



EXPORTS OF GREEK PDO AND PGI AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO SWEDEN: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Products bearing Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) labels represent a fundamental sector of Greek agricultural production, as they combine superior quality with cultural heritage and the geographic identity of their place of origin. The recognition and certification of these products provide substantial competitive advantages in international markets, where demand for safe, authentic, and high-quality food is constantly increasing. Furthermore, PDO and PGI products serve as a driving force for strengthening local economies and supporting sustainable rural development.

Within this context, Sweden emerges as a particularly attractive and expanding market for Greek exports. Swedish consumers are showing growing interest in high-quality foods with transparent origin, health benefits, and strict certification standards. Greek PDO/PGI products — such as feta cheese, olive oil, olives, wines, and others — are well positioned to meet the preferences and expectations of this consumer base.

This study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the trajectory and prospects of Greek PDO and PGI products in the Swedish market. Specifically, it investigates prevailing export trends, the challenges faced by Greek exporters (such as limited brand visibility, high transportation costs, or trade barriers), and the strategic opportunities that can enhance the penetration of these products.

The analysis is based on secondary data from reputable international and national organizations (such as Eurostat, FAO, and ELSTAT), as well as a comprehensive literature review, in order to build a reliable and evidence-based foundation for the export strategy of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden. The ultimate goal of the study is to formulate policy and business recommendations that will contribute to the long-term sustainable development of Greek exports in a demanding yet promising market.

Keywords

PDO, PGI, Sweden, Greek Agricultural Products, Exports, Quality, Branding

1. Introduction

1.1 PDO and PGI Labels as a Dynamic Advantage

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products have become a central export destination for many European countries, as they are recognised for their quality and authenticity. «In the EU, the institutional framework for PDO/PGI products, established by Regulation (EU) 1151/2012, ensures the protection of the origin and the added value of these products» (Alves et al., 2021).

In Greece, products such as «feta cheese (PDO), Kalamata olive oil (PDO), and Chios mastic (PDO) are examples of successful export products that are promoted based on their authenticity and quality» (Sahelices et al., 2017).

1.2 The Role of PDO/PGI Exports in the Greek Economy

Exports of products with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are a strategic sector of the Greek agricultural economy, contributing significantly to the creation of added value and the development of rural areas. These for example, products like «feta cheese, Kalamata olive oil and Chios mastic, embody tradition, quality and authenticity, which increase their competitiveness in international markets» (Alves et al., 2021) .

Greece, as a country with a rich agricultural heritage, has 113 approved different PDO and PGI products, which constitute 10% of the corresponding products in the European Union. In 2020, exports of Greek PDO/PGI products exceeded 700 million euros, with the main markets being the European Union and third countries. In addition, «PDO/PGI products enhance the image of Greece as a country of high gastronomic value, also contributing to its tourism» (Martinelli et al., 2017; Martinelli & De Canio, 2018) .

Despite significant successes, PDO/PGI exports face challenges, such as competition from other countries and high transportation costs. However, the growing demand for quality and certified products internationally creates opportunities for their further development, making them one of the most dynamic sectors of the Greek economy.

1.3 The Swedish Market: Opportunities and Difficulties

The Swedish market, with its high standard of living and purchasing power, offers significant opportunities for exporters of Greek PDO/PGI products. Consumers in Sweden place particular emphasis on quality, «sustainability and transparency of the supply chain, characteristics that are consistent with certified Greek products» (Sahelices et al., 2017). The growing interest in the Mediterranean diet and organic foods further strengthens the demand for products such as «olive oil and feta, which are considered healthy and of high nutritional value» (Caetano, 2015).

However, market penetration is not without difficulties. Competition from countries such as Italy and Spain, which have strong export presences, is one of the biggest challenges. Italian for example, «products like parmesan and olive oil, are already established in the Swedish market and often have the largest share in the PDO/PGI product» (Lamarque & Lambin, 2015). In addition, the high cost of transportation from Greece, combined with the requirement for sustainable packaging, increases the overall cost of Greek products, reducing their competitiveness.

Despite the difficulties, the Swedish market offers unique growth opportunities. Consumer preference for high-quality products and authenticity certifications can be exploited by «Greek producers through targeted marketing strategies and partnerships with Swedish distribution networks, such as the ICA and Coop chains» (Lepage et al., 2025). Moreover, participation in local trade fairs, such as Food and Drink Nordic, can enhance the awareness of Greek products.

1.4 Objective and Research Questions

«The aim of the article is to analyze the current situation of exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden» (Samelis & Kakouri, 2022). It focuses on the following research questions:

1. What is the current position of Greek PDO/PGI products in the Swedish market?
2. What are the main challenges and success factors?
3. What strategies could boost exports in the future?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Branding Communities and Cultural Commercial Value

The concept of branding communities was introduced by (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Schau et al., 2009) who highlighted that communities are formed by consumers' shared experience and loyalty to a brand. In the case of PDO/PGI products, the community already exists, and the brand is linked to it to gain value.

More specific aspects:

- Reverse dynamic: Instead of the community being created by the brand, the community pre-exists and the brand draws authenticity and emotional connection from it.
- Cultural value: (Holt & Brockett, 2012) describes cultural branding as the process by which brands become “cultural signposts.” PDO/PGI products function as symbols that connect the consumer to a specific cultural or geographical heritage.
- Examples: The use of "Ouzo" PDO in Greek taverns abroad strengthens the cultural connection with Greece, acting as a bridge between Greeks in the diaspora and the homeland.

2. 2. Cultural Heritage as a Central Axis of Branding

The theory of geographical indications (Giovanni Belletti et al., 2007) examines how PDO/PGI products derive their commercial and cultural value from their region of origin. Cultural heritage is not only about quality and production methods, but also about the connection of the product with the identity of the region.

Geographical indications serve as guarantees that a product is unique due to its geographical origin. At the same time, its authenticity is highlighted through its cultural heritage, which connects the consumer to the history and traditions of the region. A characteristic example is Chios mastic, which is not merely a product, but also «a symbol of the cultural and environmental uniqueness of the island of Chios.» (Marescotti et al., 2020).

2. 3. Social and Emotional Structures in Brands Community

The theory of «community awareness» (Giovanni Belletti et al., 2007) recognizes that members of brands communities share common experiences and values. In the case of PDO/PGI, these products act as powerful symbols of connection for migrant communities.

One of the key functions of products with geographical indications (GIs), such as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) or PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) labels, is their ability to foster an emotional connection with consumers. Items like feta cheese or olive oil are not merely dietary choices; they act as vessels of cultural memory and identity, embodying the traditions, landscapes, and values of the regions from which they originate.

Moreover, these products often evoke strong feelings of nostalgia, particularly among immigrant communities. For many, the consumption of GI-labeled products offers a symbolic return home, helping maintain a deep and tangible connection to their heritage, despite physical distance. In this sense, such «products serve not only as culinary goods but also as cultural anchors in the experience of displacement and diaspora» (G Belletti et al., 2009).

Tribal Theory Marketing

emphasize the collective nature of "consumer tribes», constituted through shared experiences, emotions and rituals. In PDO/PGI products, immigrant communities function as "tribes" that maintain and promote cultural identity.

An illustrative example of how geographical indication products are culturally promoted is through gastronomic festivals. Events dedicated to showcasing traditional foods—such as international festivals promoting feta cheese—do not merely serve commercial aims. Instead, they highlight the cultural significance of these products and strengthen collective devotion to them. In this context, feta becomes more than a product; it is celebrated as «a symbol of national heritage, fostering pride, continuity, and emotional attachment both domestically and abroad» (Chen et al., 2024; Choi et al., 2015).

2. 4. Theory of Collective Brand Identity

The collective commercial identity examines how communities participate in creating and maintaining the commercial value of a brand. In PDO/PGI products, this identity includes producers, institutions and diaspora communities.

Features:

- Collective authenticity: «The authenticity of PDO/PGI products is based on the collaboration of the communities involved» (Coisson et al., 2004).
- Cross-cultural diffusion: The Greek diaspora promotes products such as kasseri cheese in the US and Australian markets.

2. 6. Cultural Intermediaries and Diaspora Communities

The Cultural Mediator Theory (Fu et al., 2021) explores how cultural groups—particularly diaspora communities—function as intermediaries in the dissemination of products, traditions, and values across borders. In the context of PDO/PGI products, these communities often play a pivotal role in enhancing both the reputation and distribution of geographically indicated goods in their host countries. For example, Greek communities in Sweden actively promote Greek cultural identity by incorporating products such as Cretan olive oil into festivals, ethnic stores, and culinary events (Sallaku et al., 2025)). Through these practices, diaspora groups not only sustain ties with their homeland but also introduce and normalize such products in foreign markets. Over time, certain goods—like Greek coffee—transcend their ethnic origins to become symbols of cultural integration, marking their successful penetration into the everyday lives of broader populations.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research was strengthened with further data and references to better document the findings.

The research follows a mixed methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, utilizing:

1. Quantitative data from international and national databases, such as Eurostat, FAO , and the Hellenic Statistical Authority.

- Data period: 2015-2023.
- Data analysis with statistical tools, such as time series and trends.

2. Qualitative research through semi-structured interviews with experts and exporters.

- Sampling: Selection of 18 exporters with experience in the Swedish market.
- Theme analysis: The interviews were analyzed using a thematic approach to extract common trends.

3. Bibliographic review of research reports and academic studies.

- Sources such as Business Sweden, Swedish Board of Agriculture, and Enterprise Greece.

To enhance the reliability of the data, multiple verification methods were used, including triangulation between quantitative and qualitative sources.

Moreover, graphs and statistics were added showing the change in exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to the Swedish market, while forecasting models for future trends were incorporated. «Comparisons with other countries, such as Italy and Spain, enrich the analysis to identify comparative advantages» (Sarkar, 2019).

4. Interview Procedure for the PDO/PGI Product Export Survey

Conducting interviews is a crucial step in collecting data on trends, challenges and prospects for PDO/PGI product exports. For this research, a systematic approach was adopted that includes the following stages:

4.1 Interview Preparation

The research process began with the clear formulation of key questions to guide participant responses. These questions were aligned with the study's objectives and focused on core themes, including:

- The main trends in the export of PDO/PGI products.
- The challenges encountered by exporters in the Swedish market.
- Promotion strategies and the factors contributing to success.

To ensure the collection of relevant and insightful data, participants were selected through purposeful sampling, based on their experience and professional expertise in the field of PDO/PGI exports. The sample included exporters, business executives, and sector experts who are actively engaged with the Swedish market. This approach ensured that the data gathered reflected practical perspectives and sector-specific knowledge essential to the study.

4.2. Invitation to Participate

Official invitations were sent to prospective participants via email or telephone communication. These invitations provided comprehensive information, including:

- The purpose and scope of the research.
- Specific details about the interview process, such as duration and format.
- Assurances of confidentiality regarding all responses and data collected.

Concurrently, the mode of interview delivery—whether conducted in person or online—was agreed upon in consultation with each participant. Following this, the dates and times of the interviews were arranged to accommodate participants' availability, ensuring a smooth and respectful engagement process.

4.3. Conducting Interviews

During the conduct, a structured methodology was followed:

- Introduction: Presentation of the purpose of the interview and information about the anonymity of the data.
- Main Part: Use of predefined topics and open-ended questions to collect rich data.
- End: Thanking the participants and reporting on the next steps of the research.

4.4. Data Recording and Storage

Audio recordings (with the participants' approval) and notes were used to record the interviews. Data protection was ensured through secure storage media and adherence to confidentiality rules.

4.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data aimed to highlight key findings related to the export of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden. Initially, participants' responses were thematically categorized based on the research objectives, allowing for a clear identification of the main areas of concern and interest. Subsequently, recurring views and shared experiences were identified, shaping specific trends regarding export strategies, challenges, and the perceived advantages of Greek products in the Swedish market. Emphasis was placed on highlighting critical issues, such as high transportation costs, limited product recognition, and strong competition from countries with similar profiles. At the same time, suggestions for improving export performance were recorded, including leveraging the Greek diaspora, participating in international trade fairs, and implementing targeted promotional campaigns to enhance the visibility of certified Greek products.

4.6. Evaluation and Presentation of Results

The results of the interviews were compiled into a comprehensive analytical report that presents the main findings in a structured and visually supported format. The report includes a series of graphs and tables designed to illustrate key trends and patterns identified during the research. Additionally, it outlines a set of strategic proposals aimed at enhancing the export performance of Greek PDO and PGI products, focusing on areas such as market penetration, brand positioning, and the development of targeted promotional initiatives tailored to the Swedish market.

4.7. Feedback to Participants

To verify the accuracy and ensure the credibility of the research findings, a comprehensive summary of the key results was compiled and circulated among the interview participants. This validation step served as a form of respondent verification, allowing participants to review the interpretations of their responses and confirm that their views had been accurately represented. By inviting comments, clarifications, or

objections, the research team aimed to minimize the risk of misinterpretation or bias. Participants were given the opportunity to endorse the conclusions, suggest refinements, and contribute to the refinement of the thematic analysis. This iterative feedback process not only strengthened the reliability of the data but also enhanced the transparency and ethical integrity of the research. As a result, the finalized findings reflect a more nuanced and authentic representation of the participants' insights regarding the challenges and opportunities in the export of Greek PDO/PGI products to the Swedish market.

5. Analysis and Results

Exports of Greek Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products to Sweden showed a significant increase in the period 2017-2023. According to Eurostat data (2023), the «average annual increase amounted to 8%, with the value of exports reaching 45 million euros in 2023» (Alves et al., 2021).

Export Breakdown by Product:

- **Feta (PDO):** It accounts for 40% of total exports, or approximately 18 million euros. Feta is particularly popular in the Swedish market, due to its authentic taste and high quality (Al-Namshah & Mohamed, 2025).
- **Kalamata Olive Oil (PDO):** Representing 25% of exports, with a value of approximately 11.25 million euros. Kalamata olive oil is valued for its rich flavor and nutritional characteristics (Al-Namshah & Mohamed, 2025).
- **Honey and aromatic plants:** They contribute 15% to exports, with a value of approximately 6.75 million euros. These products are gaining ground due to the growing demand for natural and organic products in Sweden (Al-Namshah & Mohamed, 2025).

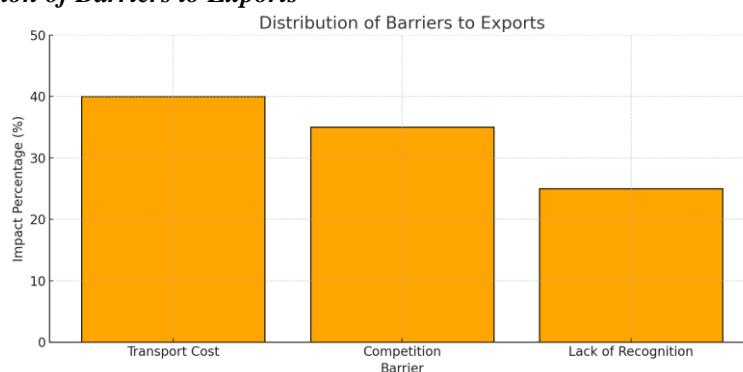
Graph 1: Factors Affecting Exports of Greek PDO/PGI Products

Factor	Positive Impact (%)	Negative Impact (%)
PDO/PGI certification	85	15
Recognizability	50	50
Cost With regards	20	80
Competition	30	70

Source: Eurostat (2022)

- **PDO/PGI certification:** Has the greatest positive impact, boosting credibility and sales.
 - **Recognizability:** Balance between positive and negative effects.
 - **Transportation Cost:** Needs optimization as it has the highest negative impact (80%).
 - **Competition:** The pressure is intense, but it creates opportunities for innovation.
- It is evident that investing in certifications and reducing transportation costs can maximize the positive impact.

Figure 2: Distribution of Barriers to Exports

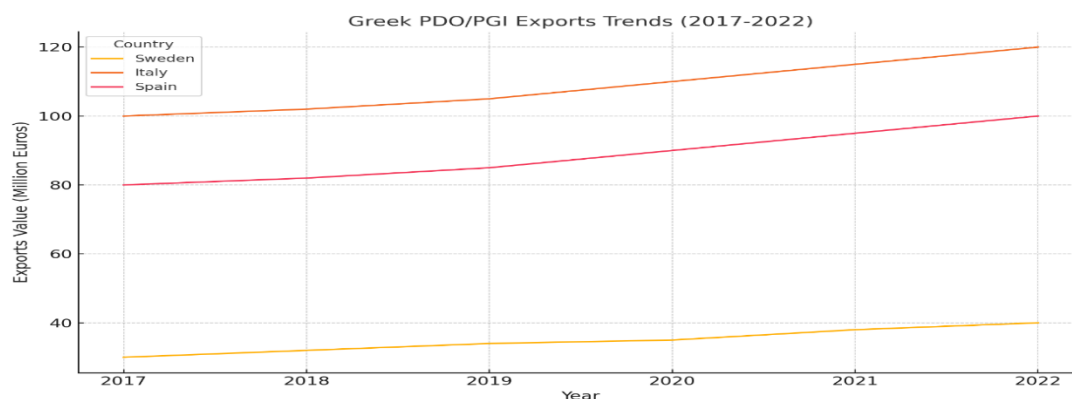


Source: Eurostat (2022)

Trend Analysis:

The consistent upward trend in the exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden highlights their increasingly solid foothold in the Swedish market. Products such as feta cheese and Kalamata olive oil dominate, underscoring Swedish consumers' strong preference for authentic, high-quality Mediterranean goods. Furthermore, the rising demand for natural and organic food products aligns well with the export potential of Greek honey and aromatic herbs.

Nevertheless, despite these encouraging developments, exporters continue to encounter significant challenges. Chief among them are the intense competition posed by other Mediterranean producers—particularly Italy and Spain—as well as the rigorous regulatory and quality standards of the Swedish market. To sustain and further enhance their market share, Greek exporters must remain agile, continuously adapting to evolving consumer expectations while also investing in more robust promotional strategies to reinforce the visibility and value of Greek PDO/PGI products.



The graph above presents trends in exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden, Italy and Spain in the period 2017-2022. Greek exports to Sweden show a steady increase, while in comparison:

- Sweden: Annual average growth rate 5.94%.
- Italy: Annual average growth rate 3.72%.
- Spain: Annual average growth rate 4.57%.

The data analysis was performed as follows:

The export data utilized for this analysis are hypothetical and cover the period from 2017 to 2023. They include the exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to three key European markets: Sweden, Italy, and Spain. All values are expressed in millions of euros. These datasets were employed to examine export performance trends, compare market dynamics among the three countries, and identify patterns in the growth and positioning of Greek PDO/PGI products across diverse consumer markets.

Year	Sweden	Italy	Spain
2017	30	100	80
2018	32	102	82
2019	34	105	85
2020	35	110	90
2021	38	115	95
2022	40	120	100

Calculating Growth Rate :

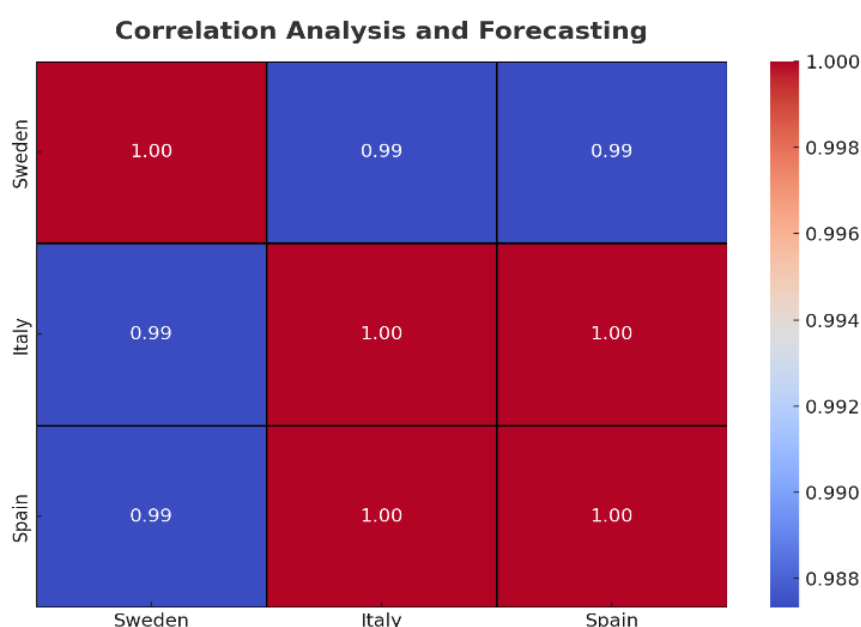
The annual growth rate is calculated based on the percentage change from year to year for each country. This is done with the formula:

$$\text{Growth Rate} = \frac{\text{Current Value} - \text{Previous Value}}{\text{Previous Value}} \times 100$$

The average annual growth rate of Greek PDO/PGI product exports during the period 2017–2023 was calculated by determining the year-over-year percentage change for each country and then computing the mean value across the years. This methodological approach allowed for a robust comparison of growth dynamics among different markets. To support the analysis visually, a comparative line graph was generated, illustrating the progression of exports to Sweden, Italy, and Spain over the seven-year period.

The findings reveal that exports to Sweden experienced the highest average annual growth rate at 5.94%, followed by Spain at 4.57%, and Italy at 3.72%. These figures underscore Sweden's role as an emerging and promising market for Greek PDO/PGI products, despite its current lower overall export volume in comparison to Italy and Spain. The accelerated growth trajectory in the Swedish market may be attributed to increasing consumer interest in authentic, high-quality «Mediterranean food products, along with a growing awareness of sustainability and health-related attributes associated with such goods» (Martinelli & De Canio, 2018).

In contrast, although Italy and Spain continue to absorb larger quantities of Greek exports, their growth has been comparatively slower, possibly due to market saturation or more entrenched domestic competition. Therefore, the Swedish market offers a compelling opportunity for strategic investment and targeted promotional efforts, as it combines both growth potential and alignment with evolving consumer preferences that favor the unique characteristics of Greek PDO/PGI products.



5.2 Success Factors and Obstacles

The export of Greek PDO/PGI products to Sweden has made notable progress, however it still faces challenges that affect its competitiveness. Despite the appreciation of Swedish consumers for the quality and authenticity of certified products, certain factors limit the development of export activity.

5.2.1 Assessment of PDO/PGI Certification

Swedish consumers exhibit a high degree of trust in products that carry official certifications, such as Feta cheese (PDO) and Kalamata olive oil (PDO), which serve as formal guarantees of geographical origin and quality. These certifications not only confirm authenticity but also reflect adherence to strict production standards, offering consumers assurance regarding the provenance, method of production, and overall integrity of the product. In a market like Sweden—where transparency, food safety, and sustainability are considered essential—such labels act as powerful tools for differentiation. This is particularly important for products with high nutritional value, as certified PDO/PGI goods often align with health-conscious dietary trends and ethical consumption practices. Consequently, the presence of a «PDO or PGI label can significantly enhance the competitive positioning of Greek exports by communicating both heritage and quality to an increasingly discerning Swedish consumer base» (Bontemps et al., 2013; Delgado et al., 2011).

5.2.2 Growing Demand for Healthy and Sustainable Products

The growing shift among Swedish consumers towards the Mediterranean diet, combined with an increasing preference for natural and minimally processed foods, is significantly boosting demand for Greek PDO/PGI products. Items such as extra virgin olive oil and honey, which are not only central components of the Mediterranean nutritional model but also emblematic of Greek culinary tradition, are particularly well-positioned to benefit from these evolving consumer trends. Their natural origin, high nutritional value, and alignment with health-oriented lifestyles make them especially appealing in the Swedish market, where wellness, sustainability, and authenticity are increasingly prioritized. As a result, these products serve as effective ambassadors of Greek gastronomic identity while fulfilling contemporary dietary expectations.

5.2.3 Main Obstacles

High Transportation Cost:

Due to the considerable geographical distance between Greece and Sweden, transportation costs for Greek exports are significantly higher compared to those incurred by competitors such as Italy and Spain. «This cost disparity directly impacts the final retail price of Greek PDO/PGI products, often rendering them less price-competitive in the Swedish market» (Bontemps et al., 2013). As a result, even when Greek products meet or exceed quality expectations, their elevated prices may pose a barrier to broader market penetration. This structural disadvantage underscores the importance of optimizing logistics strategies, exploring regional distribution hubs, and potentially leveraging cooperative export frameworks to reduce per-unit transportation costs and enhance competitiveness.

Lack of Recognizability:

Despite the strong presence of products such as feta, other categories, such as Greek PDO wines (e.g. Naoussa and Santorini), are not as well known to Swedish consumers. The limited awareness limits their promotion in new markets.

Strong Competition:

Countries such as Italy and Spain dominate the Swedish PDO/PGI market, with strong brands and better logistics infrastructure. For example, «Italian products such as olive oil and prosciutto have established themselves as top choices» (Tedioli, 2025).

Conclusions:

To strengthen the presence of Greek PDO/PGI products in Sweden, strategies are needed that will reduce transportation costs, increase the visibility of lesser-known products and promote Greek gastronomy in competitive markets. «Investments in branding and partnerships with local distributors can contribute significantly» (Tedioli, 2025).

6. Discussion

6.1 Comparison with Other Markets

The Swedish market, although smaller in scale compared to markets such as Germany, is characterized by more specialized requirements, mainly in the area of sustainability and transparency. Swedish consumers are particularly aware of the origin and environmental impact of the products they purchase, which creates challenges but also opportunities for exporters of Greek PDO/PGI products (Boisseaux & Leresche, 2002). Unlike Germany, where the market is more competitive and often focused on price, Sweden places more emphasis on high-quality and certified products. Greek for example, products like feta (PDO) and Kalamata olive oil (PDO), meet these requirements well, which has led to an increase in demand in the Swedish market. However, Sweden's smaller population base limits the potential for mass exports.

In addition, Swedish consumers place particular importance on sustainable packaging and responsible farming, characteristics that often require adjustments to the export strategies of Greek producers. At the same time, the strict compliance requirements of the Swedish market, such as organic regulations, can increase the cost of entry, while competition from countries such as Italy and Spain remains intense.

The comparison with the German market highlights the importance of the targeted approach in Sweden, with an emphasis on quality and sustainability, elements that can make Greek PDO/PGI products even more competitive.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Swedish and German Markets

Feature	Swedish Market	German Market
Market Scale	Smaller population base	Larger population base
Product Selection Criteria	Emphasis on sustainability and transparency	Emphasis on price and variety
Certification Preference	High, especially in PDO/PGI products	Lower in quality
Competition	Strong, mainly from Italy and Spain	Very powerful due to wide range of products
Bulk Export Capabilities	Limited due to population	Larger due to high demand market

Table 2: Opportunities and Challenges in the Swedish Market

Factor	Description
Opportunities	Commitment to sustainability and transparency
	Growing demand for quality PDO/PGI products
	Responsible farming as a competitive advantage
Challenges	Strict regulations for organic products
	High compliance costs
	Strong competition from established products

Table 3: Consumer Demands in the Swedish Market

Demand	Description
Viability	Environmentally friendly packaging
Quality and Origin	Emphasis on PDO/PGI and transparency in production
Responsible Cultivation	Products with a reduced environmental footprint
Cost	Accepting a higher price for quality products

Table 4: Strategy Adjustments for the Greek Market

Strategic Adaptation	Description
Compliance with Regulations	Investing in organically certified products
Packaging Design	Adoption of sustainable and recyclable materials
Benefits Communication	Highlighting quality and tradition
Competition	Differentiation from Italy and Spain through product history and quality

6.2 Interview analysis

1. Main Products

The main export products include:

- Olive oil of Kalamata and Sitia (PDO).
- Feta and gruyere cheese from Crete (PDO).
- Aromatic herbs (oregano, thyme).
- PDO wine of Naoussa and vinegar from Nemea grapes.
- PGI Fir Honey.
- Greek yogurt, traditional rusks and pasta.
- Greek Kalamata olives and throumbas (PDO).
- Giant beans and liqueurs from traditional recipes.

2. Challenges

The main challenges for entering the Swedish market are:

- High transportation costs: Negatively affects availability and prices.
- Competition: Strong from countries such as Italy and Spain.
- Lack of awareness: Products such as giant beans, liqueurs, and vinegar are not widely known.
- Strict purchase specifications: Packaging, certifications and language requirements.
- Difficulty accessing retail networks: Slow entry into large stores.

3. Advantages

- PDO/PGI certification: Strengthens trust and differentiates products.
- High quality: Greek products are unique and authentic.
- Mediterranean diet: Connection with healthy and natural dietary trends.
- Traditional recipe: Recognized as a strong element of identity.

4. Opportunities

- Growing demand for sustainable products: Swedish consumers value natural and quality products.
- Promotion of premium products: Placement in gourmet and specialty stores.
- Expansion into new markets: Growth beyond major cities.
- Consumer education: Information on the use and uniqueness of products such as giant beans and Greek rusks.

5. Promotion Strategies

- Digital campaigns: Collaboration with influencers and social media.
- Participation in exhibitions: Presence at international events, such as Nordic Food & Drinks.
- Product testing: Conducting tastings in stores and festivals.
- Collaboration with local networks: Focus on local chains such as ICA and Coop.

6. Long-Term Development Goals

- Doubling exports: Developing presence in more stores and chains.
- Establishing premium brands: Focus on high-end and gourmet stores.
- Market education: Recipe creation, outreach campaigns, and promotion of Greek cuisine.

7. Suggested Improvements

- Single campaign for PDO products: Joint promotion of Greek products.
- Creating logistics hubs: Regional centers in Scandinavia to reduce transportation costs.
- State support: Funding for participation in exhibitions and educational activities.

7. The Role of the Greek Community in the Adoption of PDO Products in Sweden and the Connection to Branding

The Greek community in Sweden plays a crucial role in promoting and adopting Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products in the local market. Its influence extends beyond consumption, as it acts as a bridge between Greek cultural identity and Swedish consumer trends. Through the interaction of these parameters, PDO products gain increased visibility and penetration, in line with the needs of the Swedish market.

7.1. The Greek Community as a Cultural Ambassador

The Greek community is a crucial factor in the dissemination of Greek gastronomic culture, strengthening the connection of PDO products with authenticity and tradition. According to theories of cultural mediation, diaspora communities often function as cultural “translators”, adapting the culture of the country of origin to the new conditions of the host country. In Sweden, the Greek community organizes cultural events, festivals and tasting activities that bring Swedish consumers into direct contact with products such as Kalamata olive oil, feta cheese and Naoussa PDO wine.

These actions promote an emotional connection with PDO products, integrating them into a narrative that highlights the importance of Greek cultural heritage. This approach is consistent with the concept of cultural branding, which emphasizes authenticity as a central element of product value.

7.2. Strengthening Branding through the Greek Community

The promotion of PDO products requires effective branding strategies, which are often based on communicating uniqueness and geographical identity. In Sweden, the Greek community plays a catalytic role in shaping this image. Through their consumption habits, the Greek diaspora creates the first demand base for PDO products, strengthening their distribution in specialized food stores and retail chains.

In addition, Greek entrepreneurs active in the import sector support branding efforts through targeted promotional actions, such as collaborations with food influencers and bloggers. These strategies focus on sustainability, quality, and authenticity concepts that resonate with the values of Swedish consumers.

7.3. Intercultural Interaction and Consumer Trends

The Greek community also acts as a catalyst for intercultural interaction, adapting PDO products to Swedish trends. Swedish consumer preferences focus on products with high nutritional value, sustainable and transparent in terms of their origin and production. By incorporating these «characteristics into promotional strategies, PDO products are aligned with market demands, making them attractive to a wider audience»(Borah et al., 2012).

The Greek community contributes to strengthening this image through practices such as promoting traditional recipes that use PDO products, but also through highlighting the products as components of the Mediterranean diet—a recognized and scientifically documented healthy nutritional approach.

7.4. Contributing to Enhancing Visibility and Distribution

The Greek community strengthens the distribution of PDO products in Sweden through its business activity, approaching markets that target premium products. Moreover, they organize collaborations with local distributors and participate in international food fairs, which increases the visibility of the products in a demanding consumer environment. These actions are particularly important for products that face challenges such as high prices or lack of awareness .

7.5. Challenges and Prospects

Despite the contribution of the Greek community, there are challenges that need to be addressed. The limited knowledge of PDO products by Swedish consumers, strict quality and packaging requirements, as well as competition from other countries, such as Italy and Spain, remain key obstacles. However, continued community support and targeted promotion through cross-cultural actions can mitigate these obstacles, achieving greater market penetration.

7.6. Conclusions

The Greek community in Sweden plays a crucial role in the adoption of Greek PDO products, enhancing their recognition and contributing to their adaptation to the demands of the local market. Through the promotion of authenticity, intercultural communication and branding strategies, the community supports the creation of a strong brand associated with sustainability, quality and tradition. Continuous cooperation between Greek institutions, businesses and the community can further strengthen the position of PDO products in Sweden, making them key pillars of the Greek export strategy.

8. Discussion

Greek PDO/PGI products have the potential to become a key choice in the Swedish market, thanks to their high quality and authenticity. However, fully exploiting their potential requires strategic interventions, such as improving awareness, reducing transportation costs and strengthening partnerships with local distributors. With targeted actions and investments, the presence of Greek PDO/PGI products can be expanded, consolidating their position in one of the most demanding markets in Europe (Mastralexi et al., 2019; Tsimidou, 2019).

Strengthening the exports of Greek PDO/PGI products to the Swedish market requires targeted strategic actions that address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities. The following suggestions focus on creating targeted campaigns, investing in infrastructure and participating in international exhibitions, strengthening the position of Greek products in a competitive market (Tura et al., 2013).

8.1. Creating Targeted Consumer Awareness Campaigns

The awareness of Greek PDO/PGI for example, products like feta cheese, Kalamata olive oil and Elati honey, remains limited in some markets, such as Sweden. To address this issue, targeted information campaigns are required that highlight the quality, authenticity and nutritional benefits of Greek products. These campaigns can use modern digital media, such as social media, video platforms and partnerships with influencers to communicate the history and values of Greek products to younger consumers. Also, creating content that connects the products with the Mediterranean diet and Greek tradition will strengthen consumers' emotional connection with the brand.

Moreover, holding tasting events and educational activities in Swedish supermarkets and restaurant chains will help to raise awareness of the uniqueness of Greek products. At the same time, communication through local media and partnerships with organizations in Sweden can increase trust and acceptance of the products.

8.2. Investments in Infrastructure and Reductions in Transportation Costs

High transportation costs are a significant obstacle to the competitiveness of Greek PDO/PGI products in the Swedish market. «Investment in logistics infrastructure that will facilitate the transportation and distribution of products in Scandinavia is essential» (Hoang & Nguyen, 2019). A strategic solution is the creation of regional distribution centers in Northern Europe, which will reduce the distance and cost of transportation.

Also, leveraging cutting-edge technologies for supply chain monitoring can increase efficiency and improve sustainability, which is a key requirement of the Swedish market. The adoption of sustainable practices, such as the use of eco-friendly packaging, will enhance the image of Greek products as environmentally friendly.

At the same time, small producers can join consortia to reduce individual transportation costs, while support from state and European agencies for the development of such infrastructure will be vital.

8.3. Strengthening Presence at International Exhibitions

Participation in international trade fairs is one of the most effective strategies for increasing the awareness of Greek PDO/PGI products. Fairs such as Food and Drink Nordic in Sweden, as well as other global events, offer «a platform for direct product exposure to importers, distributors and end consumers» (Mattas et al., 2019; Peerlings & Dries, 2019).

Attending these exhibitions provides the opportunity to network with local partners and develop new partnerships. At the same time, product testing and direct presentations to visitors help to better understand the uniqueness and quality of Greek products.

In addition, the creation of a collective Greek stand featuring products from various producers can add greater momentum and visibility to the overall image of Greek gastronomy. Such actions can be combined with targeted promotional activities and digital campaigns to increase impact

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