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Publication of an application for registration of a geographical indication pursuant to Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(C/2025/6349)

Within three months from the date of 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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

'Liptovská bryndza'

EU No: PDO-SK-03316 – 12.8.2024

1. **Name(s)**

'Liptovská bryndza'

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO ☒ PGI ☐

3. **Country to which the defined geographical area belongs**

Slovakia

4. **Description of the agricultural product**

4.1. *Classification of the agricultural product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature heading and code, as referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143*

04 – DAIRY PRODUCE; BIRDS' EGGS; NATURAL HONEY; EDIBLE PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED OR INCLUDED

0406 – Cheeses and curds

4.2. *Description of the agricultural product to which the registered name applies*

'Liptovská bryndza' is a soft, blended sheep's cheese in granular form, with a delicate, slightly sour taste. It is produced according to a traditional method. Lump sheep cheese comes from freshly extracted sheep's milk without heat treatment. When aged, it is made into 'Liptovská bryndza' by crushing, grinding and mixing with salt or a specially prepared salt solution. The cheese's sensory properties derive from the natural microflora present in the lump cheese which comes from raw sheep's milk using the special production method.

Characteristics

Colour: white to yellowish (but not yellow).

Consistency: fine, spreadable cheese in granular form; it must not be sandy, rubbery or unctuous.

Aroma and flavour: delicate, pleasantly sour sheep's cheese taste, slightly spicy and salty; it must not be too sour, yeasty, fatty, soapy, rancid, putrid, sharp, spicy or bitter or have any other unwanted flavours.

[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 product is tested at a temperature of 18-20 °C.

Composition

— 100 % lump sheep cheese.

— Dry matter: at least 50,0 % w/w.

— Fat in dry matter: at least 50,0 % w/w.

— Edible salt such as NaCl: not more than 2 % w/w.

— Drinking water: not more than 50,0 %.

— Protein content: 21,0 %.

— Carbohydrate content: 1,0 %.

Microbiological Attributes

'Liptovská bryndza' is a naturally spreadable mature cheese containing a broad range of naturally occurring micro-organisms, chiefly consisting of: *Lactobacillus*, *Enterococcus*, *Lactococcus*, *Streptococcus*, *Kluyveromyces marxianus* and *Geotrichum candidum*. It must not contain pathogenic micro-organisms.

4.3. *Derogations on sourcing of feed (for products of animal origin designated by a Protected Designation of Origin only) and restrictions on sourcing of raw materials (for processed products designated by a Protected Geographical Indication only)*

The meadows and pastures where sheep graze, and where the basic raw material for making 'Liptovská bryndza' – sheep's milk – is obtained, are located in the highest mountains and foothills, on limestone subsoil. The botanical composition of the meadows and pastures is: white clover, red clover, red fescue, meadow fescue, smooth-stalked meadowgrass and golden oatgrass.

During the winter, sheep are fed meadow hay of the above-mentioned clover and grass varieties.

80 % of the sheep reared are native Wallachian and improved Wallachian breeds, which are resistant to harsh mountain conditions and colder weather, and the Cigaya, East Frisian and Lacaune sheep, which are suitable for producing sheep's milk (high milk yield) and their crossbreeds.

The basic raw material is sheep's milk, from which sheep's cheese is made. This is then processed using the traditional method to become 'Liptovská bryndza'. Raw sheep's milk is obtained in the defined geographical area.

The production of sheep's cheese and its processing into lump sheep's cheese intended for the production of 'Liptovská bryndza' takes place solely in the defined mountain and sub-mountain geographical area.

Sheep's milk has a higher content of protein (5-6 %), calcium and vitamins, and an ideal fat composition of 7 to 8 %.

4.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area*

Obtaining sheep's raw milk from the defined geographical area

Production of lump sheep's cheese (basic raw material)

Production of 'Liptovská bryndza'

— Sorting and maturing of lump cheese

— Pressing

— Grinding and milling

— Mixing with salt or brine

with all production steps taking place in the defined geographical area.

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

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

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

The Liptov region is located in the north of Slovakia, in the south-east of Žilina Self-Governing Region. The area contains mountains and their foothills. The centre is formed by the Liptov Basin, which is surrounded by the High Tatras to the east, the Western Tatra and Choč Mountains to the north, the Low Tatras to the south and Veľká Fatra (Great Fatra) to the west. Geographically speaking, Liptov is a compact area, comprising the districts of Liptovský Mikuláš and Ružomberok.

6. **Link with the geographical area**

The causal link is based on the soil and climate conditions, the know-how of producers in the geographical area and the specificity and quality of 'Liptovská bryndza'.

Specificity of the geographical area (soil climate conditions)

Natural factors

The predominance of meadows and pastures in the mountains and foothills over arable land has led to the development of sheep farming. Due to its location and mountainous terrain, the region's climate is highly variable. The mildest part of the region has an average annual temperature of 6 °C. Heading up into the mountains, the temperature drops and on the peaks it varies between 2 and – 30 °C. Meadows and pastures provide the most natural and healthy diet for sheep. The highest-quality meadows and pastures are in the highest mountains and foothills, which are on limestone subsoil. Grazing at higher altitudes influences the essential-fatty-acid content of sheep's milk, which improves the consistency and taste of 'Liptovská bryndza'. The limestone soils are rich in calcium and magnesium. This reduces the acidity of the soil, thus encouraging the growth of grasses and herbs.

The botanical composition of the meadows and pastures is: white clover, red clover, red fescue, meadow fescue, smooth-stalked meadowgrass and golden oatgrass. These grasses are characterised by the composition of nutrients, aromatic substances and minerals, which influence the taste, smell and nutritional value of sheep's milk. The fact that the grazing takes place on meadows rich in these types of grass contributes to a higher content of beneficial fatty acids, vitamins and antioxidants in sheep's milk, which improves its quality.

In addition to these grasses, mountain grasses and herbs are also present in the area, such as yarrow, wild thyme, cow-wheat, witloof chicory and dandelion, which have a high content of essential oils and antioxidants. This leads to a higher proportion of essential fatty acids in the sheep's milk, giving it – and in turn 'Liptovská bryndza' – an aromatic, slightly pungent flavour. The specific composition of the grazing land influences the sensory characteristics, i.e. the taste and aroma, of the sheep's milk. The milk is slightly sweet, and deeper, denser and creamier, with subtle hints of meadow herbs and grassy notes, characteristics that are apparent in the processed product.

During the winter, sheep are fed meadow hay of the above-mentioned clover and grass varieties.

The limestone substrate of meadows and pastures creates nutritious and rich soil for varied grazing, which has an indirect but significant impact on the quality of the sheep's milk. The less acidic soil supports the specific biological composition of the pasture: grasses and herbs that contain essential oils and nutrients, which stimulate higher production of milk fat. The higher calcium and magnesium content from the subsoil is transferred to the plants, which absorb these minerals. This in turn affects the animals' mineral intake. This is what gives the sheep's milk and cheese, and subsequently the 'Liptovská bryndza', their special characteristics and quality: strong mineral taste, which is more aromatic and even slightly spicy due to the herbs, and the higher fat content giving it its creamy texture.

'Liptovská bryndza' is a product whose properties depend on the natural microflora resulting from the soil and climate conditions in the delimited area in which the sheep graze and are reared.

Human factors

The special character of 'Liptovská bryndza' is also due to the production process that was developed and is still performed in this way in the defined area. The quality itself is determined not only by microbiological and physical and chemical parameters, but primarily by the producers' experience of many years.

The quality of the sheep's milk is also influenced by rearing conditions and grazing management, which means adapting to seasonal changes, natural conditions and pasture rotation. It is the preparation of 'Liptovská bryndza' – crushing and grinding mature lump cheese with salt or salt solution – that defines its specific quality and characteristics, and this traditional production method is what sets it apart from other types of sheep's cheese. 'Liptovská bryndza' contains a high proportion of proteins, probiotics and a particular mixture of microbacteria, namely lactic bacteria and yeasts.

The technology for producing 'Liptovská bryndza' has developed almost beyond recognition, from manual production to the modern-day electric bryndza mills ('grinding benches'), but the principle remains the same.

'Liptovská bryndza' is prepared not directly from sheep's milk but from lump sheep's cheese, for which natural or industrial rennet is used to curdle the sheep's milk and make the cheese mass. The lump cheese ripens for two to four weeks, during which time fermentation takes place, which influences the flavour and helps natural bacteria to develop. Lump sheep's cheese is then ground on mills. The fineness and speed of the grinding process determines the consistency and moisture content of 'Liptovská bryndza' and ensures that no fat is lost. After the lump sheep's cheese is ground and mixed with salt or salt solution, 'Liptovská bryndza' is left to rest so that the taste becomes even more pronounced; fermentation takes place, and the probiotic properties are brought to the fore. 'Liptovská bryndza' is not just a product; it is the result of know-how that combines the nature, traditions and experience of producers in the defined area.

'Liptovská bryndza' contains a remarkable amount of lactobacteria with probiotic properties. 1 gramme of Liptovská bryndza contains up to 1 billion beneficial micro-organisms (listed by Libor Ebringer, Zoltán Mikeš, Milan Boča, Miroslav Ferenčík and Ľudovít Bergendi in their publications).

The method of producing and preserving cheeses and 'Liptovská bryndza' originated, developed and was refined thanks to knowledge and experience that has been passed down through the generations. This is how the product's characteristics and quality have been retained.

Causal link

Liptov is a classic mountain region with suitable pedo-climatic conditions for rearing and grazing sheep, and the processing of sheep's milk into cheeses. Sheep farming has a long tradition in the Slovak Republic. As early as the 11th century, sheep accounted for three quarters of the total amount of livestock. The local people have, since the first settlements, enjoyed the benefits of this mountainous environment, making the local speciality 'Liptovská bryndza' from sheep's milk and sheep's cheese.

The specific character and qualities of 'Liptovská bryndza' are also evidenced by the product's entry in the international register of the World Industrial Property Organisation (OMPI/WIPO), located in Geneva, on 22 November 1967, in accordance with the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration. The name 'Liptovská bryndza' was also protected under bilateral agreements and the following documents: the Treaty of 19 January 1976 between the Swiss Confederation and the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia on the protection of indications of source, appellations of origin and other geographic names, the Agreement between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Republic of Portugal of 18 May 1987 on the protection of designations of origin, data of origin and other geographical and analogous indications, and the Agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Austria of 20 January 1981 on protection of designations of origin, data of origin and other indications of agricultural and industrial products.

'Liptovská bryndza' is white gold from Liptov region produced by means of a traditional technological production process.

Reference to the publication of the product specification of the geographical indication

https://www.indprop.gov.sk/swift_data/source/2024/OZ%20a%20DIZAJNY/specifikacia_liptovska_bryndza.docx