

E3S GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PARIS, 9th MAY 2017

E3S WORKGROUP PDO WORKSHOP



There were 18 participants in the meeting. We had two invited speakers which were Elisa Gredilla from the Spanish accreditation body (ENAC) and Marie Derisson from the French Institute for the Designation of Origin and Quality Products (INAO).

REPORTS

Sensory methods for official control of PDOs in Spain, France and Italy

(Francisco José Perez Elortondo)

Considering the results of the 2015 survey the situation of sensory analysis for PDO accreditation in the three countries was compared. There were differences between the countries, but also inside the countries. The PDO organizations played an important role in the activity of the sensory panels in France and Spain, but not in Italy. The panel sizes were comparable in the three countries. Panel training and monitoring was carried out everywhere, but it was difficult to understand the effectiveness of this training. The methods (scorecards) were various, some qualitative, many descriptive quantitative, some with integrated scales for compliance and some with separated scales for compliance.

The wide diversity in methods and associated panel management makes the need to develop harmonized technical criteria and references at European level, together with their dissemination, increasingly urgent, because broad differences in sensory evaluations bring an unfair competition. E3S could become an European Accreditation (EA) organization recognized stakeholder collaborating in a framework coordinated by EA to contribute to this aim.

Sensory analysis requisites for accreditation of PDO (Elisa Gredilla)

The reference document used for the sensory analysis accreditation is the EA 4/09. Theoretically the scorecard used in sensory analysis should have all the descriptors which are quoted in the PDO regulation. The accreditation body checks if the laboratory is performing the sensory analysis correctly even if the laboratory is not formally accredited. There are problems in tests methods, qualification of panelists and control of test results. It is not clear if the interpretation of the test results has to be done by the control body or by the sensory laboratory.

The European Accreditation organization is aware that there are large differences in the evaluation of sensory analysis of PDO in Europe and, in order to harmonize methods at European level, a collaboration with E3S is considered necessary.

The areas of improvements are: reference materials, vocabulary of terms, standard methods, procedures for training and control of the panel.

Proposal of a guideline for sensory analysis of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) in Europe (Mario Zannoni)

Sensory analysis is important for PDOs. If there is no sensory distinctive feature of the product, a PDO risks becoming only a local product born of a tradition. Given the difficulty of a reliable sensory assessment, accreditation is the most objective guarantee of validity of the entire process. A guideline for sensory analysis of PDOs should define: selection and training of tasters, method of analysis, validation of the method, panel performance monitoring.

With the guidelines we could: have more uniformity of the methods of analysis to avoid unfair competition on the market, avoid the loss of the distinctive features of PDOs, avoid having defective products on the market, protect producers (who produce it properly) and consumers (who want to receive high quality authentic products).

The guidelines could be prepared considering the EA-4/09 G 2017 publication: *Accreditation for Sensory Testing Laboratories* and EA-1/15 A: 2014 *EA Policy For Relation with Stakeholders* as references. A working committee of sensory analysts and experts in PDO accreditation from accreditation bodies should do the task. Together with the main document it could be possible to prepare some examples of guidelines adapted to specific categories of products like wine, cheese, meat etc.

Pan-European projective perception of PDO logo (Luis Guerrero)

The results of the online survey among the consumers of 2015-16 in 7 EU-members countries were analyzed focusing attention on the knowledge of PDO logo. The survey was done using the software SurveyGizmo showing consumers the European PDO logo with and without inscription. In Italy, France, Spain the logo elicits positive association, but in Finland association was rather negative. In Italy and France many consumers associated the logo with the word *cheese*, in Spain with *wine*, in Germany with *Parma*, in Finland with *genuine* and *Feta* and in United Kingdom with *Champagne*.

The results showed nevertheless that the logo was not well known, mostly in countries of center and north Europe.

Organoleptical analysis of PDO products, French experience (Marie Derisson)

In France the sensory control of PDOs is mandatory not only because of the EU Reg. 1308/2013 but also because of the French law. French PDOs are 363 wines, 19 spirits and 98 agri-food products. The “organoleptic commissions” are settled by the INAO (Institut National de l’Origine et de la Qualité). The commission shall evaluate the compliance with the characteristic described in the product specifications and the absence of defects.

The commission is composed of at least 5 persons coming from at least two of the three official categories (operators, technicians and product’s users).

The strength/ weaknesses of the method are:

cost of controls, producer’s group involvement, tasters availability, tasters training, reliability and evaluation of technological evolution (i.e. producers groups thinking about the technical evolutions on the process and the adequacy between the product specification and the products).

Discussion

During the discussion Mario Zannoni informed the group that the process of E3S to becoming a recognized stakeholders by the EA is close to the end because the agreement will be signed at the EA general assembly in Bled, Slovenia on May 23rd.

The Geographic Indications could be certified not only by the control bodies but also by the national authorities. The guidelines we want to prepare shall be an approved document available to everyone who want to use it.

Marie Derisson was invited to participate in the subgroup method and accreditation and she has to ask permission from her management.

Management meeting

At the end of the day the program for future activities was outlined.

The subgroup methods and accreditation shall prepare a summary of the guidelines development project in a Task Force with experts from EA. This summary has to be presented to the E3S board for approval in summer 2017. We shall invite people of the sensory national organizations to participate to the preparation of the guidelines. Hopefully we could present a first draft of the guidelines at Eurosense in Verona in 2018.

For the subgroup consumers Mario Zannoni presented the proposal of collecting information about PDO public tasting competitions in Europe which use sensory analysis expertise. The proposal was shared by Spanish and Swiss colleagues. The first step in 2017 will be to collect a database of such tasting competitions.

