

Protection of geographical indications in the Republic of Moldova

Introduction

The Republic of Moldova is an integral part of Europe. Following the restructuring processes started in Central and Eastern Europe and the national liberation movement, on June 23, 1990, the former Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic proclaimed its sovereignty, and on August 27, 1991 – independence. With it began the process of state-building in the Republic of Moldova and the assertion on external level. The Republic of Moldova became a member of the United Nations Organization on March 2, 1992, a member of the Council of Europe - on July 13, 1995, and since July 26, 2001, the Republic of Moldova is a full-right member of the WTO.

Moldova is predominantly an agricultural country with secular traditions in agriculture, particularly in viticulture, and with considerable production potential for wines and for other products eligible to bear the geographical indications (GI) and appellations of origin (AO) – fruits, vegetables, honey, nuts, edible oils and essential oils, meat, poultry, sausages, dairy products, mineral waters, handicrafts, etc. The country enjoys a temperate continental climate, a fertile soil and a very favourable topography for viticulture due to its location at approximately the same latitude (45°28'-48°29' N) as the famous wine regions of France (Alsace, Bordeaux, Burgundy) and of northern Italy.

Brief History

Moldova was the main supplier of wines, fruits and vegetables for the former republics of the USSR. Unfortunately, intensive agriculture practiced in the Soviet period, particularly in the 70-80s, have not favoured preserving and developing of the manufacturing and changing traditions characteristic to the local population, therefore the culture of geographical indications was not developed, although Moldovan products, mainly wines from certain geographical areas (Purcari, Ciumai, Românești etc.) were famous far beyond the country.

After the Soviet Union collapse and the declaration of independence, Moldova passed through a transition phase to a market economy, suffering a serious economic recession. The situation in the intellectual property field (IP) at that time may be characterized by lack of an appropriate legal framework, of the specialized agencies, of the qualified staff, lack of private property in general and of exclusive right in the intellectual product (which is a private right, *par excellence*) in particular¹.

¹ It should be noted that the right of citizens in the private property was recognized by Law No. 459-XII of 22.01.1991 on Property.

Moldova has had to develop his own intellectual property protection system *ab initio*, like other post-Soviet countries. On December 25, 1991, the Republic of Moldova joined the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property of March 20, 1883, (hereinafter - the Paris Convention), and proceeded to create its own legal framework in the given field.

During the period 1993-1998 there were adopted the first national legislative provisions in the field and were registered the first Appellations of Origin:

- by Government Decree No. 456 of 26.07.1993 it was approved the Provisional Regulation on the Protection of Industrial Property in Moldova, which contained certain provisions on AO protection, by registering them with the State Agency on Industrial Property (from September 13, 2004 – State Agency on Intellectual Property, hereinafter - AGEPI);

- in the Law on Vine and Wine No. 131 of 02.06.1994 were included provisions for wines with appellations of origin;

- by Government Decree No. 760 of 10.11.1995 it has been approved the Regulations on the Production of Wines and Other Wine Products with Appellations of Origin;

- on September 26, 1995, it was adopted the Law No. 588-XIII on Trademarks and Appellations of Origin of Goods, which contained very general provisions on AO protection;

- by the Law No. 735-XIII of 20.02.1996, the Code of Administrative Offenses of 29.03.1985² was completed with Article 51³ "Violation of exclusive rights in industrial property objects" and the Criminal Code of 24.03.1961³ – with Article 141/2 "Infringement of the holder's right in industrial property objects" containing the first provisions in the national legislation that provided for administrative and criminal sanctions for IP infringement.

Thanks to the necessary legal framework, during the 1997-1998 period, the first 12 applications for the registration of AO were submitted with AGEPI, of which 7 AO were registered, including 2 domestic – „ROMĂNEȘTI” and „CIUMAI” for wines and 5 – from the Czech Republic: „BUDWEISER BIER”, „BUDWEISER BIER – BUDVAR”, „BUDWEISER BUDVAR”, „BUDWEIS BEER” for beer and „KARLSBADER BITTER” for alcoholic beverages. At the same time, it was rejected the application for registration of AO "BUD" from the Czech Republic (on the grounds that it does not represent a geographical name), and the other 4 national applications were withdrawn.

The period 2000-2003 is characterized by the development of legislative and regulatory framework in the field of IG and by the extension of the number of protected AO. In the context of

² The Code of Administrative Offenses is repealed by Contraventional Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218-XVI of 24. 10. 08, in force since 31.05.2009.

³ The Criminal Code of 24.03.1961 is repealed on 12.06.2003 by Law 1160-XV of 21.06.2002 on the implementation of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova.

accession of the Republic of Moldova to the WTO and of harmonization of the national legislation with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), by Law No. 1079 of 23.06.2000 on Amendment and Completion of Certain Legislative Acts:

- the Law No. 588-XIII of September 22, 1995, on Trademarks and Appellations of Origin of Goods has been supplemented with new provisions relating to AO and for the first time included provisions on GI, that benefited of an indirect protection through non-admission of the registration, in the trademark, of GI likely to mislead consumers as to the true place of origin. For GIs identifying wines and other alcoholic products it has been provided an advanced level of protection;

- the Law on Vine and Wine No. 131-XIII of June 2, 1994, was also supplemented with provisions on non-admission of the use of geographical indications identifying wines and other wine products not originating in the place specified in that geographical indication, and the conditions of assigning AO for wines were harmonized with the provisions of Law No. 588/1995.

In the same context, in the Moldovan Customs Code of 20.07.2000, for the first time in national legislation, were included provisions on border measures upon enforcement of intellectual property rights, including AO (Chapter XII).

On April 5, 2001, Moldova became party to 2 important WIPO-administered treaties in the field:

- the Madrid Agreement for the Repression of False or Deceptive Indications of Source of Goods of April 14, 1891, and

- the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration of October 31, 1958 (hereinafter – the Lisbon Agreement), the Republic of Moldova being the twentieth member state.

Within a year of that date, AGEPI, as the competent authority of the Republic of Moldova in the Special Union of the member countries of this Arrangement, examined 765 international registrations of AO, notified by the International Bureau of WIPO. Following examination, the absolute majority (759) of AO has been afforded protection in Moldova⁴, while for 6 AO were issued statements of refusal of granting protection on various legal grounds: AO 45 „TOKAJSKE VINO de la région slovaque”, AO 834 „KARPATSKÁ PERLA” – for wine and AO 614 „KARPATSKÉ BRANDY” for brandy (country of origin - Slovakia); AO 643 „DUNAVSKA SALATA” for preserved vegetable salad and AO 678 "KASKAVAL BALKAN" for cheese (Bulgaria); AO 598 "BUD" for beer (Czech Republic).

⁴ See, “List of appellations of origin which were afforded protection in the Republic of Moldova under the Lisbon Agreement...” in BOPI No. 5 of 2002, page 71-98, <http://www.agepi.md/pdf/bopi/bopi-05-2002/BOPI-DO-05-2002.pdf>.

The national regulatory framework in the IG field was also supplemented with the Implementing Regulations of Law No. 588/1995 on Trademarks and Appellations of Origin of Goods (the part relating to the appellations of origin of goods), approved by order of the Director General AGEPI No. 131 of 21.10.2003.

Harmonization of the IP national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*

On July 1, 1998, the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, Establishing a Partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Moldova, on the other hand (PCA), signed in Brussels on November 28, 1994, came into force. According to Articles 49 and 50 of PCA (IP concerning objectives), the Republic of Moldova must provide a level of IP rights protection similar to that existing in the EU, including effective means to ensure implementation of these rights.

According to the European Union - Moldova (EU-Moldova) Action Plan signed on February 22, 2005 in Brussels between representatives of the European Commission and the Government of Moldova, AGEPI, has elaborated, with the assistance of EU experts, the special draft laws according to the *acquis communautaire*. One of the most complex and specific fields turned out to be that of geographical indications. The complexity is determined by the fact that in the EU there are three protection systems (for wines, spirits and agricultural products and foodstuffs) and two instruments - Protected Appellation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication.

At the same time, a number of products eligible to bear AO or GI (for example, mineral waters, handicrafts, mineral products, etc.) do not fit into these systems⁵, but the Republic of Moldova, as a member of the Lisbon Agreement, has already granted protection to a whole series of AO from different countries for such products, possessing in turn a considerable potential in this sense, still unused.

Moreover, neither the Lisbon Agreement nor the TRIPS Agreement contains any restrictions on products that GI can be used for. According to these considerations, it was decided that a draft law containing the common rules valid for all products be elaborated⁶. Regarding specific regulations for different types of products, they must take the specialized bodies empowered.

A unique domain in the harmonization of national IP legislation was the EU system for registration of traditional specialties guaranteed (TSG), destined to identify and protect traditional

⁵ Initially, the Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and appellations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs viewed also mineral waters, but following the amendments made by the Council Regulation (EC) No. 692/2003 of 8 April 2003, these were excluded from the list of products to which the Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2081/92 is applied.

⁶ It should be mentioned that soon in EU, by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 479/2008 of 29 April 2008 on the common organization of the wine market, a system for protection of GI and AO for wines, similar to that existent for agricultural products and foodstuffs was introduced.

products names. Between the Community rules regarding the registration, protection and use of GI and AO and appropriate regulations for TSG there are many similarities. This has led to the elaboration of a single draft law covering the protection of these 3 items. The project was discussed with experts from various fields, civil society and European experts, being appreciated positive.

On March 27, 2008, the Parliament of RM adopted the Law No. 66-XVII on the Protection of Geographical Indications, Appellations of Origin and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (hereinafter - the Law), in force since October 25 of that year.

Law is harmonized with:

- Council Regulation (EC) No. 509/2006 of 20 March 2006 on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialties guaranteed;
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and appellations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs;
- Directive 2004/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the enforcement of intellectual property rights,

being also fully concordant with the provisions of the Lisbon Agreement, the Paris Convention and TRIPS Agreement.

For the first time the Moldovan legislation, in addition to appellations of origin, provides legal protection of two new objects, more exactly, geographical indications and traditional specialties guaranteed. This is ensured:

- on the grounds of their registration with AGEPI as established by Law, or
- on the basis of international treaties, including bilateral agreements, to which the Republic of Moldova is party (now - the Lisbon Agreement).

The Law contains provisions concerning the registration, protection and use of these three objects, the regulations of relations between them and trademarks, the reasons for refusal to register. Special rules govern the effects of registration and the conditions for cancellation of registration, revocation of protection or revocation of the right for use thereof. The Law also contains rules on official controls on conformity of products and monitoring of compliance with the product specification etc.

A separate chapter of the Law is devoted to international registrations of appellations of origin, made according to the Lisbon Agreement, which have Moldova as their country of origin or which extend their effects to the Republic of Moldova. Another important chapter concerns the enforcement of rights deriving from a protected geographical indication, an appellation of origin or a traditional specialty guaranteed.

GI and AO acquiring protection in Moldova are protected against any misuse or misleading use of a protected appellation that would allow exploitation of its reputation, or would be likely to

mislead consumers as to the true origin of goods. Also, protected appellations may not become generic.

The application of the Law will create conditions for access of local products to the international markets; it will contribute to the implementation of a series of strategies adopted by the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

With the view of enforcing the measures to protect IP, by Law No. 110-XVI of 27.04.2007, Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 985 of 18.04.2002 was completed with Art. 185² “Infringement of rights on industrial property objects”, which includes penalties for unlawful use of an appellation of origin.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that in the context of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* a number of normative acts pertaining to the IP field, including to geographical indications was adopted or modified. Thus:

- ✓ by Law No. 280 of 14.12.2007 was amended the Law on Vine and Wine No. 57 of 10.03.2006, important restrictions related to the production of wines with appellation of origin, controlled appellation of origin and geographical indication being introduced;
- ✓ the Contraventional Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218 was adopted on 24.10.2008, in force since 31. 05. 2009, which contains provisions on penalties for unlawful use of the appellation of origin;
- ✓ by Law No. 103-XVI of 16.05.2008 the Customs Code was amended, it was completed including with provisions on border enforcement measures for the protection of geographical indications;
- ✓ by Government Decision No. 356 of 11.05.2009 was approved the technical Regulation “The wine market organization system and traceability of the products”, in force since 15.08.2009, transposing into the national law the provisions of the Council Regulation (EC) No. 479/2008 of 29 April 2008 on the common organization of the wine market. The Regulations includes requirements for raw materials, technological processes used, conformity assessment procedures, specific requirements for market surveillance, traceability of wine production, etc., which are essential for wines with GI and AO.

Entry into force of the Law brought along a number of measures with a view to bringing national legislation in conformity with that Law and to its effective application.

With that end in view AGEPI elaborated the drafts:

- ✓ Regulations on the submission, examination and registration of geographical indications, appellations of origin and traditional specialties guaranteed (hereinafter - Regulations);
- ✓ Law amending and supplementing certain acts, which added to the Contraventional Code of the Republic of Moldova 2 articles on the illegal use of appellations of origin/geographical

indications and reserved names of traditional specialties guaranteed and art. 185² of the Criminal Code was completed with 2 new paragraphs relating to penalties for fraudulent or misleading use of geographical indications or names of traditional specialties guaranteed.

The listed drafts were coordinated with the resort bodies and are to be approved by the Government.

Although the regulatory framework largely exists, we can't consider that the national system for protection of geographical indications is fully set. The practice of other countries with rich experience in this area (France, Italy) shows that this is a complex system, both in terms of regulatory and institutional. Besides AGEPI, the only authority to grant legal protection in Moldova to IG, AO and TSG under the Law, this system will include 2 types of competent authorities:

I. with attributions and responsibilities on homologation of the product specifications, defining the main principles, approving the stages and procedures of verification in order to provide observance of the product specifications in conformity with the provisions of the law;

II. bearing responsibility on the official control in relation of the conformity of products with designations of origin, geographical indications and traditional specialties guaranteed.

They are to be appointed by the Government for different types of products, proceeding from their specificity, and from the functions and powers of various ministries and central administrative authorities. In this regard is relevant the Government Decision No. 31 of 23.01.2009 on approval of regulated areas, regulatory authorities and bodies with market supervisory functions.

Unlike other IP objects, the geographical indications have a particular trait: by law, they do not belong to anyone with exclusive rights, cannot be assigned, licensed and be the subject of real rights. Recording of AO or GI generates only the occurrence of the right to use thereof, however, this right can be obtained by any person in the appropriate geographical area, under the Law.

Hence the need for association of producers, processors and others devoted to the given product as to obtain protection and to ensure compliance with specifications (internal controls), to promote products, to protect rights, etc. In addition to the need to ensure equity, the association is determined also by the fact that the actions listed require very substantial financial investment, which could be an obstacle to registration of GI and AO.

However, the practice of countries with traditions in this field shows that the benefits obtained as a result of promotion of GI products outweigh the costs. Its benefits are not only materials and direct, but multiple and diverse - the sustainable development of agriculture, halting the exodus from rural areas, employment, attraction of youth in farming, agricultural diversification, rural tourism development, etc.

Protection of geographical indications

Speaking of GI protection it is necessary to mention that Republic of Moldova has undertaken to respect the foreign appellations of origin even in the first years of independence: thus in 1993 the first national normative documents for wines and spirits were adopted, which have replaced the corresponding standards of the USSR⁷, under which a number of appellations of origin were used as generic. Instead indigenous names were introduced:

Appellation used in:		Product	AO (No. ⁸ , country of origin)
URSS in Cyrillic characters (transliteration)	Moldova		
<i>Шампанское (shampanskoe)</i>	<i>Spumant</i>	Sparkling wine	CHAMPAGNE (AO 231, FR)
<i>Коньяк (coniac)</i>	<i>Divin</i>	Matured wine distillate	COGNAC (AO 343, FR)
<i>Кагор (cagor)</i>	<i>Pastoral</i>	Red and pink dessert wines	CAHORS (AO 396, FR)
<i>Портвейн (portvein)</i>	<i>Prometeu</i>	Wine heated with O ₂ access in minimum doses	PORTO (AO 682, PT)
<i>Мадера (madera)</i>	<i>Luceafăr</i>	Heat-treated wine with O ₂ access in excessive doses	MADEIRA (AO 683, PT)
<i>Сотерн (sotern)</i>	<i>Nectar</i>	White dessert wines	SAUTERNES (AO 128, FR)
<i>Марсала (marsala)</i>	<i>Cărpineni</i>	Caramelized wine	Marsala (IT)
<i>Херес (heres)</i>	<i>Ialoveni</i>	Pellicular wine	Xérès (ES)

This has contributed greatly to the “education” of producers, traders and consumers in the spirit of respect of appellations of origin, despite the tradition established during the Soviet period.


We can neither overlook the protection of AO within the examining procedure of the applications for registration of trademarks. AGEPI has always rejected the registration of trademarks containing appellations of origin, or heir increasingly sophisticated imitations, applied for registration by persons not authorized to use such appellations. Most attempts in this sense were

⁷ For example, All-Union state standard 12494-77 (in force) Cognacs (brandy) delivered for export. Specifications. All-Union state standard 13918-88 (in force) Soviet champagne. Specifications, etc.

⁸ The international registration number of the appellation of origin registered under the Lisbon Agreement.

made in relation to some of the most famous appellations of origin protected under the Lisbon Agreement⁹. Here are a few examples:

- ✓ under AO 343 COGNAC were rejected more trademarks, including*:

CONAC	CONACUL VERDE (cl. 33)	LA CONAC
СОНЬЯК SONIAC		CONAC BOIERESC
	CONACUL STRĂMOȘESC	

* The word “conac” shall translate “mansion”; designation “conacul verde” means “green mansion”; “conacul strămoșesc” - “ancestral mansion”; “conac boieresc” – “manorial mansion”.

- ✓ under AO 231 CHAMPAGNE were rejected several trademarks, including the following:

Svetscoe Şampanskoe	ШАМПАНЕЛЛА
СЛАВНЫЙ ШАМПУСИК	SHAMPANELLA

- ✓ under AO 396 CAHORS were rejected all trademarks containing this appellation, most commonly filed in Cyrillic characters, in the phonetic version of the Russian language, e.g.:

КАГОР ОСОБЫЙ	Кагор БАРХАТНЫЙ	КАГОР АРХИЕРЕЙСКИЙ
Кагор РУБИНОВЫЙ	КАГОР СЛАВЯНСКИЙ КАГОР, СЛАВЕАНСКИИ	Кагор ПҮРПҮРНЫЙ

⁹ Until now, Moldova has granted protection to a number of 802 AO under the Lisbon Agreement.

✓ there were considered imitations of the Georgian AO “KINDZMARAUЛИ” and “KHVANCHKARA”¹⁰ and were rejected the following 4 trademarks:



To note that on 19.04.2007 the first national AO „ROMĂNEȘTI”- for red wines - was filed for protection under the Lisbon Agreement (AO 882).

Parallel to the protection of geographical indications under laws relating to intellectual property, it must be specified also adoption by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova of two laws that set up a special regime for use of geographical indications “Cricova” and “Milestii Mici”:

- ✓ Law No. 322-XV of 18.07.2003 on the Declaration of the Complex “Combinatul de Vinuri “Cricova” S.A.” as an Object of the National-Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova and
- ✓ Law No. 199-XVI of 28.07.2005 on the Provision of the Status of Object of the National-Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Moldova to “Combinatul de Vinuri Milestii Mici” State Owned Enterprise.

By these laws the mentioned wine-making companies have been recognized as cultural and landscape complexes of national importance, bearing the information about the traditions of the people in wine-making and in the vine culture, allocation of status of national-cultural heritage objects aimed at their preservation for present and future generations.

The wine-making enterprise “CRICOVA” is rightly considered the pearl of Moldavian wine-making. It was founded in 1953. In 1955 there began the production of sparkling wines by the

¹⁰ They are now protected by the Lisbon Agreement - KINDZMARAUЛИ (861) კინძმარაული and KHVANCHKARA (862) ხვანჭკარა.

traditional method of secondary fermentation in the bottle. Currently it is the only company in the Republic of Moldova, which produces sparkling wines based on traditional French technology. Cellars of Cricova are a veritable temple of wine, known not only in the country but also abroad. They represent an underground city of wines, with streets, tasting rooms and warehouses etc., located at a depth of 60-80 m.

The Length of underground galleries dug in the limestone rock is of over 60 km, with a constant temperature of about 12°C and a humidity of 97-98%. These are ideal conditions for the preservation of more than 30 million litres of elite wine. The Cricova wine collection has more than 1 million bottles of wine, the oldest dating from 1902. Cricova wines have won more than 60 gold and silver medals at the most famous international exhibitions and competitions and the enterprise “Cricova” was appreciated with the Golden Star of Quality awarded by the European Club of Commercial Leaders.



The State Enterprise Quality Wines Industrial Complex “Milestii Mici” was founded in 1969 and is an winemaking plant specialized in the secondary vinification, in compliance with millennial traditions. The enterprise produces collection wines, quality wines, ordinary wines and sparkling wines. Wines are stored in underground galleries in enormous oak barrels with a capacity from 600 to 2000 dal, ideal conditions for maturation and preservation thereof: quiet, constant temperature (+12 – +14°C) and relative humidity (85-95%).

In 2006, the cellars of the Enterprise “Milestii Mici” were included in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest wine warehouse in the world: its galleries, located at a depth of 40 to 85 m, have a total length of 200 km, of which about 55 km are used for technological purposes and the “Golden Collection” of the plant is over 1.5 million bottles of wine, since 1968.

Current state: Problems and Opportunities

When referring to the actual state of affairs on the production of products with GI and AO, we note that currently this is done only in the wine sector.

In addition to the normative documents above, in order to create optimal conditions for the production of wines with appellations of origin and for their promotion on outlets, a list of wine centers (12) and lands (micro-regions) (33) to produce wines with appellation of origin was approved by Government Decision No. 551 of 07. 06. 2005 on some measures to production of

wines with appellation of origin, these being parts of two wine-growing and making regions (zones) - Cahul (South) and Codru (Center). Also, until 2010, the extension of the vineyards for the production of wines with appellation of origin to a surface of at least 3250 ha was disposed.

In addition to the normative documents above, in order to create optimal conditions for the production of wines with appellations of origin and for their promotion on outlets, a list of wine centers (12) and lands (micro-regions) (33) to produce wines with appellation of origin was approved by Government Decision No. 551 of 07.06.2005 on some measures to production of wines with appellation of origin. These centers are part of two wine regions (zones) - Cahul (South) and Codru (Center)¹¹. Also, until 2010, the extension of the vineyards for the production of wines with appellation of origin to a surface of at least 3250 ha was scheduled¹².

Currently in Moldova does not exist the necessary experience with a view to setting up a complex system of protection of geographical indications under the European rigors. In order to overcome this impediment, AGEPI performed multiple activities to inform civil society, local producers and specialists from the central and local government bodies of the benefits and economic and social advantages of the protection system of GIs, in particular: dissemination of relevant information by the written press, radio and TV, organization of a series of roundtables and seminars, including with the participation of representatives of European institutions, etc.

Especially helpful is the transfer of knowledge about the European experience on developing the system of protection of GI and AO, best practices to strengthen the institutional framework for implementation of the system. It is relevant in this respect the seminar “The system of geographical indications and appellations of origin in Moldova” held in Chisinau on 25-26 March 2009 under the TAIEX technical assistance program by the European Commission in collaboration with AGEPI and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry for the representatives of public institutions responsible for implementation of the Law, of producer associations and farmers, of accredited inspection and certification bodies etc.

It should be mentioned that for the first time in the year 2008 AGEPI accessed the TWINNING program, being elaborated the Project Fiche in IP field on implementation of the compartment “Industrial and intellectual property rights” from the RM-EU Action Plan. Project launch is planned for the second half of 2009. It contains a series of activities aimed at disseminating knowledge and information updated on implementation of the protection system of AO, GI and TSG, in the light of best practices in EU Member States. For this purpose it is

¹¹ Composition of wine regions (zones): **Cahul (South)** - wine centers Trifești, Ciurari, Tigheci, Comrat, Cimișlia, Purcari; **Codru (Center)** – wine centers Hîncești, Bulboacă, Ialoveni, Cricova, Românești, Nisporeni.

¹² At the date of issuance of the mentioned Decision the existing area was 810 ha.

envisaged the publication of a manual to explain the legal framework and provide practical recommendations useful both to producers and the relevant administrative authorities.

Proceeding from the above mentioned, it can be concluded that Moldova currently has adequate legislation on the protection of geographical indications. Its implementation will allow the development of the country's potential with a view to producing various products with geographical indications and will create conditions for access of local products in international markets, and will contribute to the realization of a number of strategies adopted by the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

Conclusions: The Republic of Moldova in a relatively short time succeeded to establish its national framework, harmonized with the *acquis communautaire*, and to join the international system of protection of geographical indications. Our country has a considerable potential to produce wines and other products eligible to bear the geographical indications and appellations of origin. To develop this potential, Moldova should build a workable and effective protection system and to highlight the worth of all its advantages to the benefit of the entire society.