to promote advocacy and to create awareness of the problems encountered in Romania, in order to find proper solutions. The event was attended by about 100 guests, representatives of ministries and other public institutions, farmers' associations, Local Action Groups and other NGOs with interest for the sustainable development of mountain areas in Romania.

Among the topics discussed during the event we specify: characteristics and growth prospects for mountain communities on the basis of mountain product, the quality mountain product - best practices, mountain product and the short chain supply, sustainable agricultural models for the Romanian mountain area, marketing mountain products, the importance of certification of products coming from the mountains.

Given the context, and the importance of the subject addressed, high-class speakers have been invited to share their experience, trying to clarify as many aspects as possible of the concept of optional quality term "mountain product", recently regulated by the European Commission through the Delegated Regulation no. 665/2014 and 1151/2012, a novelty for most of the EU Member States.

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On the first day of the event were treated topics such as the characteristics and development opportunities based on mountain products with high biological value, the Swiss benchmark towards the importance of product certification in the mountains and upland pastures products, Marketing of mountain products - current and future prospects and Opportunities for “mountain product” in Romania - under the European Innovation Partnership. These topics were conducted by highly recognized experts such as Radu REY, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development / Senator of Euromontana, Thomas EGGER, Director of the Swiss Centre for Mountain Regions (SAB) / Euromontana, Ovidiu SPINU – Director of Heifer Romania and Mr. Tiberiu STEF, Director of AGROM-RO Association. The afternoon was devoted to parallel working sessions moderated by Ovidiu SPINU, Director of Heifer Romania and Mr. Ioan Agapi, Director of the Mountain Farmers Federation "DORNA" treating the subjects: “Identity of the Traditional Mountain Products” and “Certification of Mountain Products”.

The second day of the event was very interesting with technical and theoretical components, the presentations contrived by the representatives of the authorities and of private sector, addressing topics such as: Possibility for extending the scope of accreditation in quality schemes, Mountain products - consumer protection issues, Food safety and mountain products, The registration of geographical indications in accordance with laws, Mountain products and short chain supply - problems and solutions, National and European Quality schemes for Romanian food products.

One of the most interesting moments of the day was the presentation made by Ioan AGAPI, Director of Mountain Farmers Federation “DORNA” of the two projects - "Sustainable agricultural models in the mountains of Romania” and “Green processing of berries”. For the first time, he presented to a broad audience the first two examples of creating a brand identity for a Mountain Product in Romania (“De la Munte” and “Aroma Muntelui”). This was possible through two projects co-financed by the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme and Innovation Norway. Although both projects are still in the implementing phase, they are already seen as reference points regarding to the introduction in Romania of the optional quality term “Mountain Product” in the modern economy.



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Elena DI BELLA, Director of Rural Mountain Development - Citta Metropolitana di Torino / Euromontana, offered to the attendees the chance to discover some Italian best practices and stressed the opportunities that arise at European level regarding the Quality Mountain Product.

The event was auspicious and should be considered as a win for the future of "mountain product" in Romania aiming to trigger the development of the national regulations for the optional quality certification; the actors involved expressed their interest in the topic and the initiative to contribute to the definition and establishment of the "mountain product" in Romania.

A working group will be functional soon at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, including representatives of the main public and private stakeholders, including NGOs – with the purpose of creating the framework for applying in Romania the European Regulation regarding optional quality term “Mountain Product”.

Up-to-date information regarding the “Mountain Product” in Romania will be soon available, both in Romanian and English language, on the website of ROMONTANA at www.romontana.org.



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