

EUROMONTANA WORK ON MOUNTAIN QUALITY FOOD PRODUCTS



Euromontana is the European multisectoral association for co-operation and development of mountain territories. Euromontana's mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas.

Euromontana has for a long time been working on two mutually reinforcing approaches to maintaining and developing viable economic and agricultural activities in mountain areas in a sustainable way: through **recognition and adding value to mountain quality products** and through **endorsing public goods (positive externalities) created by mountain agriculture**.

<http://www.euromontana.org/Doc/TRENTOdecfin-EN.pdf>

Euromontana's parallel work on the positive externalities of land management in mountain and remoter areas is extensive and embraces a seminal international symposium on the topic in 2005 and a study undertaken for FAO under the SARD M global initiative delivered in October 2007

<http://www.fao.org/sard/common/ecg/3007/en/SARDMExternalitiesPoliciesMarketsEN.pdf>



The approach on mountain products is based on acknowledging the important role of agriculture in the preservation and enhancement of mountain heritage, contributing to quality of life of European populations.

The current economic context tends to progressively marginalise mountain regions and their products, which in a purely economic logic have trouble finding their place. Agricultural production has an overcost in mountain areas and it is essential to add value to the products to cover the additional expenses. It is essential to study the development of mountain products through innovation and quality, responding to consumer expectations.

Euromontana believes that the term "mountain" has a very positive image among consumers. Therefore by using the word "mountain" in connection to products, a promise is made to the consumers which should not disappoint them.

However in the majority of member states and European countries there is currently no definition for "mountain products", and where the definitions exist they vary from one country to another.

The progression of Euromontana's work on quality products to date has five elements:

- Initial Quality Study 1999 -20 (DG Agri)
- Mountain Food Quality Project 2002-2004 (5th RDT FP)
- European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products 2005
- Euromountains.net Interreg III. Project 2004-2007
- Euro-MARC - European Mountain Agrofood products, Retailers and Consumers (6th RDT FP) 2007-10





Initial Quality Study 1999 -2000 (DG Agri)

Euromontana started working on the mountain quality food products through a DG Agri funded working group in 1999-2000. Three seminars organised on the theme culminated in the **2nd European Mountain Convention** in 2000, organised in Trento, Italy with the support of the DG Agriculture, the Province of Trento and the French Ministry of Agriculture. The Convention declared **quality to be the comparative advantage of the future for the mountain areas** and in the final declaration Euromontana committed to initiating, animating and coordinating programmes to follow up on the Convention conclusions.



2nd Mountain European Convention – Mountains, pioneers of sustainable development. Quality: comparative advantage of the future. Final report including the summaries of the preparatory seminars. 2000.

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Project Team



Mountain Food Quality Project 2002-2004 (5th RDT FP)

Following the Convention Euromontana established a European research programme on mountain food products with 14 partners. The 2002-2004 project was financed by the 5th RTD Framework Programme of DG Research, European Commission.

The aim was to develop and put at the disposal of the actors and professionals some useful tools for the development of mountain products.

The project comprised 10 study areas (1) in 8 European countries from Norway and Scotland to Italy, Spain and Romania, representing the diversity of European mountain ranges both in terms of their topography and climatic conditions. In the first phase the project collected data on more than 120 products. The second study took the form of case studies on 18 of the previously studied products. The legislation concerning the products was also studied in the 8 countries.

The project identified two main strategies for the development of mountain quality prod-

ucts:

- 1) based on **unique product and specific know-how**, often under official denomination, and
- 2) products made under **natural mountain conditions and specific environment**. If the quality of the mountain environment is crucial to the 'intrinsic' quality of products, the agricultural practices in these difficult areas have a positive impact on the land and are necessary for maintenance of breeds, landscapes, management and keeping natural resources, etc. **The combination between extrinsic and intrinsic qualities leads to the creation of a set of values - the basis for the distinctive identity of "mountain" products.**

The main factors of success for mountain quality product seemed to be a strong link between the product and mountain environment, such as natural conditions, extensive productions, relations with local community, culture and history, some form of collective organisation of production and support avail-

(1) Both Departments of Savoie, Northern Alps (France); The Province of Turin, Western Alps (Italy); The Province of Trento, Eastern Alps (Italy); The Regions of Pindos and Cholomonidas (Greece); The Eastern Carpathians (Rumania); Andalusia (three areas) (Spain); The Basque Country (Spain); The Region of Sogn (Norway); The Tatras Mountains (Poland); The Highlands of Scotland (United Kingdom)

able for developing new projects.

The survey of regulation revealed that the two official national approaches existing at the time, the French and Italian, lacked homogeneity and no formal quality policy had been adopted to supervise the use of the term “mountain”.

Nothing existed at the European level. Therefore the project set a goal to identify common denominator characteristics for Mountain Quality Products and key indicators for future strategy.

<http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/sites/Euromontana/quality/analysis.aspx>



European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products 2005

One of the concrete outcomes of the research project was the drafting of the European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products, which was formally launched at the European Parliament in December 2005.

The political level Charter addresses the following economic development and policy objectives:

1) **The better identification of the quality mountain products in the market** in order to avoid counterfeits that would be detrimental to producers and consumers. In particular regarding the commercial use of the term

“mountain” and achieving a fair price for all of the partners in the commodity chains concerned.

2) **Promoting the recognition of the role of farmers and enterprises producing in mountain areas in Europe in producing public goods and defending their interests.**

Currently, the Charter has 66 signatories from 11 countries, from governments (France, Norway, Romania) to local cooperatives or MEPs.

<http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/sites/Euromontana/CHARTER/default.aspx>

Cécile Levret and Commissioner Fischer Boel, presentation of the European Charter for Mountain Quality Products



The Charter is based on 5 principles, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1/ The raw materials must be derived from a mountain region;
- 2/ The processing must be carried out in a mountain region;
- 3/ Production must take into account concerns relating to sustainable development;
- 4/ Production must attempt to maintain the biodiversity and heritage of mountain regions;
- 5/ Producers must be able to guarantee at all times the transparency of information to consumers.



Catherine Guy-Quint, MEP, Joseph Daul, MEP, Frank Gaskell, President of Euromontana, and Jean-Louis Cazaubon, member of the Euromontana board, at the launch of the European Charter for Mountain Quality Products



**Euromountains.net
Interreg III C
Project 2004-2007**

Euromountains.net Interreg III C project coordinated by Euromontana had a theme on the role of territorial authorities in developing and promoting quality mountain resources and products that aimed to analyse their intervention in this regard.

21 case studies in six partner regions in Norway, Italy, France and Spain revealed that there were no interventions specific to mountain areas and that the level of self-financing was not always a key factor. The **recommendations to territorial authorities** regarding support to mountain quality products concerned:

- avoiding annually negotiable sources of support in multi-year projects

- the need for capacity in territorial authorities to understand the projects, in particular the ones presented by businesses
- controlling the implementation and development of the project
- collaboration and clear definition of roles between financial partners
- adaptation of support to the state of development of the project
- the need for the territorial authorities to accept the risk of failure and to communicate with regard to their objectives

<http://www.euromountains.net/theme2.html>



Euro-MARC - European Mountain Agrofood products, Retailers and Consumers (6RDT FP) 2007-10

In February 2007 Euromontana started a 3-year research project under the 6th RDT programme of DG Research, "Priority 8" for Scientific support to policies. The project has 10 partners from 6 countries (Austria, Scotland, France, Norway, Romania, Slovenia) under the overall coordination of Euromontana and the scientific coordination of ENITA Clermont-Ferrand.

The main objectives of the Euro-MARC project is to **assess the perception and interest of European consumers in mountain quality food products** in order to find ways of adding value to mountain food products as a prerequisite for the survival and the management of rural and cultural mountain diversity. Euro-MARC intends to provide a representative overview of the different meanings of mountain food products along the food chain, from end-user consumers, to retailers, producers, farmers and "mountain" policy makers as well. The assessment aims to identify the multifactor

conditions of success and failure for the sustainable development of mountain areas, their living countryside and healthy environment. To obtain this overview, partners of Euro-Marc undertake consumer oriented surveys, distribution channels analysis, food supply chain actors' interviews, field studies of local initiatives in respect of mountain quality food products and rural development and analysis of mountain policy frameworks.

The outputs of this project will **refine the conditions for successfully applying the European Charter of Mountain Quality Food Products, particularly for professionals** with practical guidelines for development, promotion, and communication, and **for policy makers, with recommendations relating to a labelling policy in Europe.**

http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/sites/Euromontana/EuroMARC_Project/Origins_and_methodology.aspx

Pour plus d'informations:

www.mountainproducts-europe.org
www.euromontana.org
www.euromountains.net