**COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**

**of 12 September 2018**

**on the publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* of the application for registration of a name referred to in Article 49 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council**

**'Istra' (PDO)**

(2018/C 327/05)

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 of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs [1], and in particular Article 50(2)(a) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the application to register the name 'Istarsko ekstra djevičansko maslinovo ulje' as protected designation of origin, submitted by Croatia, was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* [2].

(2) By the notice of opposition of 22 June 2016 and the reasoned statement of opposition of 22 August 2016, Slovenia opposed the registration under Article 51(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

(3) The opposition was deemed admissible. Croatia and Slovenia carried out appropriate consultations and reached an agreement substantially amending the single document.

(4) In accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 Croatia sent to the Commission the documents and the information relevant to the agreement reached with Slovenia in the opposition procedure concerning the application for registration of the name 'Istarsko ekstra djevičansko maslinovo ulje' as protected designation of origin, including the substantially amended single document, the main amendment concerning the name to be registered as protected designation of origin ('Istra').

(5) In accordance with Articles 50 and 51(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the Commission has examined that application and concluded that it fulfils the conditions laid down in that Regulation.

(6) In order to allow for the submission of notices of opposition in accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of that Regulation for the name 'Istra' should be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Sole Article*

The single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 for the name 'Istra' (PDO) are contained in the Annex to this Decision.

In accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the publication of this Decision shall confer the right to oppose to the registration of the name referred to in the first paragraph of this Article within three months from the date of publication of this Decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 12 September 2018.

*For the Commission*
Phil HOGAN
*Member of the Commission*

[1] OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.
[2] OJ C 108, 23.3.2016, p. 18.

*ANNEX*

SINGLE DOCUMENT

**'ISTRA'**

**EU No: HR-PDO-0005-01358 — 30.7.2015**

**PDO ( X ) PGI ( )**

1. **Name(s)**

'Istra'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Croatia

Slovenia

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

3.1. *Product type*

Class 1.5. Oils and fats (butter, margarine, oils, etc.)

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

'Istra' is an extra virgin olive oil obtained directly from the fruit of the olive tree (*Olea europaea* L.) solely by mechanical means.

When the product is placed on the market, it must have the following physico-chemical and organoleptic characteristics:

— free fatty acid content expressed as oleic acid: ≤ 0,4 %,

— peroxide value: ≤ 12 meq $O_2$/k,

— K232: ≤ 2,25,

— K270: ≤ 0,20,

— Delta-K: ≤ 0,01,

— aroma: moderately to heavily pronounced aroma of fresh olives, fruit, vegetables or other green vegetation, such as green leaves, green grass, etc. (median of fruity on a continuous linear scale > 3,0),

— taste: of healthy and fresh olives, with bitterness and sharpness of the following intensity:

  — bitterness: mildly, moderately or heavily pronounced (median on a continuous linear scale ≥ 2,0),

  — sharpness: mildly, moderately or heavily pronounced (median on a continuous linear scale ≥ 2,0).

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

The following olive varieties may be used to produce 'Istra' olive oil: buga (synonym: črna), buža, črnica, drobnica, istarska belica (synonyms: istrska belica, istarska bjelica, bianchera), karbonaca, mata, plominka, puntoža, rošinjola, štorta, žižolera, frantoio, leccino, maurino, moraiolo, pendolino and picholine. In a given quantity of 'Istra', at least 80 % of the oil must come from one or more of the above varieties.

In monovarietal oils, at least 80 % of the oil must come from a single olive variety.

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

All stages in the production of 'Istra' olive oil, from growing to processing the olives, must take place within the geographical area defined in point 4.

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

The oil must be packaged within the geographical area defined in point 4 in order to preserve its specific characteristics and quality. Packaging the oil within the production area minimises the risk of the quality of the product becoming impaired through transport and multiple decanting, when it could become exposed to fluctuations in temperature, atmospheric oxygen and light. Moreover, limiting packaging to the production area allows the relevant inspection authorities to conduct compliance checks in the presence of the interested producers, who traditionally bottle the oil themselves. Compliance certification and the right to use a designation of origin are of paramount importance to these producers, as they reinforce consumer trust, provide a competitive advantage and, ultimately, result in higher profits.

Packaging the oil within the production area greatly facilitates traceability and quality control, which would be difficult to carry out outside the production area.

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

It is permissible to use the names of agricultural holdings or the locations of olive groves next to the 'Istra' PDO, but only where the product is obtained exclusively from olives grown on the agricultural holding in question, i.e. in the olive groves referred to on the label.

The varietal composition of the oil may also be indicated, but only where this can be supported by documentary evidence. With monovarietal oils, the official varietal names listed under 3.3 may be used.

When the product is placed on the market, irrespective of the packaging, the name 'Istra' must clearly stand out from any other wording thanks to the size, type and colour of the letters (typography).

The year of harvest must also be indicated on the label.

When the product is placed on the market, each package must also bear an adhesive stamp featuring the common symbol and the unique packaging number. All users of the 'Istra' PDO who place the product on the market in accordance with its specification have the right to use the stamp, under the same conditions.

There are two versions of the common symbol: a Croatian and a Slovenian one. The common symbol comprises an upright stylised olive within a dark circle. A drop of oil appears to flow out from the middle of the fruit. Below the drop of oil is the word ISTRA, written in capital letters. Above the letter A in the word ISTRA, the Croatian version features the letters ZOI, whereas the Slovenian version has the letters ZOP, both written in smaller type.


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

The production area of 'Istra' comprises part of the Istrian peninsula.

The geographical area of production of 'Istra' olive oil begins at Port Preluk, just north of the Preluk campsite, on the border between the City of Rijeka and Opatija. The boundary runs along the Rijeka-Opatija border, around the campsite, to the tripoint between Opatija, Matulji and Kastav to the north. It cuts through Baredi up to the railway line, at the tripoint between Matulji, Kastav and Rijeka. It then follows the railway line towards Rijeka, along the border between Kastav and Rijeka. To the east of the Vrata Jadrana motorway service area, the boundary turns north through the villages of Bačići and Murini, and just east of Tuhtani, to the Rijeka-Viškovo-Kastav tripoint.

It continues along the Viškovo-Kastav border through Duževo (trig point (281), until it reaches the Kastav-Viškovo road under Ranjevac, where it briefly follows the road to Viškovo before turning north to pass between the villages of Jardasi and Kosi and reach the Viškovo-Kastav-Klana tripoint to the east of Sohi (trig point (452). It then turns west and then south-west, crossing Sohi, running between Prkačine and Plas and reaching Majevi Hill (411 m) at the Kastav-Matulji-Klana tripoint. The boundary continues northwards, along the border of the municipality of Matulji up to the foot of Stanić Hill (465 m), where it veers slightly to the west before turning back north, passing east of the village of Mučići, through Kapužnjak, east of the village of Ružići and Vela Rebra Hill (446 m), on across Pišćevati Breg, Turinski Dol, Raspravica, Popenac, over the peak at 738 m and through Liskovac before reaching Visoč Hill (756 m). At Visoč Hill the boundary turns west, passes to the north of Klanac, over trig point 547, the elevation point at 657 m, passing the town of Rupa to the north, cutting through Leščina up to trig point 447 where it turns north. It then runs to the west of Gradina Hill (562 m), along the railway line up to trig point 519 at Velika Reber, after which it first turns west and then to the south, through Barišča, Kališča (trig point (602), down to Buričine. At Buričine Hill, the boundary turns west crossing Kovnica Hill (901 m), passing between Jankovac and Osik Hill, over Surinova Glavica and Strahovica Hill (771 m). It then runs south of Ravni Kot over Mt Ribnik (1 023 m) and trig point 1028.5, where it turns to the north-west, crossing Vinćarija and reaching Glavičorka to the south (trig point 1083). Next it makes a brief turn to the west and again to the north-west up to Lipica, continuing south-west of trig points 979 (Lipica) and 953 (Mala Plešivica) further to the north-west to Mala Vrata (trig point (695). At Mala Vrata the boundary turns west to Jelovščina, past Mali Grižan Hill (trig point (851) to the south-west, then makes a south-east turn, passing north-west of Blažinov Hill, where it veers westwards to continue north of Stružnjak (781 m) and Gnojina (776 m) and then south-west up to the Jelovica-Podgorje road. It then follows the road towards the north-west through the villages of Podgorje, Praproče and Črnotiče, stopping just south of Gaber Hill (447 m). From there, the boundary continues north, via the village of Kastelec to the town of Socerb, over trig point 447, until it reaches the Slovenian-Italian border.

Finally, the boundary runs along the international border westwards as far as San Bartolomeo and then follows the coastline south-east back to the starting point at Port Preluk.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

*Specificity of the area*

In terms of its geological, topographic and, to some extent, climatic characteristics, the region of Istria comprises four distinct parts: the small mountainous edge to the north and north-east of the peninsula, the north-western coastal part composed of carbonate flysch, the hilly central part with flysch deposits, and the limestone plateau along the southern and western coast. The north-western, western, southern and central parts, which have a Mediterranean climate, are the most important in terms of olive growing. Although the Istrian Peninsula is located at the edge of the latitude suitable for olive growing, it enjoys a milder climate compared to other areas lying on the same latitude, owing to its shape and orientation. In the south of Istria, the climate exhibits Eumediterranean features, with a strong maritime influence, a pronounced dry summer season, an average annual temperature of around 16 °C and total annual precipitation of around 820 mm. The areas to the west and north-west are characterised by a sub-Mediterranean climate with a less pronounced dry summer season, average annual temperatures around 14 °C and total annual precipitation around 1 000 mm.

The fact that the soil and climate of Istria favour olive growing was recognised as far back as Ancient Roman times. Hence, for 2 000 years or more, olives and olive oil have been not just an important economic factor but also Istria's trademark. Some of the amphorae discovered still bear the inscriptions Olei Histrici (Istrian oil) and Olei flos (first-press oil), showing that, even then, dedicated labelling was in place for quality oils. Istrian olive oil was transported via trade routes to northern Italy, Noricum and Pannonia.

In the second half of the twentieth century, olive growing in Istria began developing at a faster pace. With the help of scientific and professional institutions, new olive groves were planted, some of the assortment was expanded, and new olive production and processing techniques were introduced. The ancient tradition of olive growing and the emergence of new trends gradually led to increasing specialisation among Istrian olive growers and processors. Led by their unquenchable curiosity, propensity to innovate and competitive drive, they soon took advantage of the new opportunity to perfect the knowledge and skills passed down through generations.

*Specificity of the product*

'Istra' olive oil is prized for and distinguished by its high quality and organoleptic characteristics that result from a number of factors. The oil has a moderate to intense aroma of fresh olives, often overlapping with notes of fruit, vegetables or green vegetation (e.g. green leaves, green grass, etc.) of differing intensities. The taste of 'Istra' olive oil is harmonious, reminiscent of the healthy fresh olive and usually moderately bitter and sharp.

'Istra' is rich in C6 and C5 volatiles that are linked with its green aromas, its bitterness and sharpness. However, the bitterness and sharpness of 'Istra' are related not only to the high content of volatiles but also to the high proportion of phenolic substances, which, in addition to enhancing the oil's organoleptic properties, also positively affect its nutritional properties and stability, making it resistant to oxidation.

Furthermore, years of research on Istrian extra virgin olive oils have scientifically proven their nutritional value and confirmed that, in addition to being rich in phenolic substances, they also have a high oleic acid content. On average, 'Istra' will have a high oleic acid content (most often over 74 %), while the proportion of linolenic acid will be below 10 %. This specific chemical composition of 'Istra', i.e. the high ratio of oleic to linolenic acids (> 7), in combination with a high phenolic content, enhances its oxidation stability.

Another distinctive feature of 'Istra' is its very low free fatty acid content and low peroxide value.

*Causal link between the area and the product*

Since the Istrian Peninsula lies at the very northern boundary of the olive growing region, it may appear that the conditions there do not favour olive growing. However, Istria has been recognised as an ideal place for producing olives and high quality olive oil ever since Roman times. Direct proof of this is the wide variety of olive varieties grown there. The fact that 'Istra' always meets the organoleptic and chemical criteria set out in point 3.2, irrespective of its varietal composition, indicates that the pedo-climatic conditions in the Istrian Peninsula contribute greatly to the quality and characteristics of the olives grown there and to the chemical and organoleptic properties of the oil.

The main consequence of the specific climatic conditions in Istria is the high proportion of mono-unsaturated oleic acid among all the fatty acids in 'Istra'. This is because olive trees adapt to colder climates by producing more oleic acid (Pannelli et al., 1993, in O. Koprivnjak, I. Vrhovnik, T. Hladnik, Ž. Prgomet, B. Hlevnjak and V. Majetić Germek: *Obilježja prehrambene vrijednosti djevičanskih maslinovih ulja sorti Buža, Istarska bjelica, Leccino i Rosulja, Hrvatski časopis za prehrambenu tehnologiju, biotehnologiju i nutricionizam* No 7, (2012), p. 174).

The rich chemical composition of the volatiles in 'Istra', which affect the green aromas – some even accounting for its bitterness and sharpness – is due not only to the assortment and the climatic conditions, but also to the production processes adopted by olive growers, i.e. picking olives when they are just ripe and applying good practice when keeping and processing the fruit and storing the oil. Hence, the expertise and skills in olive growing and oil making and storage accumulated and perfected by local olive growers and processors through generations play a key role in ensuring the quality of the product.

An early harvest, which takes place when the fruits are still green or mottled and firm, greatly affects the oil's characteristics. This production practice has become a mainstay among Istrian olive growers. In addition to helping avoid low temperatures, which could cause the fruit to freeze, an early harvest prevents infestation by the second and third generations of the olive fruit fly, either of which could severely affect the quality of the oil. Moreover, an early harvest is known to directly improve the chemical quality indicators and the specific characteristics in the taste and aroma of 'Istra'; it is linked to low levels of free fatty acids, a low peroxide value and low K-numbers, and a high intensity of positive organoleptic properties in terms of taste and aroma (K. Brkić Bubola, O. Koprivnjak, B. Sladonja, D. Škevin, I. Belobrajić: *Chemical and sensorial changes of Croatian monovarietal olive oils during ripening*, European Journal of Lipid Science and Technology, vol. 114 (2012), p. 1400).

The interaction of the various local natural and human factors mentioned above give the product bearing the 'Istra' PDO its distinctive character, i.e. harmonious taste and balance between the sharpness, bitterness and fruitiness of the olive fruit.

**Reference to publication of the product specification**

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

http://www.mps.hr/datastore/filestore/87/2017-03-29_-_ZOI_Istra_2017_03_08.pdf

http://www.mkgp.gov.si/fileadmin/mkgp.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocja/Kmetijstvo/zascita_kmetijskih_pridelkov_zivil/ZOI_Istra_2017.pdf