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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.8462 — KKR/CDPQ/USI Insurance Services)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2017/C 150/01)

On 10 May 2017, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the Competition website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32017M8462. EUR-Lex is the online access to European law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND
AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾**12 May 2017**

(2017/C 150/02)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate
USD US dollar	1,0876	CAD Canadian dollar	1,4941
JPY Japanese yen	123,82	HKD Hong Kong dollar	8,4761
DKK Danish krone	7,4402	NZD New Zealand dollar	1,5892
GBP Pound sterling	0,84588	SGD Singapore dollar	1,5314
SEK Swedish krona	9,6673	KRW South Korean won	1 226,52
CHF Swiss franc	1,0963	ZAR South African rand	14,6336
ISK Iceland króna		CNY Chinese yuan renminbi	7,5047
NOK Norwegian krone	9,3665	HRK Croatian kuna	7,4225
BGN Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR Indonesian rupiah	14 497,16
CZK Czech koruna	26,576	MYR Malaysian ringgit	4,7243
HUF Hungarian forint	310,24	PHP Philippine peso	54,087
PLN Polish zloty	4,2170	RUB Russian rouble	62,3148
RON Romanian leu	4,5450	THB Thai baht	37,778
TRY Turkish lira	3,9038	BRL Brazilian real	3,4227
AUD Australian dollar	1,4731	MXN Mexican peso	20,5521
		INR Indian rupee	69,9395

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION**Publication of the total number of allowances in circulation for the purposes of the Market Stability Reserve under the EU Emissions Trading System established by Directive 2003/87/EC**

(2017/C 150/03)

1. Introduction

In 2015, the Council and the European Parliament took the decision to establish a Market Stability Reserve ('MSR') ⁽¹⁾ under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) established by Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾. The MSR will operate as of 2019. The purpose of the MSR is to avoid the EU carbon market operating with a large structural surplus of allowances, with the associated risk that this prevents the EU ETS from delivering the necessary investment signal to deliver on the EU's emission reduction target in a cost-efficient manner,

The Decision states that, by 15 May each year and starting in 2017, the Commission shall publish the total number of allowances in circulation. This figure determines whether allowances intended to be auctioned in the subsequent year should be placed into the reserve.

This Communication is the first publication of the total number of allowances in circulation for the purposes of the MSR, and concerns the year 2016. The remainder of this Communication sets out in detail how this figure has been calculated. As the MSR will only start operating in 2019, this publication is for information purposes. While required by Article 1(4) of the MSR Decision, it will not lead to the placement of any allowances in the reserve.

2. Functioning of the Market Stability Reserve

The MSR functions in an automatic manner where the total number of allowances in circulation is outside of a predefined range. Allowances are added to the reserve, if the total number of allowances in circulation exceeds the threshold of 833 million allowances ⁽³⁾. Allowances are released from the reserve, if the total number of allowances in circulation is lower than 400 million allowances. Allowances are added to the reserve by auctioning less, and released from the reserve by auctioning 100 million more allowances in the future.

The publication of the total number of allowances in circulation, on the basis of which allowances will be added to or released from the reserve, is therefore a key element for the operation of the reserve.

3. The total number of allowances in circulation

According to Article 1(4) of Decision (EU) 2015/1814, the total number of allowances in circulation 'shall be the cumulative number of allowances issued in the period since 1 January 2008, including the number issued pursuant to Article 13(2) of Directive 2003/87/EC in that period and entitlements to use international credits exercised by installations under the EU ETS in respect of emissions up to 31 December of that given year, minus the cumulative tonnes of verified emissions from installations under the EU ETS between 1 January 2008 and 31 December of that same given year, any allowances cancelled in accordance with Article 12(4) of Directive 2003/87/EC and the number of allowances in the reserve.'

In short, the total number of allowances in circulation relevant for MSR feeds and releases is calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{TNAC} = \text{Supply} - (\text{Demand} + \text{allowances in the MSR})$$

There are three different elements that determine the total number of allowances in circulation: first, the supply of allowances since 1 January 2008; second, the number of allowances surrendered and cancelled ('demand'); and third, the holdings of the reserve.

Aviation allowances and verified aviation emissions are not considered in this context.

⁽¹⁾ Decision (EU) 2015/1814 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 October 2015 concerning the establishment and operation of a market stability reserve for the Union greenhouse gas emission trading scheme and amending Directive 2003/87/EC (OJ L 264, 9.10.2015, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 275, 25.10.2003, p. 32.

⁽³⁾ This threshold reflects the current legislation. Changes to the market stability parameters contemplated in the context of the revision of the ETS could temporarily change it.

3.1. Supply

The supply of allowances to the market is determined by five different elements:

- allowances banked from 2008-2012 ('phase 2'),
- allowances auctioned between 1 January 2013 ⁽¹⁾ and 31 December 2016,
- allowances allocated for free since 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2016, including allowances allocated from the new entrants' reserve ('NER'),
- allowances monetised by the European Investment Bank (EIB) for the purposes of the 'NER300' programme, and
- international credit entitlements exercised by installations in respect of emissions up to 31 December 2016

The number of allowances banked from phase 2 of the EU ETS is 1 749 540 826 allowances ⁽²⁾. This 'banking total' represents the total number of allowances issued during phase 2 of the EU ETS, which were not surrendered to cover verified emissions or cancelled. For the purpose of the determination of the total number of allowances in circulation it therefore represents the number of ETS allowances in circulation at the start of the period 2013-2020 ('phase 3') on 1 January 2013 and is taken into account as such in the calculation.

According to the reports from the auctions on the common auction platform and on the relevant opt-out platforms ⁽³⁾, the number of allowances auctioned between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016, including the so-called early auctions, is 2 774 262 500

The number of allowances allocated for free, including allowances allocated from the NER, since 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2016 is 3 600 800 263 ⁽⁴⁾.

300 000 000 allowances have been monetised by the EIB for the purposes of the NER300 programme ⁽⁵⁾.

The international credit entitlements exercised by installations in respect of emissions up to 31 December 2016 correspond to 408 812 200 ⁽⁶⁾.

3.2. Demand

The demand consists of the total verified emissions from installations between 1 January 2013 ⁽⁷⁾ and 31 December 2016, which is 7 139 317 195 ⁽⁸⁾, and allowances cancelled in that same period, which corresponds to 193 697 allowances.

3.3. Holdings of the MSR

Considering that the MSR will start operating in 2019, there are currently no allowances held in the reserve.

3.4. Total number of allowances in circulation

In the light of the foregoing, the total number of allowances in circulation amounts to 1 693 904 897 allowances.

4. Conclusion

In line with the agreed MSR rules, no reserve feed is triggered by the indicator published in 2017.

The next publication will be made in May 2018. This will result in the determination of the first reserve feed for the period January to August 2019.

⁽¹⁾ This figure includes the so-called 'early auctions', i.e. allowances valid for the period 2013-2020, which have been auctioned before 1 January 2013.

⁽²⁾ See Carbon Market Report 2015; COM (2015) 576.

⁽³⁾ Available at: <http://www.eex.com/en/products/environmental-markets/emissions-auctions/archive> and <https://www.theice.com/marketdata/reports/148>

⁽⁴⁾ Based on an extract of the EU Transaction Log (EUTL) on 1 April 2017.

⁽⁵⁾ A first tranche of 200 million allowances — sold in 2011 and 2012 — and a second tranche of 100 million allowances — sold in 2013 and 2014; see https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/lowcarbon/ner300/docs/summary_report_ner300_monetisation_en.pdf for further details.

⁽⁶⁾ Based on an extract of the EUTL in 1 April 2017.

⁽⁷⁾ With respect to verified emissions in the period 2008-2012, please see explanations on the banking total (Section 3.1).

⁽⁸⁾ The total verified emissions are based on an extract from the EUTL on 1 April 2017 to take into account verified emissions reported by 31 March 2017. Emissions reported after that date are therefore not reflected in this total.

Table 1
Overview

Supply	
(a) Banking from phase 2	1 749 540 826
(b) Total number of allowances allocated for free between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016, including from NER	3 600 800 263
(c) Total number of allowances auctioned between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016, including early auctions	2 774 262 500
(d) The number of allowances monetised by the European Investment Bank for the purposes of the NER300 programme	300 000 000
(e) International credit entitlements exercised by installations in respect of emissions up to 31 December 2016	408 812 200
Sum (supply)	8 833 415 789
Demand	
(a) Tonnes of verified emissions from installations under the EU ETS between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016	7 139 317 195
(b) Allowances cancelled in accordance with Article 12(4) of Directive 2003/87/EC by 31 December 2016	193 697
Sum (demand)	7 139 510 892
MSR holdings	
Number of allowances in the reserve	0
Total number of allowances in circulation	1 693 904 897

V

(Announcements)

PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION
POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration**(Case M.8477 — LGP/OMERS/OPE Caliber Holdings)****Candidate case for simplified procedure****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2017/C 150/04)

1. On 5 May 2017, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾ by which Leonard Green & Partners, L.P. ('LGP', United States) and OPE USA Investment Corporation ('OPE'), an entity which forms part of the wider OMERS Group ('OMERS Group', Canada), acquire, within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation, joint control over OPE Caliber Holdings Inc., which together with its wholly-owned subsidiaries is referred to as Caliber Collision Centers ('CCC', United States) by way of a purchase of shares.
2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:
 - LGP is a US private equity investment firm headquartered in Los Angeles. LGP's primary sectors of focus are retail, consumer, healthcare, wellness, business, consumer services and distribution.
 - OMERS Group is the administrator of the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System Primary Pension Plan in Canada.
 - CCC operates a network of automobile collision repair centres in the United States. CCC is exclusively active in the United States and has no current or foreseen business activities or revenues in the EEA. CCC is currently solely controlled by OPE.
3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved. Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽²⁾ it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in this Notice.
4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by email to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference M.8477 — LGP/OMERS/OPE Caliber Holdings, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

⁽²⁾ OJ C 366, 14.12.2013, p. 5.

Prior notification of a concentration
(Case M.8286 — RHI/Magnesita Refratários)
(Text with EEA relevance)
(2017/C 150/05)

1. On 5 May 2017, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 and following a referral pursuant to Article 4(5) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾ by which the undertaking RHI AG (Austria) acquires within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation sole control of the whole of the undertaking Magnesita Refratários SA (Brazil) by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

- for RHI AG: supply of refractory products, systems and services, mining of raw materials in the EEA and worldwide,
- for Magnesita Refratários SA: supply of refractory products, systems and services, mining of raw materials in the EEA and worldwide.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by email to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference M.8286 — RHI/Magnesita Refratários, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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 150/06)

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⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘PORC NOIR DE BIGORRE’**EU No: PDO-FR-02106 — 14.1.2016****PDO (X) PGI ()****1. Name(s)**

‘Porc noir de Bigorre’

2. Member State or Third Country

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.1. Fresh meat (and offal)

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

‘Porc noir de Bigorre’ meat comes from pure bred male and female Gascon pigs reared for slaughter, with slaughter being performed at an age of at least 12 months and no more than 24 months.

The carcase weighs a minimum of 100 kg, with a ZP fat depth of at least 30 mm and a ZP muscle depth of at least 45 mm.

The fat contains neophytadiene — a hydrocarbon indicative of grass consumption — in excess of 0,4 UAA (arbitrary area unit) analysed on the basis of the backfat.

The meat has a pronounced red colour. The colour of the meat over the gluteus medius is graded at 3 or more according to the Japanese colour scale. The outer fat is white with a proportion of intramuscular fat in the Longissimus dorsi muscle greater than or equal to 2,5 %.

When cooked, the texture of the meat is only slightly fibrous, very tender, juicy, flavoursome and soft.

The meat is offered for sale chilled. It may not be thawed and chilled.

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

When suckling, piglets may consume a supplement made of a mixture based on cereal, soya and milk powder. A maximum of 5 kg of such feed may be consumed per piglet during this period. The feed may be sourced from outside the geographical area. It is in fact not possible to source all of the feed from the geographical area as the topographical and climate conditions are such that not all plant-based raw materials essential for the animals’ balanced diet, in particular protein crops and legumes, can be produced there. This share of the feed, limited to 5 kg, is less than the amount provided during the suckling phase, in which piglets ingest an average of about 40 litres of milk from their mothers, equating to 8 kg of dry matter sourced from the geographical area. The mixture based on cereal, soya and milk powder cannot be certified as coming from the defined area as it is supplied through a variety of sources.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

After weaning, the piglets are fed a cereal-based diet (70 % minimum raw material weight), possibly supplemented by proteins (rapeseed meal, sunflower meal, beans and peas), minerals and vitamins. The cereals must come from the geographical area.

From no less than three and a half months and no more than six months of age, pigs are reared in grassy paddocks during the fattening stage. The maximum density is 20 animals per hectare, with the pigs feeding partly by grazing. They therefore feed on grass, consisting predominantly of clover and grasses, fruit and other local resources.

A feedstuff to supplement the fattening process is provided. This feedstuff comprises at least 70 % cereal (wheat, oats, barley, rye, triticale), possibly supplemented by products derived from cereals and/or proteins (beans, peas, rapeseed or sunflower meal), minerals and vitamins. The cereals must come from the geographical area. Only the supplementary proteins, minerals and vitamins are sourced from outside the area. Due to local constraints, a sufficient supply cannot be produced in the geographical area.

The maximum daily intake of complementary feed is 3 kg per pig, expressed as dry matter.

These rules ensure that a minimum of 72,6 % of feed originates from the geographical area during the animal's lifetime.

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

Animals are born, reared, fattened and slaughtered in the 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*

Carcases are identified from a label fastened to the inside of each half-carcase, around the loin. The slaughter date, fattening herd number, abattoir number, pig identification number and reference 'NB' are indicated on the label.

A label accompanies the carcasses through to the retail stage, indicating, as a minimum, the following information in addition to the references required by law: the name of the livestock farmer, the holding number, the pig identification number and the slaughter date.

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

The geographical area comprises the following municipalities or parts of municipalities.

Municipalities included in their entirety:

Department of Haute-Garonne:

Ardiège, Aspret-Sarrat, Ausson, Bagiry, Balesta, Barbazan, Blajan, Bordes-de-Rivière, Boudrac, Boulogne-sur-Gesse, Cardeilhac, Cassagnabère-Tournas, Cazaril-Tambourès, Charlas, Ciadoux, Cier-de-Rivière, Clarac, Cuguron, Le Cuing, Eup, Franquevielle, Galié, Génos, Gensac-de-Boulogne, Gourdan-Polignan, Huos, Labarthe-Rivière, Labroquère, Lalouret-Laffiteau, Larcen, Larroque, Lécussan, Lespugue, Lodes, Loudet, Lourde, Lunax, Luscan, Malvezie, Martres-de-Rivière, Mont-de-Galié, Montgaillard-sur-Save, Montmaurin, Montréjeau, Nénigan, Nizan-Gesse, Ore, Payssous, Pointis-de-Rivière, Ponlat-Taillebourg, Régades, Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, Saint-Gaudens, Saint-Ignan, Saint-Lary-Boujean, Saint-Loup-en-Comminges, Saint-Marcet, Saint-Pé-d'Ardet, Saint-Pé-Delbosc, Saint-Plancard, Saman, Sarrecave, Sarremezan, Sauveterre-de-Comminges, Saux-et-Pomarède, Sédeilhac, Seilhan, Les Tourreilles, Valcabrière, Valentine, Villeneuve-de-Rivière, Villeneuve-Lécussan.

Department of Gers:

— the municipalities in the canton of Mirande-Astarac, with the exception of Lamazère,

— the municipalities in the canton of Pardiac-Rivière-Basse, with the exception of Castelnau-d'Anglès, L'Isle-de-Noé, Izotges, Montesquiou, Mouchès,

— in the canton of Astarac-Gimone, the municipalities of Arrouède, Aujan-Mournède, Bellegarde, Bézues-Bajon, Cabas-Loumassès, Chélan, Cuélas, Esclassan-Labastide, Labarthe, Lalanne-Arqué, Lourties-Monbrun, Manent-Montané, Masseube, Moncorneil-Grazan, Monlaur-Bernet, Mont-d'Astarac, Panassac, Ponsan-Soubiran, Pouy-Loubtrin, Saint-Arroman, Saint-Blancard, Samaran, Sarcos, Seissan, Sère,

— in the canton of Fezensac, the municipalities of Gazax-et-Baccarisse, Peyrusse-Grande, Peyrusse-Vieille, Saint-Pierre-d'Aubézies.

Department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques:

Aast, Bédeille, Bentayou-Sérée, Casteide-Doat, Castéra-Loubix, Coarraze, Ger, Labatmale, Labatut, Lamayou, Maure, Monségur, Montaner, Montaut, Ponson-Debat-Pouts, Ponson-Dessus, Pontacq, Pontiacq-Viellepinte, Saint-Vincent, Saubole.

Department of Hautes-Pyrénées:

- the municipalities in the following cantons: Aureilhan, Bordères-sur-l'Échez, Les Coteaux, Moyen Adour, Ossun, Val d'Adour-Rustan-Madiranais, La Vallée de l'Arros et des Baïses (with the exception of Asque, partly included), Vic-en-Bigorre,
- the following municipalities: Adast, Adé, Anères, Les Angles, Anla, Antichan, Antist, Aragnouet, Arcizac-ez-Angles, Argelès-Gazost, Arné, Arrayou-Lahitte, Arrodets-ez-Angles, Artigues, Aspin-en-Lavedan, Astugue, Aventignan, Avez, Avezac-Prat-Lahitte, Ayros-Arbouix, Ayzac-Ost, Barlest, La Barthe-de-Neste, Bartrès, Bazus-Neste, Bertren, Bize, Bizous, Boô-silhen, Bourréac, Campistrous, Cantaous, Capvern, Cheust, Clarens, Créchets, Escala, Escoubès-Pouts, Gaudent, Gazave, Gembrie, Gènerest, Ger, Gerde, Geu, Gez, Gez-ez-Angles, Hautaget, Hiis, Ilheu, Izaourt, Izaux, Jarret, Julos, Juncalas, Labastide, Laborde, Lagrange, Lannemezan, Lau-Balagnas, Lézignan, Lombrès, Lortet, Loubajac, Lourdes, Loures-Barousse, Lugagnan, Mazères-de-Neste, Mazouau, Montégut, Montgaillard, Montoussé, Montsérié, Nestier, Neuilh, Omex, Ordizan, Ossun-ez-Angles, Ousté, Pailhac, Paréac, Peyrouse, Pierrefitte-Nestalas, Pinas, Poueyferré, Pouzac, Préchac, Réjaumont, Saint-Arroman, Saint-Créac, Sainte-Marie, Saint-Laurent-de-Neste, Saint-Paul, Samuran, Sarp, Sassis, Sère-en-Lavedan, Sère-Lanso, Siradan, Sireix, Soulom, Tajan, Tarbes, Tibiran-Jaunac, Trébons, Troubat, Tuzaguet, Ugla, Viger.

Municipalities included in part:

Department of Haute-Garonne:

Antichan-de-Fontaines, Chaum, Cierp-Gaud, Esténos, Fronsac, Fontignan-de-Comminges, Marignac, Saint-Béat.

Department of Hautes-Pyrénées:

Adervielle-Pouchergues, Agos-Vidalos, Ancizan, Arcizans-Avant, Arcizans-Dessus, Ardengost, Armenteule, Arras-en-Lavedan, Arreau, Arrens-Marsous, Artalens-Souin, Aspin-Aure, Asque, Asté, Aucun, Avajan, Bagnères-de-Bigorre, Bareilles, Barran-coueu, Bazus-Aure, Beaucens, Beaudéan, Berbérust-Lias, Betpouey, Beyrède-Jumet, Bordères-Louron, Bourisp, Bramevaque, Bun, Cadéac, Cadeilhan-Trachère, Camous, Campan, Campan, Cauterets, Cazarilh, Cazaux-Debat, Cazaux-Fréchet-Anéran-Camors, Chèze, Esbareich, Esparros, Esquièze-Sère, Estaing, Estarville, Estensan, Esterre, Ferrère, Fréchet-Aure, Gaillagos, Gazost, Gèdre, Génos, Germs-sur-l'Oussouet, Gouaux, Grezian, Grust, Guchan, Guchen, Hèches, Ilhet, Jézeau, Labas-sère, Lançon, Loudenvielle, Luz-Saint-Sauveur, Mauléon-Barousse, Nistos, Ossen, Ourde, Ourdis-Cotdoussan, Ourdon, Ouzous, Ris, Sacoué, Sailhan, Saint-Lary-Soulan, Saint-Pastous, Saint-Pé-de-Bigorre, Saint-Savin, Saléchan, Saligos, Salles, Sarrancolin, Sazos, Ségus, Seich, Sers, Sost, Thèbe, Tramezaignes, Uz, Viella, Vielle-Aure, Vielle-Louron, Vier-Bordes, Vieg, Vignec, Villelongue, Viscos, Vizos.

5. Link with the geographical area

Specificity of the geographical area

Hillsides and valleys cutting into the sediment of the Pyrenees form the natural environment characteristic of the area of production, Bigorre. The largely deep and acidic soil and the damp, mild climate result in almost uninterrupted grass growth throughout the year, other than during a brief period in winter. The environment, which is often restricted by its uneven terrain and prevalence of woodland, is suited to establishing paddocks for pigs comprising both grassy and wooded areas.

Bigorre itself came into existence over 2 000 years ago, under the Romans. The link between 'black pigs' and Bigorre took hold as of the 11th century when the Benedictine monks of Cluny founded several abbeys specifically in Bigorre, developing the production and farming of these animals which were particularly well suited to exploiting the benefits of the natural, farming environment in Bigorre.

Although pigs of the Gascon breed were reared well beyond the borders of Bigorre, rearing became notably confined to the area and to an elite circle as of the 17th century and, in particular, the beginning of the 20th century, when the breed nearly died out. Efforts were made during the 1980s to conserve the breed and develop farming of it based on the core still found in Bigorre.

This Mediterranean breed is characterised by the colour of its bristles, ranging from grey to black, and its slower rate of growth. The pig is well suited to roaming, with slender trotters and flexibility in its limb conformation given its short legs. It is perfectly adapted to living in paddocks, on land which may be sloped. The pigs are incredibly hardy and are able to cope with considerable variations in climate and feed, and are quickly able to build up their fat reserves when food is abundant. They do not cope well in hot and windy conditions, which is why the paddocks chosen have, in particular, trees for shade and/or hedges. They are able to take advantage of areas otherwise difficult to cultivate (forest, moorland, heavily sloping meadows), maintaining them at the same time.

Today, the breed is genetically selected based on its docility and the maternal traits of its sows, important characteristics for this type of livestock farming.

'Porc noir de Bigorre' pigs live in paddocks from the age of six months. Throughout this finishing period, pigs which have reached adult size consume 5 to 6 kg of feed each day. As the amount of animal feed they may be given is limited to 3 kg per day, they are required to find 2 to 3 kg of forage from the paddock, which largely consists of grass. Measurements from a grassy paddock have shown that the pigs consume up to 2,9 kg of grass per day. In these paddocks, pigs also find seasonal fruit (acorns, chestnuts, etc.), roots, earthworms, insects, etc. to supplement their diet. During autumn, when fruit is in plentiful supply in certain paddocks, the pigs consume very little animal feed, preferring instead to eat fruit.

Specificity of the product

The meat has the following specific characteristics:

- the carcase weighs a minimum of 100 kg, with a ZP fat depth of at least 30 mm and a ZP muscle depth of at least 45 mm,
- pronounced red colour. The colour of the meat over the gluteus medius muscle is graded at 3 or more according to the Japanese colour scale,
- the outer fat is white. The proportion of intramuscular fat in the Longissimus dorsi muscle is greater than or equal to 2,5 %. The average is 4 %, compared to 1,5 % in conventional pigs.

When cooked, the texture of the meat is only slightly fibrous, very tender, juicy, flavoursome and soft, with fat surrounding the topside and an intense flavour.

Causal link

The Gascon breed possesses characteristics derived from centuries of breeding by livestock farmers. Consequently, it is perfectly adapted to the environment and type of livestock farming, e.g. in terms of its ability to roam and to cope with variations in climate and feed.

In the paddocks, the pigs gain a considerable amount of weight. Paddocks make regular physical activity possible and necessary for the pigs, resulting in muscle development which produces a more marbled meat with a higher myoglobine content and, therefore, a redder colour.

The forage they find in their paddocks contains aromatic compounds which subsequently influence the organoleptic characteristics of the meat. Although naturally varying between seasons, this feed nevertheless corresponds to approximately 50 % of the pigs' daily intake during the finishing period. This share is guaranteed through a low animal density in the paddock and a limit on the amount of animal feed the pigs may be given.

It is primarily during the finishing period, i.e. in the paddock, that fatty tissue is deposited, subsequently influencing in various ways the sensory qualities. The high proportion of grass and low-fat cereal (in particular wheat and barley) has a beneficial effect on the antioxidant, oleic acid and omega 3 content and the endogenous synthesis of fat which only oxidises to a limited extent. The nature of the animal feed determines the fatty acid composition in the fat. The feed therefore contributes to the specific sensory qualities of the meat.

The pigs, which are bred for their meat, are slaughtered when relatively old (12 to 24 months as compared to 5 to 6 months in the case of industrial pigs reared for slaughter), having exercised their muscles considerably by the end of their lifetime, which gives the meat its pronounced colour and a texture not found in animals reared classically.

Ultimately, the breed, diet and particular way in which the pigs are reared give 'Porc noir de Bigorre' meat its typical features, characterised by its very red colour, the white colour of the outer fat, only a slightly fibrous but soft, juicy and very tender texture and an intense flavour.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCPorcNoirDeBigorre2016.pdf>

