



2024/2017

1.8.2024

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2024/2017

of 25 July 2024

entering a name in the register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications ('Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' (PGI))

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 52(3)(b) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) In accordance with Article 90(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾, which repealed Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the latter remains applicable to the applications for registration of geographical indication for agricultural products and foodstuffs received by the Commission and published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* before 13 May 2024.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the application from Greece to register the name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* ⁽³⁾.
- (3) On 7 July 2023 the Commission received the notice of opposition and the related reasoned statement of opposition from Germany. The Commission forwarded the notice of opposition to Greece on 17 July 2023. On 8 August 2023 Germany confirmed that the reasoned statement of opposition was complete and that it did not wish to provide any additional information.
- (4) The Commission examined the reasoned statement of opposition sent by Germany and found it admissible.
- (5) The opponent claimed that 'Kashkaval' was a cheese manufactured and marketed in many Member States and in third countries and was listed as a generic name in the customs tariff nomenclature and the common customs tariff. Therefore, the opponent argued that if names 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' were to be registered as a protected geographical indication, this would mean that the manufacturers in other countries would no longer be allowed to use the name 'Kashkaval'. This would directly violate their rights and cause them significant economic disadvantages.

Moreover, the opponent made claims about potential non-compliance with the requirements of Articles 5(2) and 7(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 for a protected geographical indication.

- (6) By letter of 22 September 2023, the Commission invited the interested parties to engage in appropriate consultations to seek agreement among themselves in accordance with their internal procedures.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/1151/oj>.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11.4.2024 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>).

⁽³⁾ OJ C 175, 17.5.2023, p. 23.

- (7) Following the consultations, an agreement was reached between Greece and Germany. It was communicated to the Commission by the letter of 17 January 2024 and further supplemented with the amended single document on 15 May 2024. Greece confirmed that by applying for the registration of the name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou', it did not aim at reserving the use of the term 'Kashkaval' and consequently, that protection to be granted to name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' should not cover the stand-alone name 'Kashkaval', but only the compound name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou', as a whole. Therefore, the term 'Kashkaval' should be allowed to continue to be used within the territory of the Union, provided the principles and rules applicable in its legal order are respected.
- (8) In addition, Greece and Germany agreed that the term 'Kashkaval' in the product specification and in the single document should always be followed by the word 'Pindou'/'Πίνδου' in order to make it clear that protection relates only to that compound name. To that end, both the single document and the product specification were amended.
- (9) Moreover, Greece and Germany concluded that the Regulation entering the name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' in the register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications should include a recital that specifies the scope of the protection.
- (10) The amendments to the single document and product specification are not considered substantial. Therefore, in accordance with Article 51(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the Commission did not repeat the scrutiny of the application and concluded that the conditions for registration were fulfilled. The consolidated version of the single document should, however, be published for information as an Annex to this Regulation.
- (11) In the light of the above, the Commission considers the name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' (PGI) should be entered in the register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' (PGI) is registered.

Article 2

The name 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' (PGI) should be protected as a whole, whereas the term 'Kashkaval' may continue to be used for products that do not comply with the product specification of 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' within the territory of the Union, provided the principles and rules applicable in its legal order are respected.

Article 3

The consolidated version of the single document is set out in the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 4

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 25 July 2024.

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN

ANNEX

Single document

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’

PGI-GR-02821

Date of application: 6.12.2021

PDO ☐ PGI (X)

1. **Name(s) [of PDO or PGI]**

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Greece

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

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’ is a semi-hard, scalded curd cheese. It is off-white to pale yellow in colour and cylindrical or parallelepiped in shape. It has a buttery, slightly sour and slightly salty taste, which distinguishes it from similar cheeses of this type. These taste characteristics are partly due to the periodic addition of salt, which is part of the production process, and to the milk used, which has a high fat content and a strong, ripe aroma.

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’ has a firm, compact texture with very few openings and no rind. It has the following physico-chemical characteristics:

- Fat Content in dry matter > 45 %
- Fat content 27–30 %
- Protein content 25–28 %
- Maximum moisture content 40–45 %

Lastly, the salt content (sodium chloride) is between 1,4 % and 2 %, other inorganic components account for 2,5 % and the pH is between 5,0 and 5,3.

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’ is made from local raw or pasteurised milk (sheep's milk or a mixture of sheep and goat's milk, with the latter accounting for less than 35 % of the mix) using a specific method developed by the area's Aromanian-speaking nomadic herders.

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

‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’ is made only from raw or pasteurised milk from breeds of sheep and goats that traditionally have been raised extensively in the defined area. The milk has a high fat content (at least 6 %) due to the fact that the animals graze extensively or, during periods of bad weather, are fed local plants that have been dried and stored. The only substance that may be added to the milk that is used to make the cheese is commercially available ‘traditional Greek rennet’.

Regarding the milk that is produced in the defined area and used to make ‘Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou’, the following requirements apply:

- (i) The milk must be sheep's milk or a mixture of sheep and goat's milk, the latter accounting for less than 35 % of the mix.
- (ii) It must have a fat content of at least 6 % w/w

- (iii) The animals must not be milked for at least 10 days after giving birth (for raw milk). Until it is curdled, the milk must be stored at a controlled temperature, in accordance with the legislation in force.
- (iv) The milk must not be condensed or contain added milk powder, milk protein, casein salts, colouring or preservatives.
- (v) There must be no residues of veterinary medicinal products (e.g. antibiotics), pesticides or other harmful substances present in the milk.

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

The production of the milk and all the stages in the production of 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' cheese, including the initial packaging, must take place in the defined 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*

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

The area where the milk is produced and 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' cheese is made comprises the entire Region of Epirus, the Regional Units of Kastoria, Grevena and Kozani in the Region of Western Macedonia and the Regional Units of Trikala and Karditsa in the Region of Thessaly.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The basic factor that inseparably links 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' cheese with the geographical area is its reputation, which links the product with the area's traditions, customs and economic life. This is confirmed by numerous important written records going back over 150 years and up until today. Another important factor that links the product with the geographical area is the human factor that led to the development of the specific production method, which is perfectly suited to the rugged mountainous terrain.

The countless written references to the unquestioned reputation that has linked 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' cheese with the defined area over the years include the famous short story by Alexandros Papadiamantis *Sto Christo sto Castro* [Christ at the castle] (1892), *Peri kefalotiriou kai kashkavaliou* [Kefalotiri and kashkaval] (1900) by R. Dimitriadis, *Kashkavali* (1912) by E.D. Polichronidis, 'The Nomads of the Balkans: an account of life and customs among the Vlachs of Northern Pindus' (1914), and *Nea Oikiaki Mageiriki* [New home cooking] (1925) by A. Vitsikounakis. There are also historical references to the product in *Elliniki Tyrokomia* [Greek cheesemaking] (1956) and *I istoria tou ellinikou galaktos kai ton proiondon tou* [The history of Greek milk and dairy products] (2004). Lastly, the gold medal won by the Grigoriadis company at the Paris international fair in 1909 is further evidence of the product's high quality and commercial importance over time. 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' has continued to win awards to this day – it won a quality award at Prodexpo (Russia) in February 2011 and received an award from the International Taste Institute in January 2021.

The product's strong reputation and high quality has meant that production units in the defined area have continued to make and distribute it to this day, as evidenced by numerous recent publications. By way of example, in *Tris aiones mia zoi: yiayia Filio i mikrasiatissa* (2005), a memoir by Filio Haidemenou, the product is mentioned in connection with memories of daily life, rural life, folklore, etc. in the defined area, confirming that it was one of the cheeses that was made by the shepherds who raised their sheep up in the mountains. In *Flavours of Greece* (London 2011) by Rosemary Barron there is a detailed description of Greek dairy products and cheeses, and the author notes that this cheese is a special meze cheese because of its flavour. In *Gastronomos*, a magazine devoted to culinary topics and raw materials, there is an article by Vivi Konstantinidou, where the author describes her experience of giving her son cheese for the first time and recommends that people try Kashkavali Pindou, saying that it makes excellent toasted cheese sandwiches (11 October 2021).

Browsing the web gives over 6 000 hits for the product and many recipes for dishes that use 'Κασκαβάλι Πινδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πινδου / Kashkaval Pindou' in combination with other ingredients, such as chicken and lountza, pizza, meat loaf with croutons and paprika, and prasotigania [leeks fried with pork] and wine.

Regarding the human factor and how it helps to determine the specificity of the product, this ties in closely with the geomorphology of the defined geographical area, which is dominated by the presence of Greece's largest mountain range, the Pindos, which impacts the quality of the milk and the way the cheese is made.

Specifically, the area is rich in pastureland but unsuitable for other types of farming, so the inhabitants' main activity is extensive livestock farming and the production of dairy products. It has a continental climate, with cold winters with frequent snowfall and cool summers, giving an average annual temperature of 10 °C. There is also frequent rain; average rainfall is 600-800 mm/year and there are no long periods of dry weather in summer. The influence of the climate can be clearly seen in the vegetation, which is not purely Mediterranean, as in the mountainous and semi-mountainous areas it resembles that of central Europe, with numerous fir, beech, chestnut, oak and plane tree forests and extensive areas of grassland. The area is also home to a rich and unique variety of plants – a total of 2 012 wild plant taxa have been recorded, 21,9 % of which are endemic to the Balkans and 5,6 % of which are endemic to Greece. The sheep and goats whose milk is used to make the cheese come from breeds that have been reared in the area for many years and are adapted to the harsh climatic conditions. The holdings are of medium capacity and keep only grazing animals that produce milk in small quantities but with a high fat content.

The area is the place of origin of the Aromanian-speaking nomadic herders (Vlachs), who developed a particular way of making 'Κασκαβάλι Πινδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πινδου / Kashkaval Pindou' that is perfectly in harmony with the rugged mountainous terrain, and this is the main reason why it became established as one of the area's main products and acquired an excellent reputation. The cheesemaking process consisted of a first stage, which was the curdling in situ of the milk produced up in the mountains in summer, to produce a cheese mass that was sliced up and transported down to the neighbouring lowland areas. This was followed by the second stage of the process, which consisted of mixing the curds with hot water and then maturing the cheese. This way of making 'Κασκαβάλι Πινδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πινδου / Kashkaval Pindou' has a major advantage in that it allows the use of raw milk or milk that has soured, as when the cheese mass is mixed with hot water it is partially sterilised. Frequent dry salting gives the cheese its slightly salty taste.

This method is ideally suited to the area's terrain and climatic conditions, which were such that in summer the nomadic herders had to keep their animals at high altitudes, where there were no dairies, processing facilities, ripening chambers, storage facilities, etc. Milk produced up in the mountains in summer was immediately transformed into cheese mass, which was then transported down to lower altitudes on horseback to be made into 'Kashkavali Pindou / Kashkaval Pindou'. This solved the problem of how to preserve the milk produced in the mountains so that it could be turned into cheese. It also gave the product its name 'Κασκαβάλι Πινδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πινδου / Kashkaval Pindou', as the term 'kashkaval' roughly translated from Aromanian means 'cheese transported by horses'.

'Κασκαβάλι Πινδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πινδου / Kashkaval Pindou' is a firm, compact cheese, with very few openings and no rind. These characteristics are due to the way it is made, which notably involves cutting the cheese mass into slices and then mixing these with hot water when the acidity is right. More specifically, during the cheesemaking process the cheese mass is left to mature and it is then cut into strips (slices) that are submerged in very hot water. The cheese mass becomes very pliable, like dough, so it can be easily shaped first in the water and then on the cheesemaking table. Thus, when it is transferred into moulds to form the cheese wheels that will subsequently harden, it is uniform, homogeneous, with a firm, springy texture and no cracks.

This specificity has successfully been carried over into the modern production process, where the elements of the traditional method remain unaltered. The adaptations are to do with safety and traceability but do not affect the character or the flavour of the cheese, as the main difference is the use of pasteurised milk and that the product is now branded and packaged. A basic specific characteristic of 'Κασκαβάλι Πίνδου / Kashkavali Pindou / Κασκαβάλ Πίνδου / Kashkaval Pindou' cheese is that it is still made from sheep's milk or a mixture of sheep and goat's milk, unlike similar cheeses with the same name that are made in Balkan countries using cow's milk. Finally, the milk used is an important factor linking the product with the defined area, as its high fat content gives the product a buttery flavour, while letting the sheep and goats graze extensively on the rich variety of aromatic plants and herbs in the Pindos mountains results in high levels of volatile terpenes and aldehydes in the milk, which give the cheese its strong, ripe aroma.

Reference to publication of the specification

https://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/POP-PGE/2021/kashkavali_pindou_prod100124.pdf
