C/2025/4351

1.8.2025

Publication of the communication of an approved standard amendment to a product specification of a geographical indication in accordance with Article 5(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 [1]

(C/2025/4351)

COMMUNICATION OF APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

(Article 24 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143)

'Fronton'

PDO-FR-A0595-AM01 – 8.5.2025

1. **Name of product**

'Fronton'

2. **Geographical indication type**

☒ Protected designation of origin (PDO)

☐ Protected geographical indication (PGI)

☐ Geographical indication (GI)

3. **Sector**

☐ Agricultural products

☒ Wines

☐ Spirit drinks

4. **Country to which the geographical area belongs**

France

5. **Member State authority communicating the standard amendment**

Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'alimentation, de la pêche, de la ruralité et de l'aménagement du territoire [Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Rural Affairs and Land Use Planning]

6. **Qualification as standard amendment**

The French authorities consider that the application meets the requirements of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) 2024/1143.

The amendments to this product specification are standard amendments as defined in Article 24(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143.

The application for an amendment to the 'Fronton' PDO does not involve any of the three situations constituting a Union amendment, specifically:

(a) it does not include a change in the name or in the use of the name, or in the category of product or products designated by the geographical indication;

(b) it does not risk voiding the link to the geographical area;

(c) it does not entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product.

The French authorities therefore consider that the application is for a standard amendment.

[1] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 of 30 October 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council with rules concerning the registration and the protection of geographical indications, traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms and repealing Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 (OJ L, 2025/27, 15.1.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/27/oj).

7. **Description of the approved standard amendment(s)**

1. *Addition of standard agri-environmental provisions*

Agri-environmental provisions have been added to the point 'Other cultivation practices' in Chapter IV [*sic*] 'Vineyard management' of the product specification.

These amendments are designed to take better account of the environment and of societal demands for less use of plant protection products.

The single document has not been amended.

2. *Amended yields for rosé wines*

The yields laid down in the specification have been increased for rosé wines. The average maximum crop load per parcel and the average maximum crop load per irrigated parcel have also been brought into line with the change in yields for rosé wines.

The yields proposed are consistent with the yields for other designations in the south-west. Between 2015 and 2020 (the harvests between 2021 and 2023 were affected by climate hazards), the average yield for rosé wines of the designation was 53,17 hl/ha, and on average 44 % of winemakers exceeded the basic yield set out in the specification.

The 'Maximum yields' point of the single document has been amended.

3. *Deletion of the yield entailing a 'Loss of eligibility for the protected designation of origin'*

In line with the previous amendment (amended yields for rosé wines), the yield of 70 hectolitres per hectare in point '3. Loss of eligibility for the protected designation of origin' is too close to the proposed upper yield limit (68 hectolitres per hectare) and has therefore been deleted.

The single document is not affected.

4. *Amendment to the colour of rosé wines*

Over the last 15 years or so, the average colorimetric profile of 'Fronton' PDO rosé wines has changed. The colour is still strong but is clearly tending towards becoming lighter. The purpose of amending the product specification is to adapt to the changes in production methods on vineyards. Historically, Fronton rosé wines were mainly made using the saignée method, whereas today the direct press method has become widely used.

The 'Link with the geographical area' point of the single document has been amended.

5. *Addition of the saignée method of making rosé wines*

The saignée method of making rosé wines has been added to the 'Link with the geographical area' part of the specification. On the one hand, winemakers use the saignée method in order to produce rosé wines that have a deeper colour due to the longer maceration between the skins and the grape juice. On the other hand, in some cases the saignée method can compensate for a lack of phenolic compounds in a vat of red grapes. The aim is to protect the saignée method of producing rosé wines.

The 'Link with the geographical area' point of the single document has been amended.

6. *Addition of secondary varieties*

Two varieties that are endemic to the area are to be included as secondary varieties:

Négret Pounjut N and Bouysselet B. The reason for this choice is that these grape varieties have a strong heritage and complement the Négrette N variety. The aim is to integrate them into the production of both red and rosé wines.

The protection and management body thus proposed adding maximum proportions of 10 % as regards both the combination of grape varieties and blends for Négret Pounjut and Bouysselet.

The 'Wine grape variety(ies)' and 'Link with the geographical area' points of the single document have been amended.

7. *Introduction of the variety Marselan N as a variety of interest used for adaptation purposes*

This request comes following a number of findings which have led the 'Fronton' winegrowers to consider introducing new varieties into their product specification. Climate change is causing longer periods of drought, increased frequency of frosts, heightened susceptibility to diseases and physiological behaviour that appears to be worsening.

In the end, the group of winegrowers chose to select only the Marselan N grape variety, because of its closeness to Cabernet Sauvignon. While Cabernet varieties suffer significant decline, Marselan is an interesting alternative in blends. In addition, it has been grown on vineyards for several years (18 hectares spread over 46 parcels and grown by 19 operators) and nicely complements the Négrette N variety in terms of organoleptic characteristics.

Marselan has two advantages: it adapts better to climate change (less sensitive to frost) and it has less need for phytosanitary treatments (due to its low susceptibility to disease). Marselan N will be used to produce red and rosé wines.

The 'Wine grape variety(ies)' point of the single document has been amended.

8. *Amendment to the rules on grape varieties*

The minimum proportion of the main variety Négrette N has been retained in the product specification but amended as follows: 'greater than or equal to 50 % of the grapes grown' has been changed to 'greater than or equal to 51 %'. The maximum proportions of the secondary varieties have been deleted.

The aim is to simplify monitoring and compliance with the rules on grape varieties, while remaining consistent with the rules on blending.

The single document is not affected.

9. *Amendment to Chapter IX, point 3 'Provisions on packaging'*

The wording of the current specification states that each time packaging takes place, operators must send the inspection body an extract from the handling register and an analysis carried out before packaging. The group of winegrowers for the designation considers this obligation to be too stringent and proposes using the same wording as in other specifications, i.e. requiring the handling register and an analysis carried out before or after packaging.to be made available to the inspection body.

The single document is not affected.

10. *Deletion of transitional measures*

The transitional measures laid down in Chapter XI, point 1 'Grape varieties', which came to an end in 2011 and 2018, have been deleted from the specification.

The single document is not affected.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Fronton

2. **Type of geographical indication**

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. **Categories of grapevine product**

1. Wine

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

— 22 – BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2204 – Wine of fresh grapes, including fortified wines; grape must other than that of heading 2009

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

The wines are red or rosé still wines. The red wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 11 %. The rosé wines have a minimum natural alcoholic strength by volume of 10,5 %. After enrichment, the wines' total alcoholic strength by volume must not exceed 13 %. At the packing stage, every batch of red wine has a malic acid content not exceeding 0,4 grams per litre. At the packing stage: – the wines have a fermentable sugar content (glucose and fructose) not exceeding 3 grams per litre for the red wines, and not exceeding 4 grams per litre for the rosé wines; – the red wines have a volatile acid content not exceeding 18 milliequivalents per litre. The volatile acidity of the rosé wines and the total acidity and sulphur dioxide content of the wines are those laid down by EU legislation. The other characteristics comply, by default, with those laid down by EU legislation. The wines may be produced from the Négrette N variety only or from a blend of varieties in which Négrette N is the main variety. The taste of the red wines is generally characterised by aromas of red and black fruit, flowers, spices and liquorice. They contain tannins which provide structure and roundness as they age. They are pleasant to drink when young but are also suited to ageing. The taste of the rosé wines is characterised by rather fruity aromas and low acidity. They have an intense colour and are enjoyed young.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume): —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume): —

— Minimum total acidity: —

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre): —

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre): —

5. **Winemaking practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

1. Cultivation method

(a) Planting density. The minimum planting density of the vines is 4 000 plants per hectare. The spacing between the rows is no more than 2,50 metres. Between plants in the same row, spacing is at least 0,80 metres.

(b) Pruning rules. The vines are trained using either short pruning and spurs ('Gobelet', unilateral cordon ('Cordon de Royat') or bilateral cordon method) or using a single Guyot or double Guyot (known locally as a 'tirette') system, with a maximum of 12 buds per vine. Regardless of the pruning method used, as from 1 June the number of fruit-bearing branches per vine may not exceed 10.

Irrigation may be authorised.

2. Specific oenological practice

Oenological practices: – Subtractive enrichment techniques are permitted for the red wines, with the maximum partial concentration rate set at 10 % in relation to the volumes used. Winemakers are permitted to use oenological charcoal to produce the rosé wines, exclusively for musts and new wines still in fermentation, in a proportion not exceeding 20 % of the volume of rosé wine produced by the winemaker concerned for the harvest and the colour in question.

After enrichment, the wines' total alcoholic strength by volume must not exceed 13 %.

In addition to the above provisions, the oenological practices applied to these wines must meet the requirements laid down at EU level and in the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code.

5.2. *Maximum yields*

1. Rosé wines

60 hectolitres per hectare

2. Red wines

50 hectolitres per hectare

6. **Demarcated geographical area**

The grapes are harvested and the wines made, developed and aged on the territory of the following municipalities: – Department of Haute-Garonne: Bouloc, Castelnau-d'Estrétefonds, Fronton, Saint-Rustice, Vacquiers, Villaudric, Villematier, Villemur-sur-Tarn, Villeneuve-lès-Bouloc; – Department of Tarn-et-Garonne: Bessens, Campsas, Canals, Dieupentale, Fabas, Grisolles, Labastide-Saint-Pierre, Montbartier, Nohic, Orgueil, Pompignan.

7. **Wine grape variety(ies)**

Bouysselet

Cabernet Franc N

Cabernet Sauvignon N

Gamay N

Marselan N

Mérille N

Negret Pounjut

Négrette N

8. **Description of the link(s)**

(a) *Description of the natural factors relevant to the link*

The geographical area of the 'Fronton' protected designation of origin is situated some 20 kilometres north of Toulouse, on the terraces formed by the ancient alluvial deposits of the Tarn, which were deposited on the tertiary molassic substrate during the different glaciations of the Quaternary. The parcels are precisely demarcated for the harvest of grapes and are spread over the three geomorphological levels of the low, medium and high terraces of the Tarn, excluding the low plain of the Tarn and the soils that developed on Oligocene molasse in the south and west of this area.

The alluvial deposits, originating from the Massif Central, are characterised by their richness in siliceous elements, gravels and sands, and the absence of limestone. The soils of the low terrace, situated at an average altitude of 130 metres, are heterogeneous in nature, with a mix of silts, sands of varying coarseness and clays in an uneven distribution. The altitude of the medium terrace varies between 130 and 160 metres. The soils show weathering and greater leaching than on the low terrace. Finally, the high terrace, which is the oldest and the smallest in surface area, reaches a maximum height of 200 metres. As the finer elements have been eroded away, these soils are very gravelly and pebbly.

The geographical area is spread over 20 municipalities falling within the departments of Haute-Garonne and Tarn-et-Garonne.

The topography of the landscape is basically flat. Variations in the landscape are due to small hillocks, embankments between the terraces and gentle slopes created by the tributaries of the Tarn.

The Fronton area has an oceanic climate with a Mediterranean influence. Winters are relatively mild. Temperatures rise markedly in the spring, while summer is characterised by plenty of sunshine and high temperatures. The average annual rainfall varies between 650 mm and 700 mm. It is distributed evenly throughout the year, except in spring, when rainfall peaks significantly. The prevailing winds blow from the west. They are oceanic and bring with them cloud formations and rainfall. A little less frequently, the warm, dry 'Autan' wind blows from the south-east.

(b) *Description of the human factors relevant to the link*

The history of the vineyards is closely linked to that of the town of Fronton, which was, at the beginning of the 12th century, governed by the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem (now the Order of Malta) as a result of donations made by various lords. Adrien Escudier (*Histoire de Fronton et du Frontonnais* [History of Fronton and the Fronton area], 1905) refers to a donation to the Order made in 1122 by Pons Bernard de Benque, Alamande his wife and Payen, consisting of the church and everything controlled by it, reserving the right to keep the seventh part of the grape harvest. The 'Fronton' vineyards were therefore already well established at the beginning of the 12th century.

Since that time, the wines have been particularly well cared for and treated. The municipal archives of Fronton refer to the annual appointment of 'eight experts to visit and check the vineyards of the Fronton consulate'. Thus, each district was visited and the experts checked the ripeness of the grapes. An oral report was provided to the consular assembly which fixed the date on which the harvest could begin. The harvest proclamation was announced to the inhabitants by the town-crier.

In 1470, Aymerie de Senergues, prior of the Abbey de la Daurade in Toulouse, granted a charter to his subjects authorising all serfs planting vines to claim their freedom and the right of ownership in respect of the cleared land of Villaudric. In the 17th century, the two parishes of Fronton and Villaudric vied for dominance of the territory.

The vineyards reached their peak in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the wines were shipped throughout Europe via the port of Bordeaux. Pierre Galet (*Cépages et vignobles de France* [Vine varieties and vineyards of France], 1962) states that: 'The vineyards of Fronton and Villaudric have long been the most renowned in Haute-Garonne, as these vineyards were close to Villemur, the place on the Tarn where wines were loaded and from whence they travelled by river to Bordeaux'.

The Fronton area was affected by phylloxera in 1878. The grape variety Négrette N, formerly known locally as 'Le Négret', was the main variety in the vineyards before they were affected by phylloxera. It was widely replanted after the phylloxera crisis, but the grafting made the plant prone to a failure to develop fruit and more sensitive to grey rot. The perseverance of the winegrowers, who were attached to this historic grape variety, allowed them to adapt and continue the tradition of growing this variety. As wine produced from Négrette N usually lacks acidity, it is frequently supplemented with the harvest of late varieties.

The designation of origin Vins Délimités de Qualité Supérieure [delimited wine of superior quality] 'Villaudric' was recognised by a judgment of the first-instance civil court of Toulouse on 28 July 1944. It covers six municipalities of the department of Haute-Garonne. A year later, on 31 July 1945, the designation of origin Vins Délimités de Qualité Supérieure 'Fronton' or 'Côtes de Fronton' was recognised, with a geographical area comprising 15 municipalities in the departments of Haute-Garonne and Tarn-et-Garonne. In 1970, aware of their common history and practices, producers of the two controlled designations of origin came together in a single association. Thus, the controlled designation of origin 'Côtes du Frontonnais' was recognised by decree on 7 February 1975, with two geographical names: 'Fronton' and 'Villaudric'. 30 years later, the controlled designation of origin 'Côtes du Frontonnais' was recognised within the controlled designation of origin 'Fronton' by decree of 31 August 2005.

By 2008, an area of more than 1 700 hectares was farmed by more than 110 producers, divided into 40 independent wine cellars, 1 wine-making cooperative and 2 wine producers/merchants. Approximately one third of the production is rosé wine and two thirds red wine. The wines may be produced from the Négrette N variety only or from a blend of varieties in which Négrette N is the main variety. The secondary grape varieties that may be added to the blend are Cabernet Franc N, Cabernet Sauvignon N, Cinsaut N, Cot N, Fer N, Gamay N, Mérille N, Syrah N, Négret Pounjut N and Bouysselet B.

The taste of the red wines is generally characterised by aromas of red and black fruit, flowers, spices and liquorice. They contain tannins which provide structure and roundness as they age. They are pleasant to drink when young but are also suited to ageing. In order to avoid the excessive extraction of tannins, continuous presses are prohibited. Wines are aged at least until 15 January of the year following that of the harvest.

The taste of the rosé wines is characterised by rather fruity aromas and low acidity. They have a colour ranging from lychee to raspberry (according to the Centre du Rosé colour chart) depending on the technique used (direct press or saignée) and they are enjoyed young. Appreciated for its aromatic qualities, the grape variety Négrette N was once widely grown in the Grand Sud-Ouest area. It is a naturally vigorous and fertile grape variety; the thin skin of the grapes and the compactness of the bunches make it very susceptible to powdery mildew, grey rot and mites. The Négrette N variety has been abandoned in most regions owing to the difficulties encountered in growing it but it has found an ecological niche in the Fronton region, where the poor, acidic soils rich in metal oxides mean that the vines are moderately vigorous, which naturally regulates yields and ensures optimal ripeness, an intense, complex aroma and very refined tannins.

The winegrowers of the Fronton area have managed to control this emblematic grape variety, and thus maintain its cultivation, by adapting their know-how, in particular through pruning methods that allow a good distribution of bunches and clonal selection.

The soil and climate conditions of the Fronton area are particularly well suited to growing vines, especially the Négrette N grape variety. The maritime climate means that the spring air is humid; this, together with a significant increase in temperatures, ensures good growth of the vines. The mild winter reduces the risk of sharp frosts. During the summer, the influence of the Mediterranean brings dry heat and sunshine, which encourage regular, optimum ripening of the grapes, with moderate water stress in summer ensuring that the grapes ripen well. The 'Autan' wind affects the behaviour of the vines throughout their growing cycle, for example by hastening budding, flowering and ripening. It sometimes blows hard at the end of the summer, which promotes the ripening of the grapes and dries the vines after the August storms. This limits the development of cryptogamic diseases. The late onset of cold weather allows the wood to mellow well.

Reflecting the uses and knowledge of the local environment, the demarcated parcel area favours soils which drain well and warm up easily. The soils are rich in sand and gravel, with varying silt and clay content. Cold, frost-prone areas and the most fertile soils are excluded.

With the controlled designation of origin since 1975, the human community maintains the renown and reputation of 'Fronton' wines through its dynamism, expertise and commitment to the Négrette N grape variety.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Legal framework:

National legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

Wines with the controlled designation of origin may specify on their labels the larger geographical unit 'Sud-Ouest'. This larger geographical unit may also feature on any literature and containers. The size of the letters for the larger geographical unit must not be larger, in either height or width, than the size of the letters forming the name of the controlled designation of origin.

Link to the product specification

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/boagri/document_administratif-c6bb8395-ee7c-45c5-b59b-dee556bb82f6