

How Does the European Recognition Change the Economic Value of a Product? Case Study “Cașcaval de Săveni”

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Abstract

The promotion of geographical indications (GIs) can help to improve the relationship between producers and consumers with the effect of increasing the demand for such products and thus increasing the supply. The EC analysis of agri-food trade in the 27 European countries with such agri-food products showed that consumer interest in products in this category has increased, creating advantages and opportunities for countries with products registered as a European quality scheme. This paper aims to increase the awareness of agri-food producers about the potential benefits of obtaining and registering agri-food products on European quality schemes. Consequently, „Cașcaval de Săveni” (PGI) model was analysed to illustrate the positive economic impact that the development of a quality scheme can have on a product. The economic data presented has not been included in other studies. As far as it goes for the value of the present, because Romania has only 8 products registered as GIs the subject is of interest and represent new ground that can be developed and it suitable for studies. Based on the present paper traditional producers from Romania can evaluate using these findings the high benefits of registering their products as IGs. We hope that the research will stimulate the development of short food chains and associations of them for the registration of other IGs.

Keywords

food, EU quality schemes, Romanian traditional products, PGI, Sustainable agriculture

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Introduction

EEC Member States at that time (1957: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, 1973: Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, 1981; Greece and 1986: Portugal, Spain, under the Treaty establishing the European Community, defined: designations of origin (a) and geographical indications (b) in Regulation (EEC) No 2454/93 Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/1992 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs, namely "specific characteristic" and "certificates of specificity" (c) in Council Regulation (EEC) No 2454/93 2082/1992 of 14 July 1992 on certificates of specificity for agricultural products and foodstuffs, thus:

(a) designation of origin: means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff: - originating in that region, specific place or country, and - the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors, and the production, processing and preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area;

(b) geographical indication: means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff: - originating in that region, specific place or country, and - which possesses a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to that geographical origin and the production and / or processing and / or preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area.

(c) 'specific character' means the feature or set of features which distinguishes an agricultural product or a foodstuff clearly from other similar products or foodstuffs belonging to the same category. (...). 'certificate of specific character' means recognition by the Community of the specific character of a product by means of its registration in accordance with this Regulation.

The research and studies carried out so far by the European Commission have required, in the context of the reorientation of the Common Agricultural Policy by diversifying agricultural production, the promotion of specific products that can bring considerable benefits to the rural economy, especially in less favored or remote areas. Thus, for products that differ in their specific characteristics from other products in the same category, consumers benefit from information through "EU-specific symbols" which are written on the packaging and which allow them to make an informed choice. account of product traceability.

At present, Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on agricultural and food quality systems, which replaced the two specific food quality regulations, namely (EC) 510/2006 and 509/2006, provides extended protection against imitations, counterfeits for agricultural products and foodstuffs intended for human consumption.

With the accession of Romania, on 01.01.2007, only for a few spirits it was possible to keep the European recognition, as names of geographical indications. For this reason, for agri-food products, there were two subsequent approaches in national legislation: one that implemented European legislation in line with the European regulatory framework and the second, which created applicable legislation at national level. Initially, the national approach that promoted a voluntary quality scheme regarding the attestation of traditional products, defined by Order no. 690/2004 for the approval of the Norm regarding the conditions and criteria for the attestation of traditional products, did not benefit from European recognition.

Only in 2018, the necessary steps were taken to create a national voluntary quality scheme, by Order no. 724/2013 on the attestation of traditional products that repealed Order no. 690/2004 for the approval of the Norm regarding the conditions and criteria for the attestation of traditional products. The changes have been submitted to the European Union for approval, and since February 2020, Romania has the first voluntary agricultural product certification scheme registered in the Technical Regulation Information System (TRIS) database. Quality schemes certify the quality and characteristics of products or the production process for consumers and contribute to the sustainable development of the rural environment. The CAP provides for measures to access European funds to promote agri-food products registered on quality schemes (Popa and Nica, 2021).

The paper is structured as follows. The introduction contains an overview of European legislation on quality certification schemes as well as the Romanian evolution of the quality scheme „traditional food” [„produs tradițional”]. After detailing the two types of recognition, respectively voluntary quality scheme for traditional food in 2020 and GIs a Romanian successful model has been presented. Using the study case, the positive economic impact of registering a product as quality scheme has been presented. Finally, the conclusion was that a traditional product can be more easily transformed in a PGI. Also, the benefits of certifying a product as any IG were exposed.

Review of the scientific literature

The protection of Geographical Indications (GIs) has, over the years, emerged as one of the most contentious intellectual property right (IPR) issues in the realm of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It has gained ore interest since its protection has been ensured multilaterally under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organisation. (Singh, 2016; Ferrer-Pérez, 2020) For almost 30 years, the European Union (EU) has introduced

legislation for the protection of geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, as an instrument for an active quality policy (Josling, 2006, 2007, Leufkens, 2018).

Due to historical developments in Europe, Italian, French and Spanish manufacturers and processors in particular have so far used the advantages of the system, also known as more vigorous GI regulation than producers in other European Union (EU) countries, thus achieving a figure of considerable business and export potential (Mora, 2007; Parrott et. al., 2002). A continuous increase in sales and efforts to register new products can also be seen in Portugal, the United Kingdom and a few other countries, which indicates that there is a potential for permanent growth for products with designation of origin protection throughout Europe (Profeta, et al., 2006; BstMLF, 2008; Ilbery and Kneafsey, 2000b).

The currently promoted agricultural quality policies at EU level provide both support for organic production and support for the identification of standard support tools to increase the visibility and marketing of quality products in relation to other products (Harvey, 2004).

The link between sustainability goals and GIs is manifold: Several case studies show that GI products can be seen as drivers for sustainable and rural development and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), even if there might scope for more targeted focus on the EU level (Chilla, et. al., 2020).

Research methodology

The present paper identified a strong correlation between the registration of the product *Cașcaval de Săveni* as PGI and the economic growth of the businesses producing it. In order to demonstrate the positive impact of registering a product as IGs the 5 producers of the PGI *Cașcaval de Săveni* were analysed taking into consideration: the raise of the quantity of product, number of costumers, economic development, the distribution of the product, marketing and population dynamic in the area of production.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was processed and analysed in order to determine the development of the product in a 5-year period. All the data came from secondary reliable sources as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and National Statistical Institute (NSI). Comparing data from before and after the registration is a suitable method to determinate the growth of the businesses after registering the product as PGI.

Results and discussion

Cascaval de Săveni, the evolution from National Voluntary Quality Scheme traditional product to European PGI

The legal framework governing quality systems at EU level, Geographical Indication (IG), consists of two quality schemes, namely Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). Either of these two schemes contain in the name of the IG something linking to the region or geographical area where they are produced, for marketing purpose. For PDO, it is mandatory that all stages of production or processing take place in the defined geographical area, while for a PGI it is sufficient that only one of the production phases of the process takes place in the geographical area.

The creation of a national legal framework for the registration of specific products has brought major benefits to small producers, as it has been a first step towards the recognition of their product at European level. By registering the product in the National Register of Traditional Products, it was possible to identify products that are suitable to be registered as quality systems, which have specific features related to a geographical area. In the case of “*Cașcaval de Săveni*” and “*Cârnați de Pleșcoi*”, the grouping of producers in order to prepare the documentation for PGI had as a starting point the unique registration of each producer in the voluntary quality scheme “traditional product”. For products already registered or in the final phase of registration in the EU that have started from a traditional product, in this case “*Cașcaval de Săveni*” currently being registered as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)

and "Cârnați de Pleșcoi" already PGI a development of the activity can be seen, threw the opening stores outside the production area, especially in urban or tourist areas.

Romania through the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development submitted to the European Commission on 27.04.2017, the Application for registration to obtain the protection of a quality system of an agricultural and / or food product for the name "Cașcaval de Săveni" submitted by the group of Producers Association "Cașcavalul de Săveni" (PACS) registered with the number RO / PGI / 0005/02361. The recognition of the product as PGI was possible after the 6 members: SC CICOS SRL, SC GERARD SRL, SC VIOFANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL, SC GENYS COMPANY SRL, SC FAVIS SRL joined by the economic operator SC VLĂSIE COMPANY SRL obtained in 2014, 2015, respectively, from MADR the certification as a traditional product of their cheese obtained in the Săveni area (Table 1). Since 2016 they are constituted in PACS and together they wrote and submitted the documentation in order to obtain the European protection Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for the product Cașcaval de Săveni at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Table no. 1. The situation in the years 2014-2015, of the traditional product Cașcaval de Săveni with different personalized names from the geographical area of Botoșani County, where the Săveni Cheese is produced

Year of registration	Name of the certified product	Working point address	Manufacturer of the certified traditional product	The number of the certificate according to order no. 724/2013
2014	CAȘCAVAL CICOS	George Enescu commune, George Enescu village, Botoșani county	SC CICOS SRL	253
2014	CAȘCAVAL LELIȚ A	Coțușca village, Coțușca commune, Botoșani county	SC GERARD SRL	254
2014	CAȘCAVAL DE SĂVENI VIOFANNY	Săveni locality, Serg alley. Maj. Ilie Teodores-cu, no. 1, Botoșani county	SC VIOFANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL	255
2015	CAȘCAVAL GENYS	Vârfu Câmpului commune, Vârfu Câmpului village, Botoșani county	S.C. GENYS COMPANY S.R.L.	334
2015	CAȘCAVAL FAVIS	Lișna village, Suhârău commune, Botoșani county	SC FAVIS SRL	350

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development.

On 16 January 2020, the European Commission published the application for registration of the name 'Cașcaval de Săveni' pursuant to Article 50 (2) (a) of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011. Regulation (EC) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on systems relating to the quality of agricultural products and foodstuffs, for the purpose of expressing opposition by the authorities of a Member State or third country date of publication in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJ C15 / 2020). On 30.03.2020, the Republic of Bulgaria through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry submitted to the EC, the act of opposition declared admissible by the European Commission. On 08.04.2020, the Hellenic Republic (Greece), through the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, submitted to the European Commission, the opposition act for the name Cașcaval de Săveni, declared admissible by the EC.

Currently, the procedure for finalizing the registration of the product "Cașcaval de Săveni - I.G.P. for Romania by arguing that the application submitted complies with the requirements of Regulation (EU) no. 1151/2012 of the registration of a protected name and that it does not harm the producers of 'KAȘCAVAL' in the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Bulgaria, who have the possibility to continue marketing the two products (known as cheese, KASCAVAL). "Cașcaval" is a product from the category of dairy products, as widespread as „telemeaua", manufactured / produced and marketed in Romania since the 14th century, although the etymology of the word „cașcaval" is based on the scientific evidence presented above, since the occupation of the Carpato-Danubian-Pontic-European Space.

In the opposition, it was argued with the use of the name „cașcaval” for a series of products and that the request for protection refers to the compound name “Cașcaval de Săveni”.

Cascaval de Săveni, an economic perspective

In the documentation submitted by APCS in 2016, published on the MADR website, the members of the association presented the following economic information current production and estimated quantity for 5 years (tons / year), Number of customers (current and potential) on each segment of the product chain (production, distribution, marketing), as follows

1. Regarding the production evolution

Table no. 2. Current production and estimated quantity over 5 years (tones / year)

Producer	Current production 2016	Estimated quantity year I 2017	Estimated quantity year II	Estimated quantity year III	Estimated quantity year IV	Estimated quantity year V	The total amount estimated for 5 years
SC CICOS SRL	30	30	36	36	36	40	178
SC GENYS COMPANY SRL	5	10	15	20	25	30	100
SC GERARD SRL	36	40	44	48	52	60	280
SC FAVIS SRL	60	70	80	90	100	120	460
SC VIO-FANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL	22	26	31	37	44	50	210
SC VLASIE COMPANY SRL	100	140	180	210	250	280	1060
TOTAL PACS	253	316	386	441	507	580	2288

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development

Table no. 3. Number of customers (current and potential) in each segment of the product chain (production, distribution, marketing)

Producer	Number of customers (Production)		Number of customers (Production)		Number of customers (Production)	
	Current	Potential	Current	Potential	Current	Potential
SC CICOS SRL	70	100	2	1	7	2
SC GENYS COMPANY SRL	70	150	1	5	4	10

SC GERARD SRL	54	70	12	15	12	15
SC FAVIS SRL	120	200	12	20	18	24
SC VIOFANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL	25	40	2	5	27	35
SC VLASIE COMPANY SRL	145	280	6	10	6	12
TOTAL PACS	484	840	35	56	74	98

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development

Table no. 4. Geographical destination of the current product and estimated at 5 years

Producer	Current destination	Estimated destination in the first year	Estimated destination in the second year	Estimated destination in the third year	Estimated destination in the year IV	Estimated destination in the year V
SC CICOS SRL	Romania (BT, BR, B)	Romania (BT, BR, B, Romania (BT, BR, B, SV)	Romania (BT, BR, B, SV, IS)	Romania (BT, BR, B, SV, IS)	Romania (BT, BR, B, SV, IS, NT)	Romania (BT, BR, B, SV, IS, NT, CJ)
SC GENYS COMPANY SRL	Romania (BT, IS)	Romania (B, BT, IS, SV)	Romania (B, BT, IS, SV, CT)	Romania (B, BT, IS, SV, CT, BR, GL)	Romania (B, BT, IS, SV, CT, BR, GL, BC)	Romania (B, BT, IS, SV, CT, BR, GL, BC, TL, BV)
SC GERARD SRL	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)	Romania (BT, SV, GL, CT)
SC FAVIS SRL	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, CT, SV, IS, BC)
SC VIOFANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS)	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS, BC)	Romania (BT, B, SV, IS, BC)
SC VLASIE COMPANY SRL	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT)	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT, NT)	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT, GL)	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT, BC)	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT, PH)	Romania (VN; BZ, B, TL, BR, CT, BT, NT, GL, BC, PH)

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development

Table no. 5. Current and estimated economic situation over 5 years (*1000 RON)

Producer	Current economic situation	Economic situation estimated in the first year	Economic situation estimated in the second year	Economic situation estimated in the third year	Economic situation estimated in the year IV	Economic situation estimated in the year V
SC CICOS SRL	500	600	600	700	700	800
SC GENYS COMPANY SRL	380	465	545	625	705	785
SC GERARD SRL	600	700	800	900	950	950
SC FAVIS SRL	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2500
SC VIOFANNY LACT PROD-COM SRL	330	416	527	629	792	900
SC VLASIE COMPANY SRL	1400	2000	2700	3300	4100	4750
TOTAL PACS	4610	5781	6972	8154	9447	10685

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development website: www.madr.ro.

2. Regarding the producers' evolution in terms of turnover

Table no. 6 The evolution regarding the turnover for the economic operators from the applicant group in the years 2016-2019

Producer	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
SC CICOS SRL	2.174.200	1.152.765	845.675	1.303.559	682.510
SC GENYS COMPANY SRL	310.831	344.131	334.552	333.304	352.590
SC GERARD SRL	1.446.096	1.302.803	1.192.000	1.072.547	928.658
SC FAVIS SRL	819.957	1.044.430	1.227.988	1.003.167	1.456.611
SC VIOFANNY LACT PRODCOM SRL	1.365.719	1.318.132	1.015.755	681.578	297.008
SC VLASIE COMPANY SRL	5.870.798	4.944.613	4.069.379	3.110.856	1.562.983

Source: www.risco.ro.

Cascaval de Săveni, marketing growth from traditional product to European PGI

During these years, the transition from a traditional product to a product that will acquire a European protection of the product name Cașcaval de Săveni has meant an increase in the notoriety of the product. They managed through the representative form of association to make known the product Cașcaval de

Săveni in large chains of supermarkets. Thus, from the individual cheese products of the members from the Săveni area today Cașcaval de Săveni brand is offered to consumers, being a growing trend. The president of the association declared that since 2014 and until now, he can say that sales have increased by 50 %. Cașcaval de Săveni can be found in the dairy district of the whole country in the networks of Kaufland, Penny, Carrefour, Auchan, Mega Image and others. One of the producers of Cașcaval de Săveni, who has little left on the road of registration as a Protected Geographical Indication -at this time the Romanian documentation is being translated into the 27 languages, in order to be published in the Official Journal of the EC of the Regulation publishing the decision registration of PGI protection for Cașcaval de Săveni - opened in April 2020 the first store in Săveni, then two more in the city of Botoșani.

According to the statements of the president of APCS, not only the quantity of Cașcaval de Săveni product has been increasing in the last two years, but also the investments in its own store and 2 others in Botoșani, through online sales of websites and promotional Facebook of the members of the association with the local products, increase the notoriety of the product

Although European consumers are not yet sufficiently familiar with the names of quality schemes in Romania, the term traditional is very popular. The protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication logos were recognized by 18% of the responders of Eurobarometer 473 from 2018. As the traditional term is common in Romania, the transition from the specific name to the PDO or PGI quality scheme will also facilitate the integration of these new names in the minds of consumers, which will have a positive impact on other European quality schemes marketed nationally.

Through the individual actions of the APCS members, but also those of the MARD to promote the quality schemes registered and being registered, it can be seen from the initial situation of the PACS members that a major change took place. According to the conditions of the order on attestation of traditional products the estimate for the third year of the members of the association was of 441 t / year, effectively according to the report for 2019 the production achieved was 900 t / year, with a marketed production value of 18.076.000 lei.

Under the conditions imposed by order no. 724/2013 attestation of traditional products, the production limit for traditional products was 150 kg / year (365), but this was not reached by each producer, the average in 2015 for the 6 producers was 42 t / year (source: PACS members). On the way to the acquisition of European protection, the product being now registered in the Register of Systems in the field of nationally protected quality, there is both an increase in production capacity and an increase in turnover of producers in the applied group.

Cașcaval de Săveni and European funds

By protecting the name Cașcaval de Săveni-IGP, the potential of the area increases, by developing production capacities by using EU funds to modernize production capacity or accessing support measures to promote quality schemes.

The producer group also brings benefits for a better organization of the activity of promotion and defense of the right to trade under the specific name. At the same time, economic operators received additional points if they had products that are traditionally attached to the case when they accessed a measure from the EAFRD, for example measure 123 "increasing the added value of agricultural and forestry products for the expansion and modernization of the milk processing plant".

Conclusions

The usefulness of registering a traditional product has the effect that the product is obtained only in a well-defined quantity, according to the provisions of Order No. 724/2013 for small producers, or associations that must be registered / authorized from a sanitary-veterinary point of view, by knowing the traceability the product is in a direct relationship with the consumer. By associating both farmers raising animals in the area where many new operators use the same method of obtaining a product, according to a well-known recipe in the area will benefit from the effects of the local development model for Săveni cheese, which has an administrative point of view. , the geographical area corresponds to the

northern half of Botoșani County, which is located in the northeastern part of Romania, respectively: Bucecea; Vârfu Câmpului; Căndești; Mihăileni; Dersca; Hilișeu Horia; Lozna; Șendriceni; Văculești; Brăești; Leorda; Dimăcheni; Corlăteni; Broscăuți; Dorohoi; Ibănești; Pomârla; Cristinești; Suharău; George Enescu; Cordăreni; Vorniceni; Ungureni; Unțeni; Știubieni; Havârna; Hudești; Concești; Darabani; Mileanca; Drăgușeni; Săveni; Vlăsinești; Dângeni; Trușești; Dobârceni; Hănești; Avrămeni; Adășeni; Coțușca; Vișoara; Păltiniș; Rădăuți Prut; Mitoc; Manoleasa; Mihălășeni; Ripiceni. In this area, the animal farms have been restructured, modernized due to the good delivery price of the milk that is used to obtain the Cașcaval de Săveni product, the increase in the number of employees at the operators in the area who obtain the product. The association comprising all manufacturers verified by an inspection and certification body that allow negotiations with commercial network chains.

As the producers presented in the estimate transmitted to the European Union the PGI recognition raises the stake for small producers. After the member of PACS joint forces the Cașcaval de Săveni became a well-known brand that was commercialized all over Romania threw supermarket chains. Also, the producers opened shops in different cities in order to sell their product directly to the consumers. Because of the growth of product, the production has also increased, leading to a higher income for the producers.

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