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## Makers of Asiago, Parmigiano and Gorgonzola cheese join forces to conquer Eastern Europe

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Italian producers of the Asiago cheese have formed an alliance with makers of Parmigiano Reggiano and Gorgonzola to conquer Central and Eastern Europe markets. The Consortium for the Safeguard of PDO (protected denomination of origin) is getting ready for a new promotional initiative in Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Austria in the framework of the Cheese-It's Europe project: a €3 million investment co-financed by the EU that also includes the Consortium Gorgonzola and the Consortium Parmigiano Reggiano .

The joint promotion plan will be carried out between 2016 and 2018 and aims at

promoting the knowledge and consumption of these Italian cheeses in the four markets they want to conquer.

The promotion will start in September through four events/conferences – one in each country – in order to attract the attention on the excellence and uniqueness of these three Italian products.

Currently, the Asiago cheese is sold mostly in the Czech Republic, but the positive trend of the demand and the push of the market are an opportunity to be seized working in synergy with Parmigiano and Gorgonzola that are already present on those markets.

Working together is not only a chance to reaffirm the quality of Italian dairies; as far as the Asiago cheese is concerned, it is also a chance to get in touch with a market that is already receptive.

2015 was a record year for Asiago exports. 1,377,327 wheels of Asiago Fresco were produced (+1.6%) and 265,041 of Asiago Stagionato (-1.9%), for a total of 1,642,368 wheels: Asiago PDO's exports have reached their all-time high with a 6.5% increase of sale and a 5% increase in value.

The 1,690 tons of cheese sold outside Italy in 2015 were mostly destined to the US (almost +13%), followed by Switzerland and countries such as Germany, Austria and Belgium.

At an international level, any consideration about Brexit's impact is still premature, while the embargo against Moscow is clearly penalizing Asiago PDO, since it was growing on the Russian market and had already registered some encouraging results.