

TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS CERTIFICATION IN ROMANIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

GABRIELA OFELIA CHICIUDEAN¹, MARIOARA ILEA¹, DANIEL CHICIUDEAN¹

¹ *University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Cluj-Napoca, Romania;*
gabriela_chirla@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The aim of this article is to determine the stage of development of the certification process in Romania for food products, given the process strong importance in the European Union. Comparing to the European Union where the Traditional Specialities Guaranteed is the less popular certification at a national level; traditional product certification is the most common. The number of traditional products certified was analyzed using the method of spatial distribution. Results indicated a strong discrepancy between Northern and Southern regions from Romania regarding the interest for certification. It is concluded that for a future European Certification, the Northern region will become a source of certified products.*

Key words: *traditional products, food culture, spatial distribution, Traditional Specialities Guaranteed.*

INTRODUCTION

In the recent stage of the European Union development, there is a strong concern related to food product quality and food safety (Raynaud et al., 2005). Related to food quality, the European consumer demand suffered an important shift, because of the increasing interest in aspects like: food origin, the production manner and other information linked to product traceability (Dimara and Skuras, 2005)

In the European Union, there is a specific legislation regarding the quality policy of food products that includes regulations for products with the following labels: protected designation of origin (PDO), traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG), protected geographical indication (PGI). Because of the new role assumed by Central and Eastern countries from the European Union in the food supply chain, the quality schemes dominant in the Western Europe, begin to gain relevance here, also (Gawron and Theuvsen, 2008).

In Romania the policy of quality certification is at its beginnings. Until now there is only one product registered as protected geographical indication (PGI) according to the European Commission official site, and two other products have applied and waiting for approval (protected designation of origin). At a national level, traditional certification is very popular (4402 products) while at a European level, the interest for traditional specialities guaranteed (TSG) is very low (Becker and Staus, 2008), facts confirmed by the low number of this product category (45 products).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Parrot et al., (2002) conducted an analysis of spatial distribution of regional food all around Europe, focusing on PDO and PGI. Results indicated a strong differentiation between North and South, reflecting two food cultures. In the present study, a similar analysis has been conducted at a national level, using data from 2011-2013 regarding the traditional products registered, data available on the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania website (MADR). The method used is similar to the one Parrot et al., (2002) used, meaning the spatial distribution.

The article aim is to identify the regions from Romania, where people are focused on traditional certification, considering that the same regions will have the potential for a European certification, in the future.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In the European Union the interest for traditional products is very low. Only 45 products are registered as Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG), comparing to PDO and PGI. According to the European Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development Door, in 2014 PDO and PGI are totalizing 1176 products, from which more than 75% are registered by five southern countries-Italy, Portugal, Spain, France and Greece (Parrot et al., 2002). The TSG spatial distribution indicates that for TSG, these countries are not very well represented: Italy- 2 products, Portugal- no products, Spain – 4 products, France-2 products and Greece-no products. The total percentage of the five southern countries in the case of TSG is 17%. These results indicate a strong interest for TSG in the case of Central, Eastern and Northern European Countries.

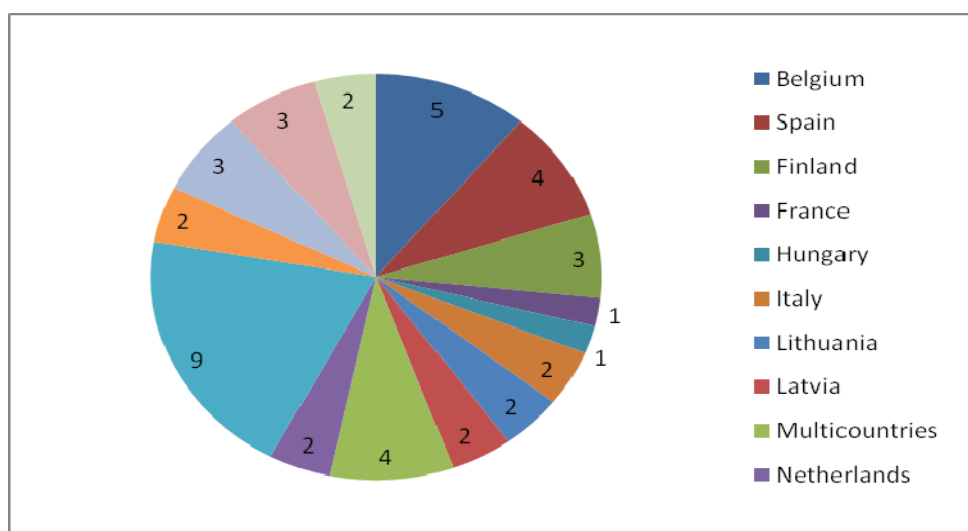


Fig 1 Traditional Specialities Guaranteed in the European Union by countries of origin

Source: Author processing after European Commission for Agriculture and Rural Development Door, 2014

At a national level, traditional certification is regulated by Order 724/2013 regarding traditional product certification. Spatial distribution of traditional products from Romania indicate a significantly discrepancy between regions. The Central region has the highest percentage from the whole country (34%), because of the strong diversity of cheese products from Sibiu. The North-West region is the second most rich in traditional products with a percentage of 23%, because of the Maramures County. The lower percentage is held by Bucharest-Ilfov region (3%) and the South-West region (2%) (Figure 2).

Following the same geographical division, between South and North used by Parrot et al. (2002), in this case considering the Carpathian mountains as a separation line, results indicate that regions from the Northern part of the Carpathians mountains (Central region, North-West, North-East and West) have a higher percentage of traditional products (72%) comparing to the regions from the Southern part (South, South-East, South-West, Bucharest-Ilfov) with a percentage of 28%.

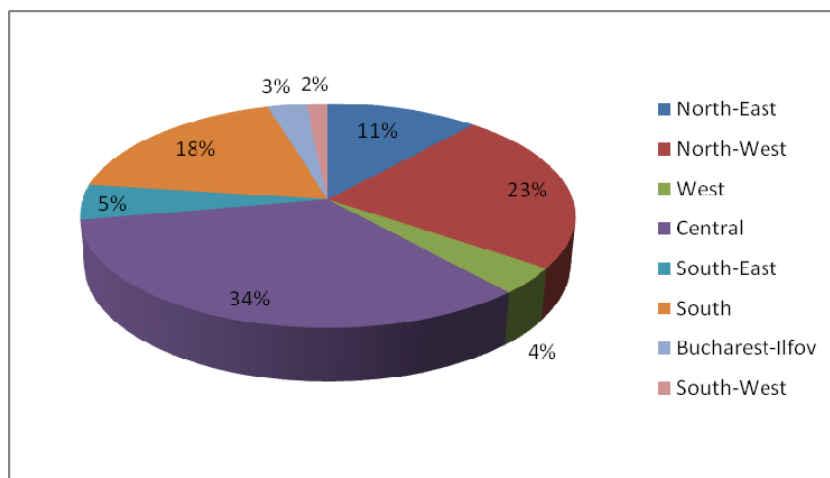


Fig 2 Spatial distribution of traditional certified products of Romania
Source: Author processing after MADR (2014)

The Northern part of the country is dominated by a large amount of traditional products (3173), of which 685 come from Sibiu, 322 come from Maramures, 300 from Brasov and 168 from Covasna. The smallest number of traditional products comes from Arad (15 products) and Bistrita-Nasaud (26 products) (Figure 3).

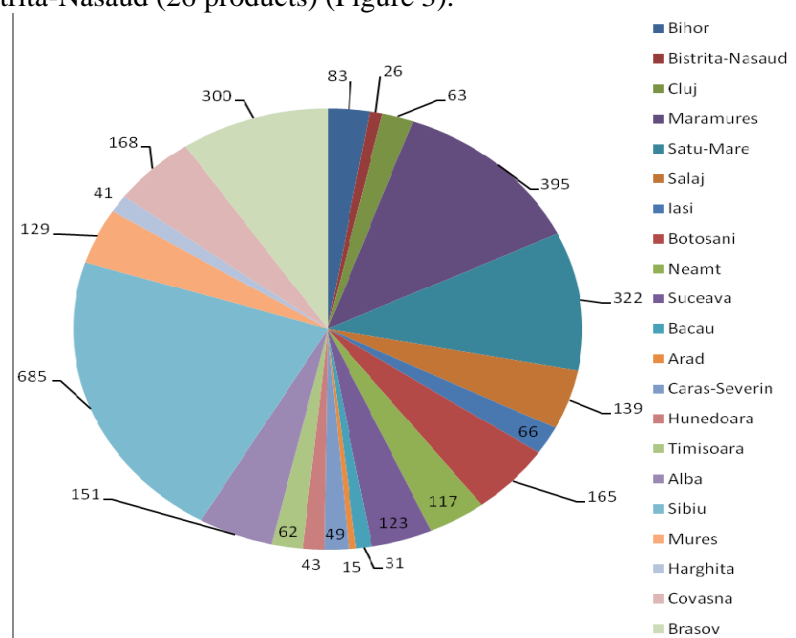


Fig 3 Number of traditional food products in the Northern part
Source: Author processing after MADR (2014)

The Southern part identified, has a total amount of 1229 traditional products, of which 641 come from Arges, 103 from Ilfov and 79 from Buzau. The smallest number of traditional products comes from Gorj (2 products) (Figure 4). At a national level, two counties (Sibiu and Arges) are occupying the top position regarding traditional products.

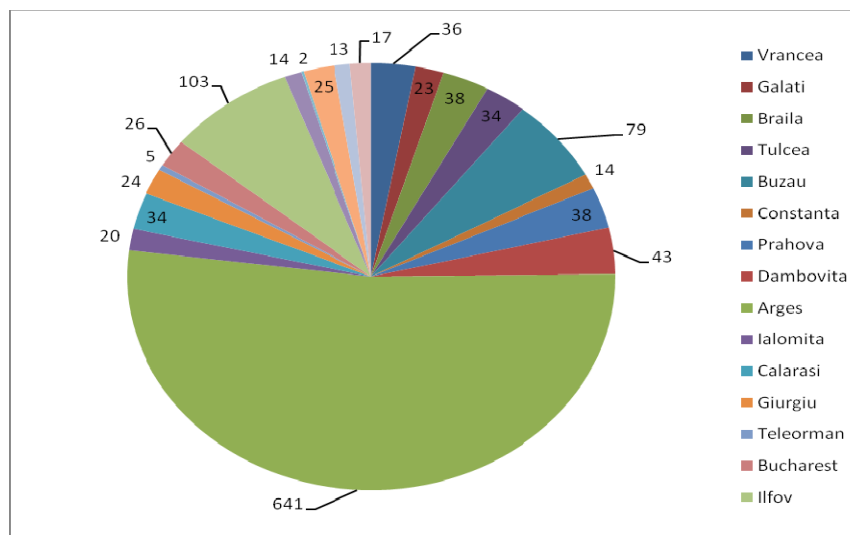


Fig 4 Number of traditional food products in the Southern part
Source: Author processing after MADR (2014)

CONCLUSIONS

Romania has a strong potential for food certification, taking into account the large number of traditional products already certified. Even if until now, only one product is recognized at a European level, the large amount of products certified represents a valuable source for a future certification. Across Romania there is a strong difference between the Northern part and the Southern part regarding the number of traditional products certified, same difference observed at a European level regarding TSG. The division identified by Parrot et al., (2002) could be applicable at a national scale, also.

REFERENCES

1. **BECKER, T. and STAUS, A., 2008**, European food quality policy: the importance of geographical indications, organic certification and food quality insurance schemes in European countries, 12th Congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists – EAAE 2008
2. **DIAMARA E. and SKURAS D., 2005**, Consumer demand for informative labelling of quality food and drink products: a European Union case study, *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 22(2): 90–100
3. **GAWRON J.C. and THEUVSEN L., 2008**, Certification schemes in the European agrifood sector: overview and opportunities for Central and Eastern Europe, Contributed Paper presented at IAMO Forum 2008;
4. **PARROT, N., WILSON, N. and MURDOCH, J., 2002**, Spatializing quality: regional protection and the alternative geography of food, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 9 (3): 241-62.
5. **RAYNAUD E., SAUVEE L.C. and VALCESCHINI E., 2005**, Alignment between Quality Enforcement Devices and Governance Structures in the Agro-food Vertical Chains, *Journal of Management and Governance*, 9:47–77
6. ***European Commission, 2014, Agriculture and Rural Development Door <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/list.html>
7. ***Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2014 <http://www.madr.ro/ro/industrie-alimentara/produse-traditionale-romanesti.html>