
Geographical Indications and other Quality Schemes in Albania

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Résumé

Albania has a significant potential for producing a range of origin-based products. Although it is a small country, Albania has a varied range of geological, hydrological and climatic conditions, enjoying several climatic zones despite its limited area.

This paper presents how registration and protection of GIs and other quality schemes has developed in Albania and explores the practical implementation of related provisions of the Albanian legislation. An analysis of the current modalities of registration and protection is made and the potential challenges in the future are discussed.

The importance of quality schemes is increasingly recognized in Albania as a tool for fostering local sustainable development, stimulating the rural economy, and promoting cultural and social visibility.

The national legislative framework for registration and protection of geographical indications (GI) is established for agricultural products, foodstuffs and wine. It includes the Law No. 9947, date 07.07.2008 "On Industrial Property", amended, the Law No. 8/2019, date 16.2.2019 "On quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuff" and number of other acts that are partially aligned with the EU *acquis* in the field of quality policy.

The institutional framework in Albania is based on the implementation of the national laws. All institutions, as below, have defined tasks, play a crucial role in the implementation of the GIs in Albania and are well coordinated. These are:

- General Directorate of Industrial Property (GDIP);
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD);
- National Food Authority (NFA);
- Private certified bodies.

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In recent years, traditional local products in Albania have started to be recognized among consumers. On one hand, the development of sustainable agritourism as a trend has influenced the development and promotion of local products by establishing a natural linkage between agritourism and local producers.

Currently, 18 agricultural and food products are registered in the national register, protected at the national level as GI. An additional 5 food products are registered as Traditional Specialties Guaranteed. Furthermore, the Republic of Albania has applied to the International Bureau of WIPO for the registration of two GI agricultural products and foodstuffs at the international level, under Rule 5 of the Common Regulations under the Lisbon Agreement and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement.

The legislation related GIs and other quality schemes presents a mixed impact for the different actors involved. While it offers significant benefits, such as improved market access, stronger protection against fraud, and enhanced consumer trust, it also introduces new responsibilities and costs for producers, authorities, and enforcement bodies. Striking a balance between these impacts is crucial to ensuring the regulation achieves its objectives without unduly burdening any particular group. Providing adequate resources, support, and clear guidelines will be essential to minimizing negative consequences and maximizing benefits for all parties involved.

Mots-Clés: Albania, Geographical indications, Legislative framework, quality schemes