

Cómo citar este trabajo: *Maior, C (2025). Protected Designation of Origin, a tourist scam, or a strong branding process across the EU? Case of study Port wine and Serra da Estrela cheese. Journal of Tourism Analysis, (32,2), 2025, 32–54. <https://doi.org/10.53596/hpexkf07>*

Protected Designation of Origin, a tourist scam, or a strong branding process across the EU?

Case of study Port wine and Serra da Estrela cheese

**Denominación de Origen Protegida: ¿una estafa turística o un sólido
proceso de marca en toda la UE?**

Caso de estudio: Vino de Oporto y Queso Serra da Estrela

Catalin Maior¹

¹University of Primorska, Slovenia

Abstract

This paper examines whether the European branding of tradition, specifically the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) label, influences purchasing decisions in crowded tourist areas. The study focuses on two PDO-certified products—Port Wine and Serra da Estrela cheese—in Lisbon, Portugal. A key research question is whether PDO labeling enhances trust and contributes to a more authentic and unique tourist experience.

To investigate this, a structured questionnaire was conducted between June and July 2022 in Lisbon, targeting two groups: European and non-European tourists. This segmentation allows for a comparative analysis of consumer awareness and perceptions of PDO branding. Additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with a manager of an accommodation facility that sells Port Wine, providing insights into the commercial perspective on PDO-labeled products.

The results indicate that European tourists generally have greater awareness of the PDO system compared to non-European tourists. However, both groups associate PDO labels with authenticity

Reception: 03.01.2024 **Revision:** 08.06.2024 **Acceptance:** 11.07.2024

Publication: 12.12.2025

 This work is subject to an international license of attribution – no commercial 4.0 Creative Commons.

and quality, influencing their purchasing decisions. The findings suggest that PDO certification can serve as a valuable marketing tool in tourism, reinforcing the cultural and gastronomic appeal of local products.

Key words: European Union, PDO, GIs, PGI, Port Wine, Serra da Estrela cheese.

Resumen

Este artículo examina si la marca europea de la tradición, específicamente la etiqueta de Denominación de Origen Protegida (DOP), influye en las decisiones de compra en áreas turísticas concurridas. El estudio se centra en dos productos con certificación DOP: el Vino de Oporto y el Queso Serra da Estrela, en Lisboa, Portugal. Una cuestión clave de investigación es si el etiquetado DOP refuerza la confianza y contribuye a una experiencia turística más auténtica y única.

Para investigar esto, se llevó a cabo un cuestionario estructurado entre junio y julio de 2022 en Lisboa, dirigido a dos grupos: turistas europeos y no europeos. Esta segmentación permite un análisis comparativo de la conciencia y percepción del consumidor sobre la marca DOP. Además, se realizó una entrevista semiestructurada con un gerente de un establecimiento de alojamiento que comercializa Vino de Oporto, proporcionando información sobre la perspectiva comercial de los productos con etiqueta DOP.

Los resultados indican que los turistas europeos generalmente tienen un mayor conocimiento del sistema DOP en comparación con los turistas no europeos. Sin embargo, ambos grupos asocian las etiquetas DOP con autenticidad y calidad, lo que influye en sus decisiones de compra. Los hallazgos sugieren que la certificación DOP puede servir como una valiosa herramienta de marketing en el turismo, reforzando el atractivo cultural y gastronómico de los productos locales.

Palabras clave: Unión Europea, DOP, IG, IGP, Vino de Oporto, Queso Serra da Estrela.

1. Introduction

European Commission emphasizes the importance of the food and beverages quality and their origin, as a strategy to protect and to preserve the traditions of a certain region, a labeling marketing strategy was introduced, those labels have the aim to protect the designations of agricultural food products that have a certain quality level given by their geographic location.

The quality food policy has the goal to protect the names of food and beverages products, as well the agricultural ones. The main goal of the labels are very strong marketing influencers, showing that a certain product, food, beverages, or agricultural ones, is not a scam, a fraud in the industry and its authentic, and years of research were behind the product to have the label. Usually, every successful food that commands a quality price will attract a huge range of scams (Olmsted, 2016). In last 3 decades, the demanding for the quality labels in Southern Europe, has increased a lot, spectacular (Albuquerque et al., 2018; Ruiz et al., 2018; Sadilek, 2020).

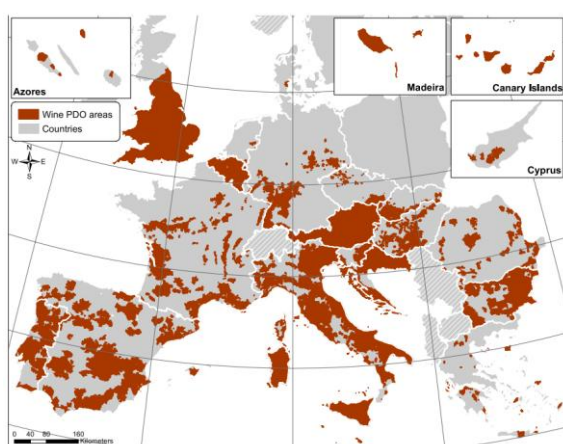
The two most popular labels created by the European Commission are Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), and the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), as per European regulation 2081/92 followed by the regulation 516/2006).

Creation of PDO and PGI, were a response to demand from the local producers and the final user, the consumer. The literature demonstrates us that those labels can be an efficient tool that producers might use in order to reflect the quality of their product. Additional costs are added for a product with a PDO (Bouamra- Mechameche and Chaaban, 2010), but the real benefit is higher if we would compare it to a product that is not part of a PDO chain, more quality and developed in a sustainable way (Grunert & Achmann, 2016). Thus, the profitability of PDO products depends very much about the market structure and the possibility of output control as described by Marette and Crespi (2003), Lence et al. (2007) and Hayes et al. (2004). In some local markets, a competitive advantage was generated from the usage of the PDO labels (Madu and Kuei; 1994).

Recent studies confirm that in various local and international markets, PDO labeling generates a **competitive advantage** by enhancing consumer trust, adding value to regional production, and contributing to rural development (Arfini et al., 2019; Belletti et al., 2020; Galli et al., 2022). Research also suggests that PDO-labeled products benefit from **higher price premiums and greater export potential**, particularly in European markets where consumers recognize and value origin-based certifications (Cei et al., 2018; Menapace et al., 2021).

In European countries the most used labels are PDOs and PGIs and they are protected by EU Regulation no. 1151/2012 (Article 5); they represent the excellence of European products, and they are a combination of human and the environments behaviors. Eu regulation specifies that the PDO label (Protected Designation of Origin) represents that a product that originated in a specific place, region of country, the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural factors, raw materials, environmental

characteristics, location and human factors, traditional and craft production and the production itself, transformation and elaboration phases can take place in the defined geographical area. The label PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), indicates a product that has its origin in a specific place, region, or country where the given quality, reputation or other characteristics are essentially attributable to its geographical origin, and for which at least one of the production steps will take place in the defined geographical area.



Map 1 PDO areas in European Union and the UK. Non-EU countries are marked with strip. Source: (Geographics, 2022)

The PDO label applies only to the final product, but the whole production process is involved in the production, and it has a great impact in local society. The competition and the market structure are the ones that are affecting the profitability. (De Pablo Valenciano & Roman Sanchez 2011; Sanchez-Hernandez et al. 2017).

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), it is a part of a regulated quality systems in the European Union. The producers of food products and wine makers are obliged to submit to the European Union authorities, technical specifications of their products which must include the sensory description. The European regulation 1151/12, determine the sensory descriptions that are included in PDO certification must be guaranteed. There is not a real standard process of the development of sensory control methods of PDO for food products, therefore each entity in charge to control the requirements, can decide what is the best legal practice to ensure the quality of the product.

As listed in E-Bacchus EU database, PDOs food products are wines and other food products. PDOs are having a very important social role due the fact that they could be responsible to establish a

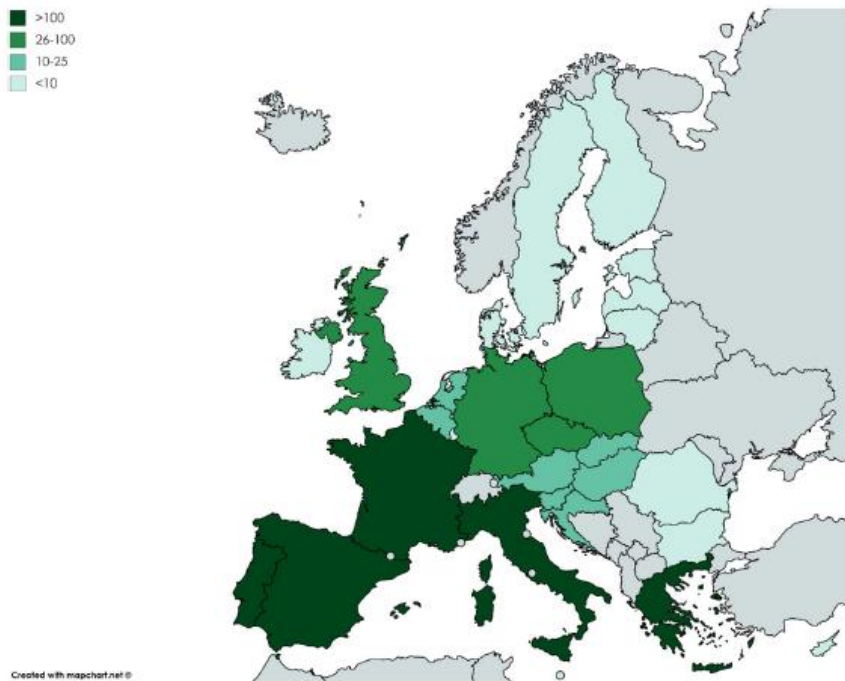
Comentado [A1]: citation APA

Comentado [CM2R1]: Done

very important part of the heritage, identity and culture helping in preservation of the landscapes, and being a huge contributor factor in development of rural areas, by protecting the rural areas, we reduce the process of depopulation. (Margaras, 2016). The expansion of the EU policies regarding the protection of the food, is very likely to meet an increase in the nearest future (Grunnert & Aachmann, 2016). Usually, the final consumers of the products are showing a positive behavior regarding the experience they had using a PDO product (Bredahl, 2001).

European Union has approximately 1400 Geographical indication protecting food items such as Port Wine, or Salata de icre de Dunare. They are known to the large public as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). If we compare the price of a similar product that is not part of the GIs chain, the price is relatively double (Chever et al., 2012). For example, in European Union cheese can be sold as Gouda (PGI Cheese from Holland), only if it was manufactured in the protected area in the Netherlands according to a strict recipe that is used only by a few producers. Protecting the Geographical Indication products outside of the European Union borders constitute a special interest, the main goal is to obtain the international recognition of a certain products, even if the producers are the direct benefits of the external protection, but indirect the region, has a great benefit as well. On a European economy level, we can also say that “is it helpful to have some export-oriented food producers in order to balance the habitual moaning from the import- competing beef farmers” (Beattie, 2019).

European Union members are proud to have at least one GI, however most of those products (Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), can be found in the “Southern five”: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. All of the mentioned countries are very strong supporters of the origin label of all around the EU Single Market (Wanat & Hanke Vela, 2019) and together they own over 70% of all European Union GIs and 80% of the wine producers can be found here, (Huysmans, 2022 & Swinnen, 2019). The 1st figure shows the number of food GIs per country as Sept 2020.



Map 2; Concentration of GIs in EU

Source: Flinzberger et al, 2022.

The European Union policy is about the culture. The first preamble of the GI regulation refers to “living cultural and gastronomic heritage” (European Union, 2012). Broude 2005, reports that European Union justifies the GIs as “a requirement in order to preserve the local traditions, national culture and cultural diversity” (Sorgho and Larue 2014). An argument in favor of gastronomic cultural heritage, in the preservation of rural economies and population is mentioned in article 1 of regulation EU 1151/2012 “The measures set out in this Regulation are intended to support agricultural and processing activities and the farming systems associated with high quality products, thereby contributing to the achievement of rural development policy objectives”.

In order for a product to be registered as GI, a single producer is not enough, there must be a producer group, this group has to be in contact with their government special agency that is responsible for GIs such as “Autoridade de Seguranca Alimentar e Economica- ASAE”, Economic and Food Safety Authority in Portugal within the Ministry of Economy and the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (Direccao Geral de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural- DGADR). In Portugal ASAE is responsible for surveillance for the usage of the name in the market,

while DGADR is responsible to do the necessary controls before the product is placed on the market.

ASAE is a central service of Portuguese State Administration and it consists of 3 units (North, Central and South), and it is managed by a General Inspector- Inspetor Geral, and two Deputies, Subinspectores Gerais, and it contains a matrix structure in supervision, research and operations: Departament of Food Risk and Laboratories (Departamento de Riscos Alimentares e Laboratorios), National Operations Unit (Unidade Nacional de Operacoes), National Information and Criminal Investigation Unit (Unidade Nacional de Informacoes e Investigacao Criminal), Departament of Administration and Logistics (Departamento de Administracao e Logistica), and Departament of Legal Affairs and Administrative Offences (Departamento de Assuntos Juridicos e Contra-Oedenacoes).

The DGADR is responsible to approve the control plans for GI, also for the checkups on GI in the production phase before it is placed on the market.

In the Wine sector, the control bodies are: The Douro and Port Wine Institute (Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e do Porto), the Madeira Wine institute (Institutho do Vinho, do Bordado e do Artesanato da Madeira), the Wine and Wine institute (Instituto da Vinha e do Vinho) and ASAE.

2. Port Wine

Port Wine is a type of wine that is produced in Douro Demarcated Region (DDR), Northeast of Portugal in the Douro Valley (Figure 2) by specific winemaking practices. Final quality and uniqueness of the different Port wine styles is given by ageing process, namely time, temperature and oxygen that are occurring during the process. There are few types of Port Wine related to the ageing process and wine making which gives the unique taste all around the world.



Map 3. Alto Douro Region(UNESCO)
Source: Own elaboration based on Google Maps (2022).

Different types of grapes are used to obtain a Port Wine, in a very strict region. The types of grapes that are cultivated in order to have a Port Wine are regulated by a Decree Law nr. 104/85, 10th of April 1985. The wine is produced exclusively from authorized grape varieties in order to preserve the taste and the tradition of winemaking. The recommended grape varieties in order to obtain a red Port, are "Touriga Nacional", "Mourisco Tinto", "Batardo", "Tinta Roriz", "Tinta Cao", "Tinta Amarela", "Tinta Barroca", "Tinta Franca" and "Tinta Francisca". In order to obtain a white Port, the winemakers must use "Malvasia Fina", "Viosinho", "Donzinho Branco", "Gouveio", "Rabigato" or "Codega". In order to obtain a Port, the fermentation process must be stopped at some point, decided by winemakers. Port wine is a strong one, being known for 18-22% of alcohol. Port wine is stored in Vila Nova de Gaia (Porto) in order to qualify for a Certificate of Origin from the "Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e Porto". (IVDP, 2025)

The Port Wine was registered as "Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)" in 24.12.1991.



Different bottles of Port Wine
Source: TheWineChef (2022)

3. Serra da Estrela cheese

Serra da Estrela, it's a Portuguese cheese with Protected Designation of Origin having a certification that the manufacturers are using only the raw milk from sheep's, salt, and a crude plant rennet from the dried flowers of *Cynara cardunculus*, all of those are result of a cheese with pellicular sensorial features and it exists for centuries, probably the best representative of Portuguese cheese (Macedo, Malcata, & Oliveira 1993). The result of the composition turns into a semihard cheese with a closed, kind of buttery, easy deformable when cutting very creamy and unctuous texture, with a few or no eyes and sensorially smooth, clean, slightly acidic bouquet (Planning and Political

Office, 2011), being registered since 1985 in Portuguese Law (Dec. Reg. No.42/85 of July 5th Ministry of Agriculture, 1985).



Map 4. Serra da Estrela

Source: Own elaboration based on Google Maps (2022).

The cheese its produced in Serra da Estrela region from October to May, only using the unpasteurized milk of right after the collection, (Macedo, Costa& Malcata 1996). In the year of 2011, Serra da Estrela cheese has been considered one of the seven wonders of Portuguese gastronomy together with grilled sardines (Planning and Political Office, 2011). The unique characteristics, origin, the methods used, together with the title of one of the seven wonders of Portuguese cuisine, made the price of the final product to increase quite a lot.



- 🏠 Made from unpasteurized sheep's milk
- 🚩 Country of origin: Portugal
- 📍 Region: Serra da Estrela
- 📦 Type: firm
- 🌀 Texture: spreadable
- 💧 Colour: ivory
- 👃 Aroma: pungent
- 🌿 Vegetarian: no
- 🔖 Synonyms: Serra da Estrela DOP

Fig2. Serra da Estrela cheese

Source: Cheese.com. (n.d.). Serra da Estrela DOP. Retrieved February 18, 2025, from <https://www.cheese.com/serra-da-estrela-dop/>

4. eAmbrosia register

European Commission has an online database where you can find official information about protected wines, spirits and foodstuffs of the European Union, the database consolidates in a single place all the products with Geographical Protection: Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indications.

The name of the database “Ambrosia” comes from the Greek “ambrosia”, and it is translated as food of the gods. The letter “E” in front, indicates the electronically database, such as e-mail.

Before eAmbrosia database, there were 3 other different ones: E-Spirit-Drinks, DOOR and E-Baccus. The information from those databases were consolidated in 2019 in order to have only one for all the GIs. The idea was saluted by all EU Members. The database includes the name of the product, in local language and other languages, the product type, file number, type: PDO or PGI, the country of origin, date of registration as well the legal instrument.

Below we can see an extract from the register for Port Wine (PDO) and Serra da Estrela cheese (PDO).

	
EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTER	EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTER
OF PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN AND PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ESTABLISHED BY ARTICLE 104 OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1308/2013	OF PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN AND PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS ESTABLISHED BY ARTICLE 11 OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1151/2012
1. Name: Porto / Port / vinho do Porto / Port Wine / vin de Porto / Oporto / Portvin / Portwein / Portwijn	1. Name: Queijo Serra da Estrela
2. Product type: Wine	2. Class: Class 1.3. Cheeses
3. File number: PDO-PT-A1540	3. File number: PDO-PT-0213
4. Type: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)	4. Type: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)
5. Country: Portugal	5. Country: Portugal
6. Date of registration: 24/12/1991	6. Date of registration: 21/06/1996
7. Legal instrument: Article 107 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013	7. Legal instrument: Official Journal L 148, 21.06.1996
 João ONOFRE Head of Unit	 João ONOFRE Head of Unit

European Commission. (n.d.). *eAmbrosia – the EU geographical indications register*. Retrieved February 18, 2025, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/eambrosia_en

The main target of the European Union with the database, as mentioned at the beginning of this article, is to promote in a standard way the GIs, both domestically and outside of the EU.



Fig5. GIs labels of the EU
Source: eAmbrosia register

5. Methodology

To evaluate whether the **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)** label is a **tourist scam or a genuine benefit** for the European Union, a **mixed-method research approach** was applied. The study combines **secondary data analysis** and **primary data collection** to assess consumer perceptions and the effectiveness of PDO labels in influencing purchasing behavior.

Research Focus and Type of Study

This study examines the role of PDO labels in shaping consumer trust and purchasing intentions, particularly for **Serra da Estrela cheese and Port Wine** in tourist markets. The research follows a **quantitative approach**, utilizing a **survey-based cross-sectional study design** to gather data from tourists in Lisbon.

Population and Sampling Strategy

The target population consisted of tourists in Lisbon, Portugal, with a division into two groups:

1. **European tourists**
2. **Non-European tourists**

A **non-probability convenience sampling** method was used, as participants were recruited based on their availability and willingness to participate during **June–July 2022** in popular tourist areas. The sample size was determined to ensure a sufficient representation of different nationalities and perspectives.

Data Collection Methods

The study employed two data collection techniques:

1. **Secondary Data Analysis** – Information was gathered from the **eAmbrosia register**, EU regulations on geographical indications (GIs), and academic literature on PDO and **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)** systems.
2. **Survey Research** – A **structured questionnaire** was administered to tourists in Lisbon. The survey assessed consumer **awareness, trust, and purchasing behavior regarding PDO products**. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with specific statements on a **five-point Likert scale** (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). No personal data, such as gender, sexual orientation, or nationality, was collected, except for **distinguishing between European and non-European tourists** to facilitate comparative analysis.

Data Processing and Analysis

Survey responses were **anonymized and analyzed using statistical software**. The data was processed through **descriptive statistics** (mean, standard deviation) and **inferential analysis**, such as **t-tests or ANOVA**, to compare European and non-European tourist perceptions. The findings were cross-referenced with insights from the **eAmbrosia register** and the literature review to validate results.

Attached is a sample of the survey that was carried.

Survey carried in Lisbon, Portugal in June- July 2022 with the purpose to find out the tourists knowledge about GIs, Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indications.

Target products: Port Wine (PDO) and Serra da Estrella cheese (PDO).

*The purpose of this study is to find out the knowledge of tourists about GIs, and about the importance of having a trust label on their product.
The survey results will be used only for general analytical study only; participation is voluntary, no personal data will be collected except the tourist origin: European and Non-European tourists, in order to compare the results and the EU's marketing strategy of the GIs.
Proceeding to the survey implies that you understand and agree to provisions and disclaimer.
The interviewer is CATALIN-IOAN MAIOR, PhD Candidate, currently exchange student in University of Coimbra, Portugal. Student ID Number:2021267582*

Please select:

European tourist/ non-European

Please rate from 1 to 5 as follow: 1 strongly disagree 5 strongly agree

- 1: I have a knowledge of Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indications food and drinks.
- 2.Food/drinks safety is very important.
- 3.Regulation of food and drinks are helping the local economy, traditions and culture.
4. European Union is promoting enough the local traditions.
- 5.When I travel, I try to look for GIs products.
- 6.I often buy GIs products.
7. I heard about Port wine, but I didn't know its GIs.
- 8.I heard about Serra da Estrella cheese but I didn't know its GIs.
8. I will recommend GIs products to my friends as well.
9. I know that GIs products are not tourist scam.
10. I agree that if a product is more expensive, its more qualitative.

Fig 6. Survey carried in Lisbon, Portugal in June-July 2022
Copyright: Catalin Maior

The final part of the data collection involved an informal interview with the owner of a small accommodation business in Lisbon, Portugal, who provided insights into the sale and perception of PDO-labeled products among tourists

Nuno M has few apartments in center of Lisbon in Bairro Alto district and Principe Real. As many of Airbnb places in Portugal, this one comes with a small welcome gift, a bottle of Port Wine and some crackers. I was curious why he decided to give as a gift Port Wine, Portugal has plenty of offers, many from Lisbon region, Nuno said, the demand for Port Wine in tourism, its higher than other wines especially for non-Portuguese tourists and the reviews are everything in this business, most of the people have a knowledge about Port Wine and they see in the pictures that they get it

for free (included in the price), works as a magnet. To mention that most of Nuno’s customers are non-Portuguese, therefore the explanation for high demand of Port Wine.

6. Results and discussion.

The survey results were added in two different charts, one for European tourists, and the second one for non-European tourists.

The numbers from 10 to 1 are referring the question from the survey and the numbers from 0 to 100 represents the number of participants with their answer, strongly agree, disagree, neutral, agree or strongly agree.

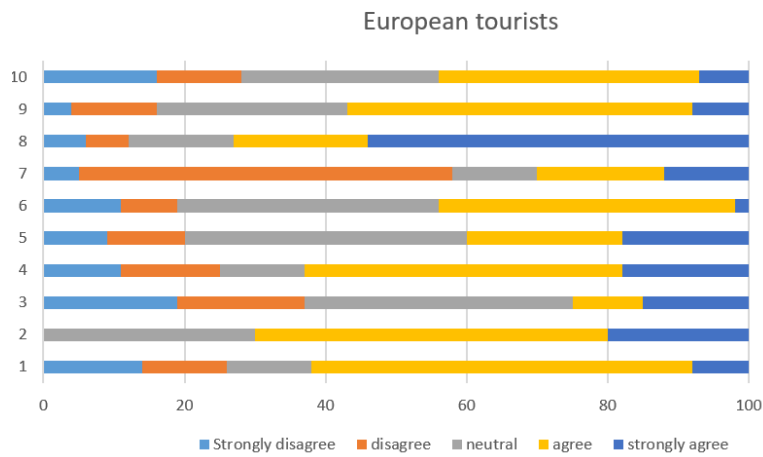


Fig7 Results of the survey for European tourists
Source: Own elaboration based on answers of the survey

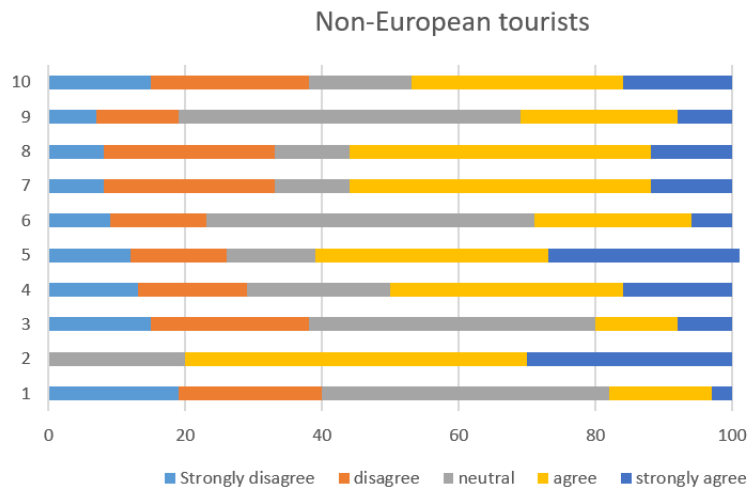


Fig8. Results of the survey for Non-European tourists
Source: Own elaboration based on answers of the survey

By analyzing this data, we will conclude our hypothesis, if the GIs are a scam from the perspective of the participants to the survey.

The first question was about the knowledge of tourists about Protected Designation of Origin (POD), and Protected Geographical Indication food and drinks, by the given data we can see that European tourists have more knowledge of this label but the difference from non-European it is quite big, therefore we can conclude that those products are more known inside of the European continent. The responders with “strongly agree” are still small from both sides if we compare with “strongly disagree”.

Regarding the food safety, both parties, non-European tourists and the “domestic ones” are agreed that is very important.

Food and drinks regulation are very important but for some reason non-European tourists are very neutral in this topic, one possible explanation would be that maybe in their countries, there aren't so strong laws like in Europe regarding the traditions or could be that for many non-European people, most of the European foods, are very similar, therefore they don't see how having a wine from Porto or one from Bordeaux, it's a big difference.

When the participants were asked if the EU is promoting enough from their point of view, the local traditions, European tourists believe more comparing to Non-European tourists that is true, this

could be explained by the fact that Europe being so small and diverse, we can often see in Spain, products from Portugal, and in France products from Italy, this mechanism of unique market, works as a self-marketing service.

The participants were asked if when they travel, they are looking for GIs products, as a result, it turned out that Non-European tourists, are looking for them more than European tourists; Which is a good thing because the aim of the PDO and PGI, are to promote European products outside of EU as well; Having an unique market as above mentioned, for an European is enough to go to the nearest supermarket and find GIs from another country, therefore the urge to buy them when they travel, is quite low, meanwhile for Non-Europeans, the urge to buy them is higher since they don't have access to them on daily basis in their countries.

When they were asked if they heard about Port Wine and Serra da Estrella cheese and if they had knowledge that this product is GIs, surprisingly, non-European tourists had more knowledge about this, it would make sense considering that the survey was carried in Lisbon, Portugal and Non-European tourists did their homework researching a bit about the local specialties. Asking some of the European tourists how come they didn't know, the most common answer was "it's very known as Port Wine, it already has a strong label, same with the cheese", It seems like for European people, there's no need of GIs, in order to prove that a product is good or not, its simply origin makes it good already. Of course, the survey was about two of the most famous products of Portugal, exported in large scale all around the European continent.

Both of parties agreed that they will recommend other GIs products to their friends.

Coming back to our hypothesis, if the tourists consider the GIs products as scam, a large amount of Non-European tourists are neutral in this situation, this could be explained by the fact that there are lot of tourist scams all around the world, and when you are in a new place, anybody can say that a product is local or homemade or made in a traditional way, but you never know. By having the label of PDO, and PGI on a product, all the tourists and not only tourists but consumers as well, can be sure that this product it's a specialty of the European Union. European tourists consider those labels very important when they decide to purchase a product or try something new.

If a product is more expensive, is more qualitative, the European tourists are the ones that are very neutral in this situation, meanwhile non-European ones, believe that if a product is more expensive, its more qualitative.

7. Conclusion

The European continent has an immense cultural and gastronomic diversity. Traveling just **40 km** can expose visitors to a new tradition, cuisine, or dialect, demonstrating the richness of regional identities. Europe is full of traditions—not only in the five Southern countries with the most **Geographical Indications (GIs)** but across all member states, as each region possesses unique characteristics that can be promoted.

The **European Union's GI protection program** and the **eAmbrosia register** represent significant steps toward increasing consumer trust in certified products, both within Europe and internationally. This research confirms that **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) labels are not mere marketing tools or tourist traps but strong and reliable quality brands**. Evidence from both tourists' perceptions and literature supports the idea that these labels reinforce authenticity and should be further promoted, particularly in **Central and Eastern Europe**, where local GI products have great potential for international recognition.

A **significant number of international tourists** express interest in purchasing **GI-certified products**, reinforcing the EU's strategy to **promote these products externally**. The two Portuguese case studies—**Port Wine and Serra da Estrela cheese**—demonstrate this in practice. Beyond their PDO certification, these products hold additional cultural value:

- **Port Wine** originates from the **Alto Douro Region**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, recognized under Criterion (V) for its **"outstanding example of a traditional European wine-producing region, reflecting the evolution of this human activity over time"** (UNESCO).
- **Serra da Estrela cheese** is celebrated as **one of the "Seven Wonders of Portuguese Gastronomy,"** alongside other iconic foods like **Alheira da Mirandela** and **Arroz de Marisco**.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights obtained, this study has several **limitations**:

1. **Sampling Bias:** The survey was conducted exclusively in **Lisbon**, which may not represent consumer behavior in other **Portuguese** or **European** tourist destinations.

2. **Non-Probability Sampling:** Convenience sampling was used, which limits the **generalizability** of the findings.
3. **Lack of Longitudinal Data:** The study captures a **snapshot in time (June–July 2022)** rather than long-term trends in consumer perception.
4. **Limited Scope of Products:** Only **two Portuguese PDO products** were analyzed, while the GI system covers a much broader range of products across Europe.

Future Research Directions

To build on these findings, **future research** could explore:

- **Expanding the sample** to include multiple European countries and different types of tourist destinations.
- **Longitudinal studies** to assess how consumer perceptions of PDO/PGI products evolve over time.
- **Comparative analyses** between Southern, Central, and Eastern European countries to identify differences in GI recognition and purchasing behavior.
- **Economic impact assessments** to measure the real contribution of PDO/PGI products to local economies and tourism industries.
- **Digital marketing and branding strategies** for GI products to explore how online platforms and **social media influence purchasing decisions**.

Final Thoughts

This research provides **valuable insights into the role of PDO and PGI labels in tourism and consumer behavior**, yet there is still much to explore. As GI protection continues to evolve, further research and innovative strategies will be essential to **maximize its benefits for producers, consumers, and regional economies**.

Bibliography

Albuquerque, T., Oliveira, M. B., & Costa, H. (2018). 25 years of European Union (EU) quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs across EU Member States. *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, 98(7), 2475–2489. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsfa.8811>

AND-International. (2020). *Study on economic value of EU quality schemes, geographical indications (GIs) and traditional specialties guaranteed (TSGs): Final report*. Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a7281794-7ebe-11ea-aea8-01aa75ed71a1>

Autoridade de Segurança Alimentar e Económica. (2022). *Official website of ASAE*. Retrieved February 2025, from <https://www.asae.gov.pt/>

Babcock, B. A., & Clemens, R. (2004). *Geographical indications and property rights: Protecting value-added agricultural products* (Publication No. 04-mbp7). Midwest Agribusiness, Trade Research and Information Center (MATRIC), Iowa State University.

Bouamra-Mechemache, Z., & Chaaban, J. (2010). Protected designation of origin revisited. *Journal of Agricultural & Food Industrial Organization*, 8(1), Article 5. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1542-0485.1306>

Bredahl, L. G. (2001). Determinants of consumer attitudes and purchase intentions with regard to genetically modified foods – The results of a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 24(1), 23-61. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010950406126>

Cheese.com. (2025). *Serra da Estrela DOP*. Retrieved from <https://www.cheese.com/serra-da-estrela-dop/>

De la Guardia, M., & González Illueca, A. (2013). *Food Protected Designation of Origin: Methodologies and Applications* (1st ed.). Elsevier. ISBN: 97044459720.

De Pablo Valenciano, J., & Román Sánchez, I. M. (2011). La importancia de la Denominación de Origen Rioja en el contexto del mercado vitivinícola español. *Mundo Agrario*, 12(23). <https://www.mundoagrario.unlp.edu.ar/article/view/v12n23a10/187>

European Commission. (2021). *Commission notice on the application of EU rules on geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs, wines, and spirit drinks*.

Official Journal of the European Union. Retrieved from [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XC0204\(01\)&from=IT](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021XC0204(01)&from=IT)

European Commission. (2022). *Common monitoring and evaluation framework (CMEF)*. Retrieved from https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cmef_en#indicator

European Commission. (2022). *eAmbrosia – The EU geographical indications register*. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/geographical-indications-register/>

European Commission. (2022). Geographical indications and designations of origin. Retrieved November 2022, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/geographical-indications-and-designations-of-origin.html>

European Commission. (2022). *Gouda Holland PGI & Noord-Hollandse Gouda PDO*. Retrieved from https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes/geographical-indications-food-and-drink/gouda-holland-pgi-noord-hollandse-gouda-pdo_en

European Commission. (2025). *eAmbrosia – The EU geographical indications register*. Retrieved February 2025, from <https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/geographical-indications-register/>

European Commission. (n.d.). *European Commission's priorities and goals*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/priorities-and-goals_en

European Food Safety Authority. (2019). *Food safety in the EU: Special Eurobarometer 2019*. Retrieved Feb 2025, from https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/corporate_publications/files/Eurobarometer2019_Foodsafety-in-the-EU_Full-report.pdf

European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). (2022). Infringement of protected geographical indications for wine, spirits, agricultural products and foodstuffs in the European Union. Retrieved from https://euiipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/Geographical_indications_report/geographical_indications_report_en.pdf

European Union. (1992). *Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and*

foodstuffs. *Official Journal of the European Communities*. Retrieved from <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7332311d-d47d-4d9b-927e-d953fbe79685/language-en>

European Union. (2006). *Council Regulation (EC) No 516/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs*. Official Journal of the European Union. Retrieved from <https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vitgbqik9hzi>

European Union. (2012). Regulation (EU) No. 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, Article 5. Official Journal of the European Union. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:343:0001:0029:en:PDF>

Flinzberger, L., Zinngrebe, Y., Bugalho, M. N., & Plieninger, T. (2022). EU-wide mapping of 'Protected Designations of Origin' food products (PDOs) reveals correlations with social-ecological landscape values. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, 42, Article 78. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-022-00778-4>

Geographics. (n.d.). PDO areas in the EU. Retrieved from <https://www.geographics.com/>

Grunert, K. G., & Wills, J. M. (2007). A review of European research on consumer response to nutrition information on food labels. *Journal of Public Health*, 15, 385–399. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10389-007-0101-9>

Huysmans, M. (2020). *Exporting protection: EU trade agreements, geographical indications, and gastronationalism*. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(3), 979–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1844272>

Huysmans, M. (2022). Exporting protection: EU trade agreements, geographical indications, and gastronationalism. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(3), 979–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1844272>

Huysmans, M., & Swinnen, J. (2019). No terroir in the cold? A note on the geography of geographical indications. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 70(2), 550–559. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-9552.12328>

Huysmans, M., & Swinnen, J. (2019). No terroir in the cold? A note on the geography of geographical indications. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 70(2), 550–559. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-9552.12328>

Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e Porto. (2025). *Introduction to Port wine regulations*. Retrieved from <https://www.ivdp.pt/en/introduction/>

Kaczorowska, J., Rejman, K., Halicka, E., Szczybyło, A., & Górską-Warsewicz, H. (2019). Impact of food sustainability labels on the perceived product value and price expectations of urban consumers. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7240. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11247240>

Lence, S. H., Marette, S., Hayes, D. J., & Foster, W. (2007). Collective marketing arrangements for geographically differentiated agricultural products: Welfare impacts and policy implications. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 89(4), 947–963. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8276.2007.01036.x>

Macedo, A. C., & Malcata, F. X. (1993). The technology, chemistry, and microbiology of Serra cheese: A review. *Journal of Dairy Science*, 76(6), 1725–1739. [https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.S0022-0302\(93\)77505-0](https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.S0022-0302(93)77505-0)

Madu, C. N., & Kuei, C. (1994). Strategic total quality management: Transformation process overview. *Total Quality Management*, 5(1), 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09544129400000046>

Marescotti, A., Quiñones-Ruiz, X. F., Edelmann, H., Belletti, G., Broscha, K., Altenbuchner, C., Penker, M., & Scaramuzzi, S. (2020). Are Protected Geographical Indications evolving due to environmentally related justifications? An analysis of amendments in the fruit and vegetable sector in the European Union. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3571. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12093571>

Marette, S., & Crespi, J. (2003). Can quality certification lead to stable cartels? Review of Industrial Organization, 23(1), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022296917363>

Margaras, V. (2016). *Sparsely populated and underpopulated areas*. European Parliament. Retrieved from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586632/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)586632_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/586632/EPRS_BRI(2016)586632_EN.pdf)

Matthews, A. (2013, July 10). *Geographical indications (GIs) in the US-EU TTIP negotiations*. CAP Reform. Retrieved from <http://capreform.eu/geographical-indications-gis-in-the-us-eu-ttip-negotiations/>

Ministry of Agriculture, Portugal. (1985). *Decree-Law No. 104/85 of 10th April on authorized grape varieties for Port Wine production*.

Olmsted, L. (2016). *Real food/fake food: Why you don't know what you're eating and what you can do about it*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Quiñones-Ruiz, X. F., Penker, M., Belletti, G., Marescotti, A., & Scaramuzzi, S. (2017). Why early collective action pays off: Evidence from setting Protected Geographical Indications. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 32(2), 179–192. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742170516000168>

Scozzafava, G., Gerini, F., Dominici, A., Contini, C., & Casini, C. (2018). Reach for the stars: The impact on consumer preferences of introducing a new top-tier typology into a PDO wine. *Wine Economics and Policy*, 7(2), 140–152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wep.2018.09.002>

Tiberio, L., & Francisco, D. (2012). Agri-food traditional products: From certification to the market—Portuguese recent evolution. *Regional Science Inquiry*, 4, 57–86.

Török, Á., & Moir, H. V. J. (2018). The market size for GI food products—Evidence from the empirical economic literature. *Studies in Agricultural Economics*, 120(2), 134–142. <https://doi.org/10.7896/j.1816>

UNESCO. (2025). *Alto Douro Wine Region*. Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1046/>

Wanat, Z., & Hanke Vela, J. (2019, December 23). *The rise of the gastronationalists*. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.eu/article/origin-labels-europe-the-rise-of-the-gastronationalists/>