C/2025/6709

16.12.2025

Publication of an application for registration of a name pursuant to Article 50(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(C/2025/6709)

Following this publication, the authorities of a Member State or of a third country, or a natural or legal person having a legitimate interest and established or resident in a third country, may lodge, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1] an opposition with the Commission within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Ostkustströmming'

EU No: PDO-SE-03050 – 18.12.2023

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name(s) of PDO**

'Ostkustströmming'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Sweden

3. **Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.7. Fresh fish, molluscs, and crustaceans and products derived therefrom

Combined nomenclature code

03 – FISH AND CRUSTACEANS, MOLLUSCS AND OTHER AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES

0302 – Fish, fresh or chilled, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading No 0304

0303 – Fish, frozen, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading No 0304

0304 – Fish fillets and other fish meat (whether or not minced), fresh, chilled or frozen

3.2. *Description of the product to which the name in 1 applies*

'Ostkustströmming' consists of wild-caught specimens of the fish *Clupea harengus* from the geographical area, which is part of the Baltic Sea. The fish is silvery and normally between 12 and 25 cm long, but the size may vary. The fish must be caught either with passive gear such as gillnets, entangling nets, handlines, pound nets and jigging equipment or with trawls with a mesh size greater than 32 mm. In addition, the fish must be landed and sorted within 24 hours of the fishing gear being emptied.

'Ostkustströmming' can be sold whole or filleted, or as roundfish.

Nutritional content per 100 g:

Energy (kcal)	130–170
Fat (g)	7–10
Protein (g)	18–24

[1] Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj).

The texture and taste of 'Ostkustströmming' are influenced partly by the fat content and partly by the fatty acid composition, where single and polyunsaturated C18 length fatty acids (mainly oleic acid) predominate.

The organoleptic characteristics of 'Ostkustströmming' can be summarised as follows:

Aroma: Mild sea smell when raw, after frying including umami.

Texture: Semi-melting (raw), after frying firm, dry and crumbly.

Flavour: Mild with a large body of umami, with sweet notes of the sea, oyster, cream and metal when raw, after frying a pure mild taste of umami and cream.

The colour of the meat is clear, slightly transparent, with a pink hue. Cooked, the meat becomes white to grey.

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

—

3.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area*

'Ostkustströmming' can be chilled uneviscerated. It may also be eviscerated and then chilled or frozen, or cut into fillets and then chilled. Fillets may also be frozen. All operations must take place in the geographical area.

Whole (unfilleted) 'Ostkustströmming' may not be frozen outside the geographical area if it is to be sold under the name 'Ostkustströmming'.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

—

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

In addition to the information required by law, every batch of 'Ostkustströmming' must be labelled with the name 'Ostkustströmming', the date of catch and the fisherman's ID number.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The geographical area is bounded to the south by Kristianopel in the Kalmar Strait and a straight line east to the boundary of the Swedish economic zone, to the east by the Swedish economic zone, to the north by a straight line east from Öregrund to the Swedish economic zone and to the west by the coastline and its communities (i.e. including the land closest to the sea – up to 1 km from the coast).

5. Link with the geographical area

The link between the geographical area and the characteristics of 'Ostkustströmming' is based on both the area's natural conditions and human factors.

Natural conditions

The Baltic Sea is the world's largest brackish sea, where the water is halfway between ocean saltwater and the freshwater of lakes and rivers. The salt in the Baltic Sea originates from the inflow of saltwater via the Sound and the Great and Little Belts in the area between Skåne and Jutland. The inflow of saltwater into the Baltic Sea varies from year to year depending on the weather and wind. A clear saline gradient can be observed from the North Sea to the innermost part of the Gulf of Bothnia.

The low salinity, together with factors such as water temperature and diet, means that the Baltic herring stocks in the Baltic Sea and the Åland Sea show genetic and morphological differences compared to both Baltic herring from the Bothnian Sea and the Gulf of Bothnia, and Atlantic herring from the Baltic proper, despite being classified as the same species (*Clupea harengus*). For example, the Baltic herring present in the geographical area has more vertebrae than the herring along the coast of Norrland. The low salinity of the geographical area means that 'Ostkustströmming' is larger in size than Norrländska strömming but smaller than Atlantic herring. The taste is also different from the other types of herring. 'Ostkustströmming' tastes mild with a large body of umami and sweet notes of sea, oysters, cream and metal when raw, and, after frying, it has a pure mild taste of umami and cream.

The differences in taste and texture are due to differences in fatty acid composition. The taste of 'Ostkustströmming' is influenced by the fat content and the fatty acid composition, where single and polyunsaturated C18 length fatty acids (mainly oleic acid) predominate.

'Ostkustströmming' clearly differs from the Atlantic herring further south and in the North Sea by having a better shelf life. Whereas the meat of the Atlantic herring becomes loose and can quite easily begin to break up, 'Ostkustströmming' retains a distinct consistency and texture, probably due to its lower fat content compared to Atlantic herring from the southern Baltic Sea. The brackish water of the Baltic Sea causes Baltic herring to grow more slowly than Atlantic herring, with less fat in the muscle. The fat content is typically 7-10 %, with a higher fat content at macro level measured further south where there is higher salinity. The texture of the raw product is semi-melting. Experiments conducted over several decades show that the fatty acid profile is clearly distinguishable in herring from the geographical area compared to herring from other parts of the Baltic Sea further north or further south.

Human factors

The taste of 'Ostkustströmming' is influenced by other factors in addition to those relating to its unique habitat and genetics:

— in-depth knowledge of the biotope,

— fast landing after catch,

— focus on quality and sustainable fishing with low impact gear.

In order to catch herring of the right maturity, quality and in sufficient quantity to be economically viable, and at the same time as part of the long-term management of fish stocks, fishers need deep knowledge of the local waters and important fishing grounds. This is particularly important as many of the herring stocks are local. Because the fisheries are on a small scale, the fish can also be landed and sorted in a way that lends the product a certain quality and reputation in the marketing chain. Fishing for 'Ostkustströmming' is traditionally carried out using 'herring drift nets', but nowadays also with trawls where a large mesh size is important to catch only those fish that are large enough for human consumption and at the same time allow smaller fish to continue growing. The fishing grounds and methods and the flavour of the fish vary with the seasons, which means extensive knowledge of local conditions is needed for herring fishing.

The reputation of 'Ostkustströmming' then also refers to the fact that it has been caught and cooked since ancient times in the area in question. It has formed a key food source both for people along the coast and for the population in large parts of the hinterland. For the coastal population, this herring was historically the main food consumed. In order to preserve the fish and enable it to be saved or traded, it has been smoked, fermented and salted, as well as preserved in vinegar with or without spices.

As early as the 16th century, the State realised the special value of Baltic herring and the Crown established harbour fisheries along the Swedish coast. In the area between Landsort and Öregrund alone, there were 41 harbour fisheries in the late 16th century, all targeting Baltic herring. The harbour fisheries were subsequently enfeoffed or passed into private hands but the same sites, known for their rich fish resources, are still used today.

The differences in salinity have a major impact on the different stocks of *Clupea harengus*. While, in administrative matters, they are often all treated as herring, there are clear differences between *sill* (Atlantic herring) and *strömming* (Baltic herring), as already described by Linné in 1761. Extensive genetic studies confirm that Baltic herring is a separate subspecies (*Clupea harengus membras*) with limited genetic exchange with Atlantic herring. The same studies also establish that the boundary between subspecies is located around the Kalmar Strait. This boundary between the names Baltic and Atlantic herring was established at Kristianopel in the Kalmar Strait by the Crown in the 16th century.

'Ostkustströmming' is an important species for the ecology and culture of the area. It provides a nutritional basis for predatory fish, seals and birds. There is significant local variation in herring fishing along the coast and in the archipelago, which requires knowledge and experience built up over centuries and passed down between generations of fishermen whose livelihoods were dependent on herring fishing. 'Ostkustströmming' is therefore a key species not only for the ecology of the area but also for its cultural history.

Reference to publication of the product specification

https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/globalassets/foretag-regler-kontroll/livsmedelsinformation-marknin g-halsopastaenden/skyddade-beteckningar/ansokan-om-skyddad-beteckning-ostkuststromming-2025-09-10-.pdf