Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2010/C 233/08)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 (1). Statements of objections must reach the Commission within six months from the date of this publication.

1. **Name:**
   "Σταφίδα Ηλείας" (Stafida Ilias)

2. **Member State or third country:**
   Greece

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

   3.1. **Type of product:**
   Class 1.6 — Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

   3.2. **Description of product to which the name in (1) applies:**
   Stafida Ilias is a variety of currant produced from black grapes of the species *Vitis Vinifera*, dried naturally in the sun or the shade. The following characteristics distinguish Stafida Ilias from other types of dried grape:

   — It is rounder, more uniform in shape and a deep black colour.

   — It has a higher sugar and tartaric acid content. Specifically, the minimum sugar content is 70 % and the minimum tartaric acid content 1.69 %. The percentage of sugars and tartaric acid may be higher than this, depending on weather conditions.

— The moisture content ranges from 13 to 18 % and 100 g of product contain 70-80 g of carbohydrates.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):
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3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only):
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3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area:
Stafida Ilias is grown, harvested and dried in the defined geographical area of the Prefecture of Ilia.

3.6. Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:
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3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:
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4. Concise definition of the geographical area:
The defined geographical area is the Prefecture of Ilia, in the area of the Peloponnese that now forms part of the region of Western Greece; the size of the area is 2 618 km². It is bordered on the east by the Prefecture of Arcadia, to the south by the Prefecture of Messinia and to the north by the Prefecture of Achaia; to the west and south-west, it is bordered by the Ionian sea.

5. Link with the geographical area:
5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:
Owing to the fertile subsoil and specific climatic conditions, the producers in Ilia produce currants of unique quality.

Soil analyses carried out in different parts of the Prefecture of Ilia have shown that both the soil and the subsoil are rich in humus, which is good for the development and production of Stafida Ilias. They are also rich in potassium; this plays a decisive role in currant production as, of the main nutrients, vines take up potassium in even larger quantities than nitrogen. This gives Stafida Ilias its sweet taste (it is known that a relative lack of potassium affects the quality of grapes, producing green grapes that are not very sweet).

In addition, the weather conditions in Ilia favour the ripening of the fruit, which can therefore be harvested earlier (August) than in other areas where dried grapes are produced. Specifically, the low summer temperatures (average 24 °C) and the low relative humidity during the summer months (average 73 %) cause the fruit to ripen more quickly. The low relative humidity in summer prevents the development of diseases such as mildew, which are particularly harmful to the product.

Lastly, the specific methods used to grow the grapes and process them after harvesting, based on experience and know-how acquired over many years, are crucial to the quality of the product. Both drying by direct exposure to the sun and drying in the shade are natural drying methods, as no technical or mechanical means are used to start or accelerate the process. In both cases, the grapes are unloaded with care to ensure that they do not split open. Stafida Ilias is not immersed in alkaline solutions before drying.
Only two methods are used for drying Stafida Ilias in the Prefecture of Ilia:

1. Direct exposure of the fruit to the sun on special surfaces called alonia that resemble sloping roofs (each side slopes down from the top, where there is a gap between them).

2. Drying in the shade, on special frames. This is slower than drying in the sun but produces currants with a better colour. The grapes are placed on frames consisting of two lengths of wood connected by three or four more pieces nailed perpendicular to these. Reeds or very thin strips of wood are placed on the frames, parallel to the main sides, and the grapes are put to dry on them. They dry naturally in the air.

5.2. Specificity of the product:
Besides its physical characteristics (uniform size of the fruit, round shape and deep black colour), the specific characteristics that distinguish Stafida Ilias from other types of dried grape are a higher sugar content (at least 70 %) and tartaric acid content (at least 1,69 %).

5.3. Causal link between the geographical area and a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product:
Stafida Ilias is a product of the Prefecture of Ilia’s natural environment and its qualities reflect the specific characteristics of the area.

The deep black colour and high level of tartaric acid and sugars are due to a combination of soil factors (soil rich in potassium, which produces currants with a higher sugar content), climate (early ripening), growing methods (no annular incisions are made) and the producers’ experience in drying the grapes by directly exposing them to the sun or drying them in the shade on special frames, which takes longer than drying in the sun but produces currants that are a very deep black.

The characteristics of the soil and the subsoil (high levels of humus and potassium) help give Stafida Ilias qualities that distinguish it from dried grapes produced in other regions, namely a high sugar and tartaric acid content.

The specific climatic conditions of the Prefecture of Ilia (e.g. average relative humidity of 73 % during the summer months) are also good for viticulture because they prevent the development of harmful diseases such as mildew and dead-arm disease and damage by pests (vine mealybugs for example). In addition, the dry climate favours the drying of the harvested fruit.

Not only does Stafida Ilias have special qualities, it also has a special reputation.

The Prefecture of Ilia has been closely linked with the production of Stafida Ilias since the beginning of the 14th century and the product has often been mentioned in texts since then. Its high quality has been known on the European market since the 19th century. In the first half of the 19th century exports led the area to specialise to such an extent that Stafida Ilias became a monoculture, as an entire rural community moved away from self-sufficiency to focus on marketing the product.

In 1878, demand for Stafida Ilias rose sharply and it became especially well known when the French vineyards were attacked and destroyed by phylloxera (Dactulosphaira vitifoliae). It was then that the Europeans, especially the French, bought much of the production, further extending the product’s reputation.
As production soared, the Prefecture of Ilia became the hub of the trade and a rail line was built to link Pyrgos (the capital of the Prefecture) with the port of Katakolo. The line was built so that the currants could be more quickly and easily transported from the fields to the port and then loaded onto the ships for export. It was inaugurated on 3 February 1883 and was the very first rail line to be built in Greece.

The reputation of Stafida Ilias is also attested by trade records mentioning the quantities exported to European countries and America from 1912 onwards.

It still has this high reputation today, and much of the production is exported to European countries, including the Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and also outside the EU, to North America for example.

Publication reference of the specification:
http://www.minagric.gr/greek/dataΠΡΟΔΙΑΓΡΑΦΕΣ%20ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ-%202017%202012%202009.zip