OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2017/C 9/12)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1].

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF NON-MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION FOR A PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN OR PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

Application for approval of amendments in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

'HUILE D'OLIVE DE CORSE'/'HUILE D'OLIVE DE CORSE — OLIU DI CORSICA'

EU No: PDO-FR-02123 — 24.2.2016

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Applicant group and legitimate interest**

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The applicant group for the PDO 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' is composed of olive producers, processors and processor-suppliers and has a legitimate interest in submitting an amendment application.

2. **Member State or Third Country**

France

3. **Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment(s)**

— ☐ Name of product

— ☒ Description of product

— ☐ Geographical area

— ☒ Proof of origin

— ☒ Method of production

— ☒ Link

— ☒ Labelling

— ☒ Other (national requirements, the contact details of the group, the methods for identifying land parcels, the inspection body)

4. **Type of amendment(s)**

— ☒ Amendments to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI not to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

[1] OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

— ☐ Amendments to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI for which a Single Document (or equivalent) has not been published and which cannot be qualified as minor within the meaning of the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

5. **Amendment(s)**

5.1. *'Description of product' section*

This section has been clarified and supplemented in order to take better account of traditional know-how and the producers' practices. This improved description has made it possible to distinguish oil obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally, by using the additional indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' ('traditional harvesting'). This oil was already covered by the initial registration, which was based on a rather broad definition of the product, but it was not identified as such. This distinction reflects the applicant group's wish to characterise and identify the product better and to provide the consumer with clear information on the harvesting technique.

— More details have been added to the organoleptic description on the basis of the inspections carried out since the designation was recognised. This has been done to better identify the product. The provisions on the colour of the product remain the same.

Therefore the original wording:

'"Huile d'olive de Corse" or "Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica" is a mild-tasting olive oil with virtually no fieriness or bitterness. Its aromas are fine and evocative of dried fruit, confectionery and Corsican scrub. The colour is straw to light yellow and may have green reflections.'

has been replaced by: '"Huile d'olive de Corse"/"Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica" is characterised by aromas reminiscent of almond, artichoke, hay, dried fruit or apple. The colour is straw to light yellow and may have green reflections.'

The introduction of the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' for oils obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally results in additional organoleptic characteristics related to the harvesting technique: the oil is full-bodied and rich in the mouth, with the following characteristic and dominant aromas: black olive, dry hay, dried fruit (almond, nut, hazelnut), floral fragrances from the scrub, mushroom and undergrowth.

— Levels of bitterness and pungency (or sharpness) have been defined and introduced in the specification: 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' is characterised by bitterness and pungency of 3 or less on the scale of values based on the International Olive Council's rating (from 0 to 10). The levels have been increased slightly from the initial description of 'virtually no pungency or bitterness' owing to the development of new plantations and the modernisation of the groves. The use of mechanical harvesting techniques results in slightly less ripe olives and in oil whose bitterness and pungency are slightly less weak. Oils bearing the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' are obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally and are therefore riper. The oil obtained is rather mild, and its pungency and bitterness do not exceed 1 on the scale of the International Olive Council.

— In order to preserve the quality of the product, a peroxide value has been determined and added to the specification. On the basis of analyses carried out on the products, this value has been restricted to 16 milliequivalents of oxygen peroxide for each kilogramme of olive oil when first marketed.

5.2. *'Proof of origin' section*

Owing to developments in national legislation and regulations, the text of the section 'Evidence that the product originates from the defined geographical area' has been consolidated to bring together, in particular, provisions on declaration requirements and the keeping of registers for tracing the product and monitoring the production conditions.

In this context, provisions on the authorisation of operators by the inspection body have been included in order to acknowledge that they are able to meet the requirements of the specification.

This section has also been supplemented with information on registers and declaration documents, enabling traceability to be guaranteed and ensuring that compliance of the products with the requirements of the specification is verified.

5.3. *'Method of production' section*

The following amendments have been made concerning the method of obtaining the oil:

The olive varieties

The timetable for the conversion of olive varieties qualifying for the right to use the designation (the list of varieties remains the same) has been removed, since most of the producers comply with the minimum percentage of varieties, with the deadline for this being 2025.

Therefore the original wording:

'However, olive groves planted before the date of publication of the national rules defining the designation that fail to comply with the provisions on varieties will continue to qualify for the right to use the designation "Huile d'olive de Corse" or "Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica" for their harvest provided that the holdings in question submit an individual timetable for the conversion of the holding in question to the National Institute of origin and quality (Institut national des appellations d'origine). The timetable must allow for olive trees of the varieties listed above to account for at least 30 % of the olive groves on the holding in 2010, 40 % in 2015, 50 % in 2020 and 70 % in 2025.

With effect from the 2010 harvest, olives obtained from these groves may be used in the preparation of olive oil bearing the designation on condition that these olives are mixed with at least one of the varieties listed above.'

has been replaced by:

'However, olive groves planted before the date of publication of the national rules defining the designation on 26 November 2004 that fail to comply with the provisions on varieties will continue to qualify for the right to use the designation "Huile d'olive de Corse"/"Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica" for their harvest provided that the olive trees of the varieties listed above account for at least 70 % of the olive groves on the holding in question.

Olives obtained from these groves may be used in the preparation of olive oil bearing the designation on condition that these olives are mixed with at least one of the varieties listed above'.

However, during the period for objections at national level, some operators lodged an objection to the removal of this timetable. Operators who meet the conditions of Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 have been allowed a transitional period until 31 December 2025.

The pollinator varieties allowed (groves and oil)

The original wording provided for a maximum percentage of 5 % of pollinator varieties in the groves and in the oil.

In view of the difficulties in verifying compliance with the provision on the maximum quantity of olives of pollinator varieties in the oil (mainly documentary checks) and the fact that these quantities are minimal, it is proposed that this provision be removed from the specification. However, the provision on the presence of pollinator varieties in the groves has been kept.

Irrigation

In order to limit late irrigation and enable the fruit to ripen under good conditions, it is proposed that the sentence be amended as follows 'While the olive trees are in leaf, the grove may be irrigated until the olives start ripening' to make it more precise.

Planting density

The provisions on planting density remain the same: the area available for each plant must be at least 24 m^2. The method of calculating this area have been specified (multiplying the two inter-row distances and the space between trees) in order to clarify and monitor compliance with the provision. The minimum distance of 4 metres between trees remains the same.

Date of harvest/Yield

Initially, the harvest start date and yield increases or decreases in exceptional weather conditions were set, respectively, by order of the prefect and of the minister on the basis of proposals by the National Institute of origin and quality after obtaining the group's opinion.

With a view to simplifying administrative procedures, it is suggested that the Director of the INAO set the harvest start date on the basis of a reasoned proposal by the group.

Furthermore, the arrangements for exceptional weather conditions have been removed in accordance with the provisions laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

Harvesting

In order to specify the conditions for using the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne', the following has been added: 'Only oils obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally and the fruit have gathered onto nets or into other receptacles under the tree may bear the indication "Huile d'olive de Corse"'.

The health status of the olives

To ensure the olives' health, it has been specified that the olives are to be delivered to the mills in good condition. The concept of 'healthy' olives in the registered specification has been clarified by limiting to 10 % the percentage of olives that are affected by pests, frost or hail.

Therefore the original wording: 'The olives used must be healthy' has been supplemented as follows:

'They are to be delivered to the mills in good condition. The olives used are healthy. The maximum total percentage of olives affected by pests, frost or hail has been limited to 10 %.'

The ripeness of the olives

In order to reinforce the provision and make it easier to verify compliance therewith, the requirements concerning the level of ripeness of the olives apply to the stage where the olives are being processed and no longer to the olives delivered to the mill.

This provision has also been amended in light of the development of new plantations where mechanical harvesting techniques are used and the olives are less ripe.

Consequently the paragraph 'Oil is produced from olives harvested when ripe. Total deliveries to a mill in an oil year must comprise for each holding — not more than 20 % of green olives, — at least 50 % of black olives' has been replaced by:

'Each batch of olives used must comprise at least 50 % of olives turning colour.

For "Huile d'olive de Corse"/"Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica" followed by the indication "récolte à l'ancienne", each batch of olives used comprises more than 50 % of black olives'.

Processing and extraction processes

While retaining the provisions of the current specification with regard to extraction methods (extraction involves solely mechanical processes and no other reagent than water), the list of authorised processes has been supplemented to make it comprehensive and to take account of all production stages. Therefore the following information has been added: leaf stripping, crushing, kneading, extraction by centrifuging or by pressing. These are the currently used techniques.

In addition, the provision on the free acidity content, expressed as oleic acid, has been moved to the 'Description of product' section. The indication of the 'virgin' nature of the oil has been removed, since that quality relates solely to the analytical characteristics of the oil and 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' may belong either to the 'virgin' or 'extra virgin' category.

5.4. *'Link' section*

The 'Link' section has been updated, consolidated and supplemented in order to better illustrate the link between the characteristics of 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica', the geographical area and local know-how. Elements related to the 'specificity of the product' and the 'causal link' have been added in line with the amendments made to the text of the 'Description of product' section. They relate, in particular, to the characteristic aromas of the product, such as almond, hay, complex aromas from the Corsican scrub, and moderate fieriness and pungency in line with the levels of bitterness and fieriness introduced in the 'Description of product' section.

5.5. *'Labelling' section*

The wording of labels specific to the designation has been brought into line with the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (use of the European Union's PDO logo). Furthermore, the words 'appellation d'origine protégée' ('protected designation of origin') also form part of the specific labelling requirements for products with the designation.

For the oils obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally, the obligation to include the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' immediately after the name of the designation has been added. The labelling of these oils must also include information specifying that the oils have been obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally.

5.6. *Other*

In the light of changes to national legislation and rules, the 'National requirements' section contains a table indicating the main items to be checked, their reference values and the evaluation methods to be used.

The contact details of the group have been updated.

In the 'Definition of the geographical area' section, the steps that must take place within the geographical area of the designation have been clarified: 'The olives are harvested and processed in the geographical area, which covers the territory of the following municipalities'.

Furthermore, some errors identified in the names of municipalities belonging to the geographical area of the designation of origin have been corrected; however, these corrections do not alter the boundaries of the geographical area of production, which remain the same. It is stipulated that the boundaries of the geographical area are entered in the register of the partly covered municipalities and that any graphic material is deposited with the town halls concerned. Moreover, the methods for identifying land parcels have been clarified.

Finally, the section on 'References to the inspection body' has been updated.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'HUILE D'OLIVE DE CORSE'/'HUILE D'OLIVE DE CORSE — OLIU DI CORSICA'

EU No: PDO-FR-02123 — 24.2.2016

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name(s)**

'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

France

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

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.5. Oils and fats (butter, margarine, oil, etc.)

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

'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' is characterised by aromas reminiscent of almond, artichoke, hay, dried fruit or apple. The colour is straw to light yellow and may contain flashes of green.

The sharpness (referred to as 'pungency' within the meaning of this Single Document) and bitterness at first marketing are 3 or less on the organoleptic scale of the International Olive Council (IOC).

The free acidity, expressed as oleic acid, must not exceed 1,5 grams per 100 grams of oil.

The peroxide value is restricted to 16 milliequivalents or less of oxygen peroxide for each kilogramme of olive oil when first marketed.

'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' followed by the words 'récolte à l'ancienne' has the following additional characteristics: the oil is full-bodied and rich in the mouth, with the following characteristic and dominant aromas: black olive, dry hay, dried fruit (almond, nut, hazelnut), floral fragrances from the scrub, mushroom and undergrowth.

The pungency and bitterness at first marketing are 1 or less on the organoleptic scale of the IOC.

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

The olive oils come mainly from the following varieties:

Sabine (also called Aliva Bianca, Biancaghja), Ghjermana, Capanace, Raspulada, Zinzala, Aliva Néra (otherwise known as Ghjermana du Sud), Curtinese.

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

Every part of the production process of the raw material and the preparation of the olive oil take place within the defined geographical area.

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

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

In addition to the compulsory information provided for by legislation on labelling and the presentation of foodstuffs, the designation of origin 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' labels must include the following:

— the name of the designation 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica',

— the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' immediately after the name of the designation, in the case of oils from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally.

— the indication: 'appellation d'origine protégée' ('protected designation of origin').

— the European Union PDO logo.

These details must all be in the same field of vision.

They must be indicated in conspicuous, clearly legible and indelible characters of a sufficient size to stand out from the label on which they are printed so as to be clearly distinguishable from all other written or graphic information.

The labelling of oils bearing the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne' include information specifying that the oils have been obtained from olives harvested after they have fallen naturally.

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

The geographical area of the designation of origin 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' corresponds to the entire territory of Corsica, except for the following municipalities: Aiti, Albertacce, Alzi, Asco, Aullène, Bastelica, Bocognano, Bustanico, Calacuccia, Cambia, Campana, Carcheto-Brustico, Carpineto, Carticasi, Casamaccioli, Casanova, Ciamanacce, Corscia, Cozzano, Cristinacce, Erone, Evisa, Felce, Ghisoni, Guagno, Guitera-les-Bains, Lano, Lozzi, Mausoléo, Mazzola, Muracciole, Novale, Olmi-Cappella, Ortale, Orto, Palneca, Pastricciola, Perelli, Pianello, Piazzali, Piedipartino, Pie-d'Orezza, Pietricaggio, Piobetta, Pioggiola, Poggiolo, Quasquara, Quenza, Renno, Rezza, Rusio, Saliceto, Sampolo, San-Lorenzo, Soccia, Tarrano, Tasso, Tavera, Tolla, Valle-d'Alesani, Vallica, Vivario and Zicavo.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

Specificity of the geographical area

Situated between 41 and 43° N and lying 160 km from the Provence coast, Corsica is a north/south-facing elongated mountainous island with an average altitude of 568 m and a very uneven terrain.

Geologically, the soils on which the olive trees are planted are derived mainly from the on-site breakdown of two of the main rocks (granite and shale, limestone in pockets, only in the extreme south). The types of soils obtained in this way are poor owing to their limited depth and low clay content, but they are also arid soils with low water reserves. The water supply for the trees therefore depends entirely on the rainfall, which, while highly variable in different years and micro-regions, is nonetheless typically Mediterranean, with a long period of summer drought lasting for about five months.

Furthermore, the characteristics of these soils are affected by erosion, which is more accentuated on steeper slopes.

In addition to the summer drought, the climate is characterised by temperatures favourable to the olive tree, with mild winters, hot summers, strong sunshine but also maritime influences providing significant moisture.

The development of the olive tree is also affected by the temperature: the elevated terrain means that specific frost conditions prevail above a certain average altitude, the limit of which varies according to the exposure of the hillsides.

Olive-growing has not developed in areas where there was a risk of frost.

The primary olive-growing area is located at 0 to 400 metres on the northern slope and at up to 600 metres on the southern slope of the vegetation belt, which is characterised by a series of cork oak and holm oak trees, together with stone pine trees, heather, arbutus trees, myrtle, mastic trees, calicotome trees and narrow-leaved mock privet.

The history of the olive tree in Corsica dates back a very long time and represents the basis for the cultivation of olives on the island. It also explains to a large extent the origin of the varieties planted: the sabine, which is the most widespread olive in Corsica, though principally grown in the Balagne region, is a variety selected locally from wild olive trees only. Similarly, the capannace, which is the dominant variety in the Cap Corse region, has been selected locally. It seems that this variety has adapted to rather hostile conditions. The 'Capannace' trees growing in Cap Corse are regularly exposed to violent winds and to mists.

Recent work has shown that certain varieties are from Tuscany ('ghjermana' and 'ghjermana di Balagna'), while others, such as the zinzala, originate from crosses between local oleasters and introduced varieties.

These main varieties became established and were multiplied, most often in combination with other varieties, in areas with suitable climatic and soil characteristics. The age of the trees today is proof of the compatibility of these varieties with the geographical environment where they became established and of an undeniable link to region.

The production of 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse – Oliu di Corsica' is based on ancient practices particularly well suited to the environment:

— The cultivation method has been and remains closely connected to the environment: low density in the groves and late picking of the olives. Keeping the olives on the trees for a long time further reinforces the phenomenon of biennial bearing.

— Traditionally, the olives were harvested by shaking them down using a long pole, picking them from the tree or collecting them from the ground, depending on the area, the volume of the harvest, the olive varieties and seasonal conditions. The most common harvesting method was to collect the olives from the ground. Nowadays producers no longer use this method; instead, the olives are collected using suspended nets or receptacles placed under the trees.

  The olives are harvested over a longer period of time in accordance with the flowering dates of the different varieties.

— Crushing takes place much sooner than previously. The waiting times, which used to be the main reason for the excessive acidity of the oils, are much shorter nowadays, thanks to more modern mills with a better capacity. Nonetheless, the waiting times still sometimes exceed those on the continent, owing to the distant location of the olive groves and the habits of the producers.

This overall improvement in the efficiency of harvesting and of the mills has made it possible to increase the quality of olive oil.

Specificity of the product

'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' is characterised by moderate pungency and sharpness. The aromas are thus delicately revealed and display good complexity.

The presence of varied spontaneous vegetation around the olive groves is reflected as almond and hay aromas in the finished product and complex aromas reminiscent of the Corsican shrub in 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' followed by the words 'récolte à l'ancienne'.

Used as a food and care product and in a number of religious and secular rites, it is an integral part of the islanders' life and is recognised for its quality.

The originality of Corsican olive growing also stems from the diversity of the ancient endemic varieties.

The use of olive varieties of small size and therefore not well suited to consumption as table olives, and the tradition of producing olive oil rather than table olives, are the reasons why all the groves in all the micro-regions of the geographical area are used exclusively for olive-oil production.

Causal link

The typical characteristics of olive oil bearing the designation 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' are the result of maintaining a certain tradition and using modern production methods combined with a specific natural environment.

The olive tree has grown spontaneously in various areas, and, through selection and hybridisation, this has led to the presence of a large number of varieties on a fairly restricted territory. This is unique compared to other Mediterranean olive-growing areas, which tend to be monovarietal or then multivarietal with one dominant variety.

Irrespective of their own characteristics, the trees are subject to a common management system and share the same climatic conditions, which result in the slow development of the raw material in a special environment.

Keeping the olives on the trees for a long time due to the absence of frost in the growing areas is a key factor in the typical features of 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' in that it allows the olive to capture the odours of the surrounding plant species and, in particular, those of the scrub, which odours are then found in the particular aromas of 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' followed by the indication 'récolte à l'ancienne'.

In other words, the interdependence between natural and human, local and specific factors mitigate for their part the variability caused by the variety, soil or exposure and give 'Huile d'olive de Corse'/'Huile d'olive de Corse — Oliu di Corsica' original features that are common to olive production throughout the island.

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CdCHuiledeCorsemodifie.doc