

**Publication of an 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 280/05)

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 <sup>(1)</sup>.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

**‘ΜΕΛΕΚΟ΄ΥΝΙ’ (MELEKOUNI)**

**EU No: PGI-GR-02208 — 8.12.2016**

**PDO ( ) PGI ( X )**

**1. Name(s)**

‘Μελεκούνη’ (Melekouni)

**2. Member State or Third Country**

Greece

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

**3.1. Type of product**

Class 2.3. Bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, biscuits and other baker’s wares

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

‘Melekouni’ is a traditional sweet produced on the island of Rhodes. It is diamond-shaped and made from sesame seeds and honey, spices, almonds and (optional) citrus zest and/or juice, which are mixed and cooked together. Its texture is soft and pliable but it does not break up, and it has an elastic, non-sticky, firm consistency. The flavours and aromas of the spices and the citrus zest/juice are released gently when the product is unwrapped and intensely when it is chewed. The colour ranges from golden yellow to brown, depending on the colour of the honey, the degree of toasting of the sesame seeds and the spices used.

The name ‘Melekouni’ has its roots in ancient Greece and comes from the words ‘meli’ [honey] and ‘kounni’, which means ‘seed’ in Rhodian dialect.

It weighs between 10 g and 70 g.

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

‘Melekouni’ is traditionally made using the following ingredients:

- honey (minimum of 40 % of the net weight)
- sesame (minimum of 40 % of the net weight)
- almonds (1,5-10 % of the net weight)
- spices (cinnamon and/or nutmeg and/or cloves and/or coriander)
- optionally, citrus zest and/or juice (usually orange and/or bergamot and/or lemon and/or bitter orange)

The honey must have the characteristics prescribed by the relevant legislation in force.

The sesame must be unhulled and toasted.

The almonds must be toasted.

The spices used must be carefully balanced with the rest of the mixture and no single aroma should predominate in the final product.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

All the stages of production of 'Melekouni' must take place in the geographical area defined in point 4, from the heating and mixing together of the ingredients to the cooling, compacting and shaping of the mixture on a suitable surface.

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

'Melekouni' is marketed whole as it is, in its original packaging and does not undergo any further processing before final distribution. It must be cut up and packaged in the place where it is made, as transport time and changes in temperature alter its characteristics, the main problem being an increase in the moisture content of the mixture that makes it difficult to shape and cut.

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

Regardless of the commercial presentation, the following words must feature on the labelling:

'Melekouni – Protected Geographical Indication' or 'Melekouni PGI'.

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

The defined geographical area for 'Melekouni' production is the island of Rhodes, which is in the Dodecanese prefecture in the South Aegean region.

### 5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link between 'Melekouni' and the geographical area derives from the product's reputation. There is a strong tradition linking 'Melekouni' with the island of Rhodes that goes back many centuries.

Since ancient times it has been a traditional local sweet offered as a treat at weddings, christenings and other social events. Typical was the way in which 'Melekouni' was presented in certain villages after a wedding ceremony. It would be placed in a large baking tray, cut into pieces with a spoon and offered to guests.

'Melekouni' is prepared using the traditional method that has been consolidated by knowledge handed down from one generation to the next. For example: the length of time and temperature to which the honey is heated affect how the product 'sets' (and depend on the weather conditions prevailing at the time the 'Melekouni' is made, such as humidity and ambient temperature), the time and temperature of the heat treatment of the sesame seeds (they must be toasted evenly while stirring), the temperature of the sesame seeds when they are added to the honey, how hard the mixture is compacted, which gives it the requisite cohesion and immediate packaging which prevents the product from acquiring extra moisture (which impairs quality and reduces keeping time).

'Melekouni' has the following specific characteristics:

- its texture is soft and pliable but it does not break up
- it has an elastic, non-sticky, firm consistency
- it has a flavour of honey, unhulled, toasted sesame seeds, toasted almonds and the specific aroma of the citrus zest/juice and spices used
- it is diamond-shaped

'Melekouni' differs from other similar products because only honey is used and not the sweeteners often used in similar products.

The product's reputation is confirmed by countless references going back to antiquity, in records, publications, culinary guides, articles and items in the press and the online press, and in numerous events held to promote traditional local products. It has been the main wedding treat on Rhodes since ancient times and is made in the traditional way in local workshops and homes.

The name 'Melekouni' comes from Rhodian dialect, as the term 'kounni' (from the ancient Greek word *Kókkos-Kounni*) is used in the area to mean seed (in this case sesame seed), the small grain inside the fruit of the sesame plant, and the word 'meli' [honey]. For the sake of simplicity, it is written 'Melekouni' rather than 'Melekounni'.

The name 'Melekouni' is widely used in commercial circles and everyday speech.

Two prominent folklorists from Rhodes, Theodoros Konstantinidis and Christodoulos Papachristodoulou, mention it in their writings. 'Lexilogion tis dimodous Rodiakis Dialektou' [Glossary of vernacular Rhodian dialect] states that 'A sweet made with honey and toasted sesame is the official treat at village weddings and festivals and sent as a wedding announcement to friends and relatives unable to attend, like sugared almonds in the towns and cities' (Konstantinidis, 2002).

'Paradosiaki Melissokomia Aigaiou' [Traditional beekeeping in the Aegean] (Chondros, 2016), a book published by the Rhodes Beekeeping Association, 'I Kipseli', states that Rhodes has showcased many honey-based sweets, including 'Melekouni'. These sweets originated in ancient Greece and have been known since Homer's time. Herodotus (484-426 B.C.) mentions a type of sweet similar to 'Melekouni'.

The Rhodes Beekeeping Association's book makes extensive reference to 'Melekouni' stating, inter alia, that customs involving 'Melekouni' were a feature of the island's wedding customs. Specifically, in the Maritsá area, on the Friday evening – before the wedding – the parents of the bride and groom would go from house to house and invite relatives to come and help prepare the 'Melekouni', calling out 'come and make melekouni!'. The relatives would bring the ingredients (sesame, honey) and when they had prepared them (toasting, mixing together) they would cook the mixture with the help of a skilled artisan. They would then eat some of the 'Melekouni' they had made and keep the rest for the wedding. Other villages had this custom too (Damatria, Kremastí, Koskinou, etc.).

The book 'Sergiani sto xthes ton nision mas (sta chronia tis italokratias kai stis protes meta tin apeleftherosi dekaeties)' [A walk around the islands of yesteryear (under Italian rule and the first decades after independence)] mentions that '... Thursday evening when the melekouni and the wedding bread dough was prepared. On the Saturday evening a group of men led by musicians would start inviting all the villagers to the wedding of Giorgos's children, ... while the musicians were walking around the village playing the traditional wedding songs, two or three men would enter each home and leave a melekouni', ....' (Karagianni-Marmarokopou, 2007).

In the book 'Tragoudia Gamou' [wedding songs] it is stated that in Rhodes: 'Also customary was the delicious melekouni which is still made today and is the typical engagement and wedding invitation' (Boyianos, 2005).

'Melekouni' also features in 'Tis Rodou o melekounnas' a traditional Rhodian wedding dramatised by the members of the Soroni Cultural Association 'Ampernalli' (Chondros, 2016).

In addition, 'Melekouni' is part of Rhodes's Greek breakfast. The Greek breakfast is a pioneering initiative launched by the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, which showcases Greece's cultural and culinary heritage by linking it to the Greek hotel business.

The link between 'Melekouni' and the island of Rhodes is also evidenced by the fact that 'Melekouni' has been designated the exchange currency (unit of exchange) on Rhodes, which means that the members of a network on the island can exchange goods and services without using money.

The most important official recognition of the product occurred in the context of a special event held on Rhodes on 26 September 2010: preparation of the world's biggest 'Melekouni', which was entered in the Guinness World Records as 'The longest melekouni, traditional Rhodian dessert...' and helped promote the product at international level.

#### **Publication reference of the specification**

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

[http://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/POP-PGE/prod\\_pge\\_melekouni.pdf](http://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/POP-PGE/prod_pge_melekouni.pdf)

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