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Contents

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[1] Text with EEA relevance.

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 7 December 2018

on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases

(2018/C 466/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 168(6) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) Pursuant to Article 168 of the Treaty of Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), a high level of human health protection is to be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities. Union action, which is to complement national policies, is to be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and disease, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health.

(2) In accordance with Article 168(6) TFEU, the Council, on a proposal from the Commission may adopt recommendations for the purposes set out in that Article to improve public health, in particular in relation to combating major health scourges, and monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health. Vaccine-preventable diseases are considered major health scourges.

(3) Vaccination is one of the most powerful and cost-effective public health measures developed in the 20th century and remains the main tool for primary prevention of communicable diseases.

(4) While vaccination programmes are the responsibility of the Member States, the cross-border nature of vaccine-preventable diseases and the common challenges faced by national immunisation programmes would benefit from more coordinated EU action and approaches to preventing or limiting the spread of epidemics and diseases with a cross-border dimension.

(5) The rapid spread of misinformation through social media and by vocal anti-vaccination activists has fuelled misconceptions that are shifting the public focus away from the individual and collective benefits of vaccination and the risks posed by communicable diseases and towards increased distrust and fears of unproven adverse events. Action is needed to strengthen dialogue with citizens, to understand their genuine concerns and doubts about vaccination and to adequately address these issues, on the basis of individual needs.

(6) Healthcare workers play a key role in working towards the goal of improved vaccination coverage rates. To support their efforts, they should be offered opportunities for continuing education and training on vaccination in accordance with national recommendations.

(7) Cases where vaccination coverage rates of healthcare workers are considered insufficient with respect to national recommendations should be addressed in order to protect those workers and their patients.

(8) The variation in vaccination schedules between Member States with regard to recommendations, type of vaccines used, number of doses administered, and timing increases the risk that citizens, particularly children, miss a vaccination while moving from one Member State to another.

(9) The need to bring immunisation services closer to citizens requires dedicated efforts to reach out to the most vulnerable in society, in particular through community-based providers. The European Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund ('ESF') and the European Regional Development Fund ('ERDF'), offer significant opportunities for Member States to strengthen vaccine-related training of healthcare workers and to reinforce health infrastructure capacities in the area of vaccination.

(10) Demographic changes, mobility of people, climate change and waning immunity are contributing to epidemiological shifts in the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases, which require vaccination programmes with a life-course approach beyond childhood years. This approach aims to ensure adequate lifelong protection and contributes to healthy living and healthy ageing as well as the sustainability of healthcare systems.

(11) Vaccine shortages have direct consequences for the delivery and implementation of national vaccination programmes; Member States face various vaccine supply disruptions, production capacities in the EU remain limited and difficulties persist in sharing vaccines across borders, while the lack of coordinated forecast planning contributes to demand uncertainty. In this context, the European Union and its citizens remain vulnerable in the event of outbreaks of communicable diseases.

(12) The need to rapidly advance research and development of new vaccines and improve or adapt existing ones requires innovative partnerships and platforms, high-level expertise and stronger links between disciplines and sectors, as well as investment in social and behavioural science research to improve understanding of context-specific determinants underpinning vaccine-hesitant attitudes.

(13) The Council conclusions on vaccination as an effective tool in public health [1] already identify some of these key challenges and ways forward, and call on Member States and the Commission to develop joint actions to share best practices on vaccination policies.

(14) The Council conclusions on childhood immunisation [2] specifically call for the refinement of immunisation registers and information systems to improve the monitoring of vaccination programmes and facilitate the exchange of information between vaccine service providers.

(15) The Commission Communication on the implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy [3] and the Communication on the eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 [4] recall the importance of the digital health agenda and the need to prioritise the development of eHealth and big data solutions. These initiatives are reinforced by the Commission Communication on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market [5], to ensure modern and sustainable healthcare models as well as empowered citizens and healthcare workers.

(16) Directive 2000/54/EC [6] on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work lays down minimum requirements to ensure workers' protection, including the need to offer vaccines for those not previously immunised, and Council Directive 2010/32/EU [7] implementing the Framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU provides that if the risk assessment reveals that there is a risk to the safety and health of workers due to their exposure to biological agents for which effective vaccines exist, workers should be offered vaccination.

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[1] Council conclusions on vaccination as an effective tool in public health (2014/C 438/04) (OJ C 438, 6.12.2014, p. 3).

[2] Council conclusions on childhood immunisation: successes and challenges of European childhood immunisation and the way forward (OJ C 202, 8.7.2011, p. 4).

[3] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Mid-Term Review on the implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy A Connected Digital Single Market for All, COM/2017/0228.

[4] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020, COM/2012/736.

[5] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market; empowering citizens and building a healthier society, COM(2018) 233.

[6] Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work (OJ L 262, 17.10.2000, p. 21).

[7] Council Directive 2010/32/EU of 10 May 2010 implementing the Framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU (OJ L 134, 1.6.2010, p. 66).

(17) Decision 1082/2013/EU ([1]) on serious cross-border threats to health provides the basis for the establishment of a voluntary mechanism for the advance purchase of medical countermeasures for serious cross-border threats to health.

(18) The Council conclusions on common values and principles in European Union health systems ([2]) endorse the principles and overarching values of universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity, which are of paramount importance to ensure equity of access to vaccination services regardless of age, social status, or geographical location, in accordance with national and regional immunisation programmes.

(19) Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 ([3]) mandates the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ('ECDC') to support the prevention and control of communicable diseases and foster the exchange of best practices and experience with regard to vaccination programmes. In addition, the ECDC coordinates data collection, validation, analysis and dissemination at EU level, including on vaccination strategies.

(20) Directive 2001/83/EC ([4]) and Regulation (EU) No 726/2004 ([5]) on the community code relating to medicinal products for human use and establishing a European Medicines Agency provide regulatory authorities with the mandate to promote and protect public health by authorising the use of safe and effective vaccines and by continuously assessing their benefit and risk profile following the granting of marketing authorisation.

(21) The Commission One Health Action Plan ([6]) supports the EU Member States in their fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and calls for streamlined pathways for the authorisation of new antibacterial agents and for research on and development of new vaccines for pathogens associated with antimicrobial resistance to be boosted.

(22) The European Parliament resolution of 19 April 2018 on vaccine hesitancy and the drop in vaccination rates in Europe ([7]) calls on Member States to ensure sufficient vaccination of healthcare workers, take effective steps against misinformation, and implement measures for improving access to medicines. It also calls on the Commission to facilitate a more harmonised schedule for vaccination across the EU.

(23) The Commission Action Plan on Fake News and Online Disinformation aims to contribute to the development of an EU-level strategy on tackling the spreading of disinformation, and the Commission Communication on tackling disinformation ([8]) addresses online platform challenges as regards the spreading of disinformation.

(24) The Commission has supported improving access to modern and essential vaccines in the 77 poorest countries through Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance ('Gavi') since its inception in 2000. EUR 83 million had been contributed by 2015, which contributed to fully immunising 277 million children in the period 2011-2015, and another EUR 200 million have been pledged for the period 2016-2020, with plans to immunise another 300 million children between 2016 and 2020.

(25) At the 2012 World Health Assembly, ministers for health endorsed the Global Vaccine Action Plan, to ensure that by 2020 no one misses out on vital immunisation. In 2014 the European Regional Committee of the World Health Organisation ('WHO') adopted the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015-2020.

([1]) Decision 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 2119/98/EC (OJ L 293, 5.11.2013, p. 1).
([2]) Council conclusions on common values and principles in European Union health systems (OJ C 146, 22.6.2006, p. 1).
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1).
([4]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use (OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67).
([5]) Regulation (EC) No 726/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 laying down Community procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human and veterinary use and establishing a European Medicines Agency (OJ L 136, 30.4.2004, p. 1).
([6]) Commission Communication on a One Health Action Plan to support Member States in the fight against antimicrobial resistance COM(2017) 339.
([7]) European Parliament resolution on vaccine hesitancy and the drop in vaccination rates in Europe (not yet published in the Official Journal).
([8]) Commission Communication on Tackling Online Disinformation: a European Approach, COM(2018) 236.

(26) Goal 3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([1]) - 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' - underlines the importance of vaccines in protecting people against diseases. Furthermore, through the European Consensus on Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future' ([2]), the EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to protecting the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including by helping to secure access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

(27) A Joint Action on Vaccination, co-funded by the third Programme for the Union's action in the field of health ([3]), starting in 2018, is to focus on sharing best practices on national vaccination policies and identifying technical requirements regarding electronic immunisation information systems, vaccine forecasting, prioritisation of vaccine research and development, and research to address vaccine hesitancy.

(28) The actions put forward in this Recommendation aim to increase public health security, reduce inequalities between Member States, and increase the security of vaccine supply within the Internal Market. They complement and reinforce national policies and actions in all Member States while taking into account their different starting points as regards immunisation policies, institutional set-up, regional differences, and healthcare capacities.

(29) This Recommendation is consistent with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT THE MEMBER STATES:

1. Develop and implement vaccination plans, at national and/or regional level, as appropriate, aimed at increasing vaccination coverage with a view to reaching the goals and targets of the WHO's European Vaccine Action Plan by 2020. These plans could include, for example, provisions for sustainable funding and vaccine supply, a life-course approach to vaccination, capacity to respond to emergency situations, and communication and advocacy activities.

2. Aim to achieve by 2020, for measles in particular, a 95 % vaccination coverage rate, with two doses of the vaccine for the targeted child population, and work towards closing the immunity gaps across all other age groups, with a view to eliminating measles in the EU.

3. Introduce routine checks of vaccination status and regular opportunities to vaccinate across different stages of life, through routine visits to the primary healthcare system and through additional measures taken, for example when beginning (pre-) school, in the workplace or in care facilities, according to national capacities.

4. Facilitate access to national and/or regional vaccination services, by:

   (a) simplifying and broadening opportunities to offer vaccination, leveraging community-based providers; and

   (b) ensuring targeted outreach to the most vulnerable groups, including socially excluded groups, so as to bridge inequalities and gaps in vaccination coverage.

5. Encourage and cooperate with higher education institutions and relevant stakeholders to consider including and strengthening training on vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccinology, and immunisation in national medical curricula and any continuing medical education programmes for healthcare workers across all sectors whenever advisable, to strengthen their key role in aiming for higher vaccination coverage rates.

   Make use of the opportunities offered by the ESF and the ERDF in order to support the training and skills development of healthcare workers on vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccinology and immunisation and to reinforce national and regional health infrastructure capacities, including electronic immunisation information systems, in the area of vaccination.

([1]) Resolution 70/1 adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations on 25 September 2015: 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

([2]) Joint Statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission — The New European Consensus on Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future' (OJ C 210, 30.6.2017, p. 1).

([3]) Regulation (EU) No 282/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the establishment of a third Programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1350/2007/EC (OJ L 86, 21.3.2014, p. 1).

6. Wherever necessary, increase communication activities and awareness-raising on the benefits of vaccination by:

   (a) presenting scientific evidence in a form understandable to laypersons, using different context-based strategies, to counter the spread of misinformation, including, for example, through digital tools and partnerships with civil society and other relevant stakeholders;

   (b) engaging with and offering training for relevant actors, such as healthcare workers, education stakeholders, social partners and the media as multipliers, to fight complacency and increase trust in immunisation.

7. Explore the possibility of developing the capacity of health and healthcare institutions to have electronic information on the vaccination status of citizens, for example based on information systems providing reminder functionalities, capturing up-to-date vaccination coverage data across all age groups, and allowing data linkages and exchanges across the healthcare systems.

8. Where appropriate, increase support for vaccine research and innovation so that sufficient resources are available for rapid advancement of new or improved vaccines, and facilitate uptake of vaccine research for better-informed national or regional vaccination programmes and policies.

HEREBY WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS, IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE MEMBER STATES:

9. Aim to establish a *European Vaccination Information Sharing* (EVIS) system, coordinated by the ECDC, in order to:

   (a) together with the national public health authorities,

      (i) examine the feasibility of establishing, by 2020, guidelines for a core EU vaccination schedule taking into account WHO recommendations for routine immunisation, aiming to improve the compatibility of national schedules and promote equity in Union citizens' health protection, as well as the feasibility of creating a common vaccination card;

      (ii) strengthen consistency, transparency, and methodologies in the assessment of national and regional vaccination plans, by sharing scientific evidence and tools with the support of National Immunisation Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs);

      (iii) design EU methodologies and guidance on data requirements for better monitoring of vaccination coverage rates across all age groups, including healthcare workers, in cooperation with the WHO and collect such data and share them at EU level;

   (b) establish, by 2019, a European vaccination information portal, with the support of the European Medicines Agency, to provide objective, transparent and updated evidence online on vaccination and vaccines, their benefits and safety, and the pharmacovigilance process;

   (c) counter online vaccine misinformation and develop evidence-based information tools and guidance to support Member States in responding to vaccine hesitancy, in line with the Commission Communication on tackling online disinformation.

10. With the support of the European Medicines Agency and in cooperation with the ECDC, continuously monitor the benefits and risks of vaccines and vaccinations, at EU level, including through post-marketing surveillance studies.

11. Work towards developing methodologies and strengthen capacities to assess the relative effectiveness of vaccines and vaccination programmes.

12. Strengthen the effective application of Union rules on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work, as laid down in Directive 2000/54/EC and Council Directive 2010/32/EU, taking into account national competences, in particular by supporting continuing education of healthcare workers, monitoring their immunisation status and actively offering vaccination where necessary, to ensure adequate levels of patient and healthcare-workers safety.

13. Provide evidence and data, including through the European Schoolnet, to support Member States' efforts to strengthen the aspects related to vaccinology and immunisation in their national medical curricula and postgraduate education.

14. Work towards strengthening vaccine supply and mitigating risks of shortages by:

    (a) considering developing a virtual European data warehouse on vaccine needs and, if applicable, offerable stocks, to facilitate the voluntary exchange of information on available supplies, possible surpluses and global shortages of essential vaccines;

    (b) considering developing a concept for a mechanism for exchanging vaccine supplies from one Member State to another in the event of an outbreak, improving links between supply of and demand for vaccines;

    (c) exploring the feasibility of physical stockpiling and engaging in a dialogue with vaccine producing companies on a mechanism to facilitate the stockpiling and availability of vaccines in case of outbreaks, taking into account global shortages of essential vaccines;

    (d) considering, jointly with stakeholders, in particular with the vaccine-manufacturing industry, which has a key role in meeting these aims, possibilities for improving EU manufacturing capacity, ensuring continuity of supply and ensuring diversity of suppliers;

    (e) exploring the possibilities of joint procurement of vaccines or antitoxins to be used in pandemics, unexpected outbreaks and in cases of small vaccine demand (small number of cases or very specific populations to be covered);

    (f) supporting the EU Official Medicines Control Laboratories network and its work to ensure that vaccines placed on the EU market are of high quality;

    (g) monitoring compliance with the obligation of continuous supply of medicines placed on marketing authorisation holders (Article 81 of Directive 2001/83/EC) and exploring ways to enhance compliance with that obligation;

    (h) considering facilitating — together with the European Medicines Agency — early dialogue with developers, national policy-makers and regulators in order to support the authorisation of innovative vaccines, including for emerging health threats.

15. Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of EU and national vaccine research and development funding by efforts to:

    (a) reinforce existing partnerships and research infrastructures and establish new ones, including for clinical trials;

    (b) seek consensus on unmet population needs and agreed priorities for vaccines that can be used to inform future vaccine research funding programmes at national and EU level, including leveraging the advantages of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations ('CEPI') and the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness ('GloPID-R');

    (c) consider investing in behavioural and social science research on the determinants of vaccine hesitancy across different subgroups of the population and healthcare workers.

HEREBY WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

16. Examine issues of insufficient vaccine coverage caused by cross-border movement of people within the EU and look into options for addressing them, including by examining the feasibility of developing a common vaccination card/passport for EU citizens (that takes into account potentially different national vaccination schedules and) that is compatible with electronic immunisation information systems and recognised for use across borders, without duplicating work at national level.

17. Aim at producing on a regular basis, for example in the context of State of Health in the EU process, a report on the state of vaccine confidence in the EU, to monitor attitudes to vaccination. Based on that report and taking into account related work by WHO, present guidance that can support Member States in countering vaccine hesitancy.

18. Convene a Coalition for Vaccination to bring together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students' associations in the field, to commit to delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths and exchanging best practice.

19. Strengthen the impact of the annual European Immunisation Week by hosting an EU public awareness initiative and supporting Member States' own activities.

20. Identify barriers to access and support interventions to increase access to vaccination for disadvantaged and socially excluded groups, including by promoting health mediators and grassroots community networks, in line with national recommendations.

21. Develop guidance to overcome the legal and technical barriers impeding the interoperability of national immunisation information systems, having due regard to rules on personal data protection, as set out in the Commission Communication on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market, empowering citizens and building a healthier society.

22. Continue to support research and innovation through the EU framework programmes for research and innovation for the development of safe and effective new vaccines and the optimisation of existing vaccines.

23. Strengthen existing partnerships and collaboration with international actors and initiatives, such as the WHO and its Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE), the European Technical Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (ETAGE), the Global Health Security Initiative and Agenda processes (Global Health Security Initiative, Global Health Security Agenda), Unicef and financing and research initiatives like Gavi, CEPI, GloPID-R and JPIAMR (the Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance).

24. Report on a regular basis on progress in implementing this Recommendation based on indicators agreed with Member States and on information from other relevant sources.

Done at Brussels, 7 December 2018.

For the Council

The President

B. HARTINGER-KLEIN

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DECISION OF THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

of 10 December 2018

amending the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament

(2018/C 466/02)

THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 223(2) thereof,

Having regard to the Statute for Members of the European Parliament ([1]),

Having regard to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

(1) In accordance with Article 69(1) of the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament ([2]) ('the Implementing Measures'), the amounts of the reimbursable travel expenses, daily subsistence allowance and general expenditure allowance may be index-linked annually by the Bureau, up to a maximum increase equal to the annual inflation rate in the European Union in October of the previous year, as published by Eurostat.

(2) The inflation rate in the European Union for the period from October 2017 to October 2018, as notified by Eurostat on 16 November 2018, stands at 2,2 %. The new amounts resulting from the adjustment needed in order to take that inflation rate into account should apply from 1 January 2019 and the Implementing Measures should be amended accordingly.

(3) Pursuant to Article 69(2) of the Implementing Measures, the maximum amount of parliamentary assistance costs defrayable in respect of the personal staff referred to in Article 33(4) of the Implementing Measures is, where appropriate, to be index-linked annually on the basis of data established pursuant to Article 65 of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union laid down by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom, ECSC) No 259/68 ([3]).

(4) In that connection, the Commission has fixed the adjustment rate for 2018 at 1,7 %. Accordingly, the maximum monthly amount defrayable for parliamentary assistance expenses should be increased to EUR 24 943 with effect from 1 July 2018.

(5) In the light of the accounts of the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Fund, it is necessary to take a number of economically inevitable measures with a view to improving the sustainability of the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Fund, to addressing the increasing liquidity problem and to reducing the actuarial deficit and the negative consequences for the European taxpayer.

([1]) Decision 2005/684/EC, Euratom of the European Parliament of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (OJ L 262, 7.10.2005, p. 1).

([2]) Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 19 May and 9 July 2008 concerning implementing measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (OJ C 159, 13.7.2009, p. 1).

([3]) OJ L 56, 4.3.1968, p. 1.

(6) To this end, and with a view to respecting the acquired rights of beneficiaries already receiving a pension, the modalities for additional pensions for beneficiaries who do not, by 1 January 2019, fulfil all the conditions for receiving a pension should be modified as follows: the retirement age for beneficiaries of the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Scheme should be increased from the current age of 63 years to 65 years and a levy of 5 % should be introduced on all pension payments for pensions established after 1 January 2019. Those measures constitute the least intrusive measures possible for the persons concerned,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Implementing Measures are amended as follows:

(1) in Article 15, point (c) is replaced by the following:

'(c) in the event of travel by car, with a reimbursement ceiling of 1 000 km per outward or inward journey: EUR 0,53/km, plus the cost of any ferry crossing or similar transportation required.';

(2) in Article 20(1), point (a) is replaced by the following:

'(a) for the part of the journey between 0 and 50 km: EUR 23,63;';

(3) Article 22 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

'1. The maximum annual amount which may be reimbursed in respect of travel expenses incurred in the cases referred to in Article 10(1), point (b) shall be EUR 4 454.';

(b) the first subparagraph of paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

'3. The maximum annual amount which may be reimbursed in respect of the travel expenses actually incurred by committee or subcommittee chairs travelling to attend conferences or events which deal with a matter of European interest falling within the sphere of responsibility of their committee or subcommittee and which have a parliamentary dimension shall be EUR 4 454. Such participation shall require prior authorisation from the President of Parliament, following verification that appropriations up to the maximum amount indicated above are available.';

(4) in Article 24, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. If the official activity takes place on the territory of the Union, a Member shall receive a lump-sum allowance of EUR 320.';

(5) in Article 26, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. The monthly amount of the allowance under Article 25 shall be EUR 4 513.';

(6) in Article 33, paragraph 4 is replaced by the following:

'4. The maximum monthly amount defrayable in respect of all the personal staff referred to in Article 34 shall be EUR 24 943.';

(7) Article 76 is amended as follows:

(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

'1. An additional pension which becomes payable to former Members or other beneficiaries pursuant to Articles 1, 3 and 4 of Annex VII to the PEAM Rules before 1 January 2019 shall continue to be paid in accordance with that Annex as applicable until 31 December 2018.';

(b) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. Any additional pension which on 1 January 2019 has not yet become payable, shall be determined and paid pursuant to Articles 1 and 2 of Annex VII to the PEAM Rules subject to the following conditions and derogations:

(a) the pension shall be payable from the first day of the calendar month following the date when the Member reaches the age of 65 years;

(b) the pension shall be subject to a special levy amounting to 5 % of the nominal amount of the pension. The levy shall be directly payable to the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Fund.';

(c) the following paragraph is inserted:

'2a. The additional (voluntary) pension for other beneficiaries pursuant to Articles 3 and 4 of Annex VII to the PEAM Rules which on 1 January 2019 has not yet become payable shall be subject to a special levy amounting to 5 % of the nominal amount of the pension. The levy shall be directly payable to the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Fund.'

Article 2

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

This Decision shall apply from 1 January 2019, with the exception of Article 1(6), which shall apply from 1 July 2018.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates [1]

27 December 2018

(2018/C 466/03)

1 euro =

	Currency	Exchange rate		Currency	Exchange rate
USD	US dollar	1,1377	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,5500
JPY	Japanese yen	126,14	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,9109
DKK	Danish krone	7,4672	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,6964
GBP	Pound sterling	0,90073	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,5617
SEK	Swedish krona	10,2725	KRW	South Korean won	1 276,84
CHF	Swiss franc	1,1279	ZAR	South African rand	16,5208
ISK	Iceland króna	133,00	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,8109
NOK	Norwegian krone	9,9698	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,4125
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	16 608,20
CZK	Czech koruna	25,858	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,7419
HUF	Hungarian forint	321,56	PHP	Philippine peso	59,991
PLN	Polish zloty	4,2945	RUB	Russian rouble	78,8767
RON	Romanian leu	4,6536	THB	Thai baht	37,026
TRY	Turkish lira	6,0067	BRL	Brazilian real	4,4786
AUD	Australian dollar	1,6161	MXN	Mexican peso	22,6283
			INR	Indian rupee	79,9445

[1] *Source*: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

Explanatory Notes to the Combined Nomenclature of the European Union

(2018/C 466/04)

Pursuant to Article 9(1)(a) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 [1], the Explanatory Notes to the Combined Nomenclature of the European Union [2] are hereby amended as follows:

On page 380, the text '**9406 00 Prefabricated buildings**' *is replaced by the following:*

'**9406 Prefabricated buildings**

This heading includes so-called "poly-tunnels", consisting of constructive elements (typically steel or aluminium tubes), walls and roof (typically made of plastics or glass), used in horticulture, allowing the plants to be grown under cover. They are designed for long-term outdoor use, are of stable construction and weatherproof. They have to be of a size to enable a person to enter. They may be also designed to be equipped with additional features, such as heating or air conditioning.

However, "poly-tunnels" used in horticulture that do not have the character of a prefabricated building (e.g. they are of an unstable construction, designed for short term use, they can be dismantled and moved easily) are to be classified according to the constituent material of their constructive elements (typically steel or aluminium tubes) which gives the article its essential character within the meaning of general rule 3 (b).

Examples of products falling under heading 9406:

Image 1

Image 2

Examples of products which are to be classified according to the constituent material of their constructive element (tubes):

Image 3

[1] Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 of 23 July 1987 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff (OJ L 256, 7.9.1987, p. 1).

[2] OJ C 76, 4.3.2015, p. 1.

Image 4

Image 5.'

Commission notice on current State aid recovery interest rates and reference/discount rates for 28 Member States applicable as from 1 January 2019

(Published in accordance with Article 10 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 794/2004 of 21 April 2004 (OJ L 140, 30.4.2004, p. 1))

(2018/C 466/05)

Base rates calculated in accordance with the Communication from the Commission on the revision of the method for setting the reference and discount rates (OJ C 14, 19.1.2008, p. 6). Depending on the use of the reference rate, the appropriate margins have still to be added as defined in this communication. For the discount rate this means that a margin of 100 basis points has to be added. The Commission Regulation (EC) No 271/2008 of 30 January 2008 amending Regulation (EC) No 794/2004 foresees that, unless otherwise provided for in a specific decision, the recovery rate will also be calculated by adding 100 basis points to the base rate.

Modified rates are indicated in bold.

Previous table published in OJ C 412, 14.11.2018, p. 4.

From	To	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	UK
1.1.2019	…	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**0,00**	**-0,16**	**1,98**	**-0,16**	**0,02**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**0,28**	**0,56**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**1,87**	**-0,16**	**3,56**	**-0,31**	**-0,16**	**-0,16**	**1,09**

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/06)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Belgium

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ([1]). In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ([2]), euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuance of euro coins are authorised to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, one of these being that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Belgium

Subject of commemoration: The 450th anniversary of the death of Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Description of the design: The inner part of the piece depicts the portrait of the famous Belgian artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder, together with a painting on an easel. Above this, you can find the name P. Bruegel, the years 1569, with a subtle obelisk referring to the year of death, and 2019, the year of issuance.

As the Royal Dutch Mint will strike the coins, the mintmark of Utrecht, a mercury staff is located on the left together with the Belgian mint director mintmark, the coat of arms of the municipality Herzele, the country code BE. The initials LL referring to the designer of the coin, Mr Luc Luycx, are located on the right. Finally, around the edge of the inner part small dots form a circle.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Number of coins to be issued: 155 000 coins

Date of issue: January 2019

([1]) See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

([2]) See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/07)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Belgium

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins [1]. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 [2], euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuance of euro coins are authorised to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, one of these being that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Belgium

Subject of commemoration: 25th anniversary of the European Monetary Institute (EMI)

Description of the design: The inner part of the piece depicts the portrait Alexandre Lamfalussy, the first president of the EMI, on the right with his name below. On the left-hand side, the abbreviation EMI stands central with the year 1994 above, referring to date of the establishment of the Institute and the designation of Lamfalussy as its first president. Below 'EMI', several coins are depicted falling on each other with the inscription €, 'ECU' and 'BEF' from top to bottom. Given the fact that this is a Belgian issuance, we have chosen for 'BEF', the abbreviation of our former national currency. The purpose of this representation is to symbolise the transition of the national currencies to an European single currency, the euro as the EMI's main focus was on establishing the European System of Central Banks, including the ECB and the new currency On the upper part of the left side of the coin is an inscription 'European Monetary Institute'.

As the Royal Dutch Mint will strike the coins, the mintmark of Utrecht, a mercury staff is located on the left with the Belgian mint director mintmark, the coat of arms of the municipality Herzele. The country code BE and the year mark 2019 are located on the bottom. The initials LL referring to the designer of the coin, Mr Luc Luycx, are inscribed on the right.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Number of coins to be issued: 155 000 coins

Date of issue: January 2019

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[1] See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

[2] See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/08)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Germany

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins [1]. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 [2], euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Germany

Subject of commemoration: The 70th anniversary of the Bundesrat's founding

Description of the design: The design shows a highly detailed and finely sculpted rendering of the Bundesrat building. The upper half of the coin's inner section includes the mint mark of the respective mint ('A', 'D', 'F', 'G' or 'J'), the artist's initials and the year '2019'. The lower half of the coin's inner section contains the inscription 'BUNDESRAT' and Germany's issuing country code 'D'.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 30 000 000

Date of issue: January/February 2019

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[1] See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

[2] See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/09)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Spain

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins [1]. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 [2], euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Spain

Subject of commemoration: Unesco's World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites — the old town of Avila and its churches outside the walls

Description of the design: The city of Avila has preserved the auterity and purity of the mediaeval style, surrounded by the most complete walls of Spain.

The design reproduces at the centre a detail of the Avila wall. At the top side circular ascending the word 'ESPANA', the year of issuance '2019' and the mint mark.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 1 000 000

Date of issue: First quarter 2019

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[1] See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

[2] See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/10)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Italy

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins ([1]). In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 ([2]), euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Italy

Subject of commemoration: The 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci

Description of the design: The design shows a detail of the painting 'Dama con l'ermellino' (Lady with an Ermine) by Leonardo da Vinci (Czartoryski Museum in Krakow). On the left, the inscription 'Leonardo', the initials of the author Maria Angela Cassol 'MAC' and the logo 'RI' acronym of the Italian Republic; on the right, 'R', mintmark of the Mint of Rome and the dates '1519-2019', respectively the year of Leonardo's death and the year of the coin issuance.

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 3 000 000

Date of issue: January 2019

([1]) See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

([2]) See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

New national side of euro coins intended for circulation

(2018/C 466/11)

National side of the new commemorative 2-euro coin intended for circulation and issued by Luxembourg

Euro coins intended for circulation have legal tender status throughout the euro area. For the purpose of informing the public and all parties who handle the coins, the Commission publishes a description of the designs of all new coins [1]. In accordance with the Council conclusions of 10 February 2009 [2], euro-area Member States and countries that have concluded a monetary agreement with the European Union providing for the issuing of euro coins are allowed to issue commemorative euro coins intended for circulation, provided that certain conditions are met, particularly that only the 2-euro denomination is used. These coins have the same technical characteristics as other 2-euro coins, but their national face features a commemorative design that is highly symbolic in national or European terms.

Issuing country: Luxembourg

Subject of commemoration: The 100th anniversary of the accession to the throne of Grand Duchess Charlotte

Description of the design: The design shows on the left hand the effigy of His Royal Highness, the Grand Duke Henri, and on the right hand the effigy of the Grand Duchess Charlotte. At the bottom is the name of the issuing country 'LUXEMBOURG' and underneath the year of issuance '2019'. At the top, in semi-circle around the effigies is the inscription 'Centenaire de l'accession au trône de la Grande-Duchesse Charlotte' (Centenary of the accession to the throne of Grand Duchess Charlotte).

The coin's outer ring depicts the 12 stars of the European flag.

Estimated number of coins to be issued: 500 000

Date of issue: January 2019

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[1] See OJ C 373, 28.12.2001, p. 1 for the national faces of all the coins issued in 2002.

[2] See the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of 10 February 2009 and the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008 on common guidelines for the national sides and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation (OJ L 9, 14.1.2009, p. 52).

NOTICES FROM MEMBER STATES

Commission information notice pursuant to Article 17(5) of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community

Invitation to tender in respect of the operation of scheduled air services in accordance with public service obligations

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2018/C 466/12)

Member State	Portugal
Routes concerned	Bragança – Vila Real – Viseu – Cascais – Portimão – Cascais – Viseu – Vila Real – Bragança
Period of validity of the contract	4 years following the start of the operation
Deadline for submission of tenders	62 days after the day of publication of the present invitation
Address where the text of the invitation to tender and any relevant information and/or documentation related to the public tender and the modified public service obligations can be obtained	All documents are available from: http://www.saphety.com For more information please contact: Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure Office of the Secretary of State for Infrastructure Av. Barbosa do Bocage n.º 5 – 2.º andar 1049-039 Lisboa PORTUGAL Email: gab.infraestruturas@mpi.gov.pt

Public holidays 2019

(2018/C 466/13)

Belgique/België	1.1, 2.1, 22.4, 1.5, 8.5, 30.5, 10.6, 11.7, 21.7, 15.8, 27.9, 1.11, 2.11, 11.11, 15.11, 25.12, 26.12, 27.12, 30.12, 31.12
България	1.1, 3.3, 4.3, 26.4, 27.4, 28.4, 29.4, 1.5, 6.5, 24.5, 6.9, 22.9, 23.9, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Česká republika	1.1, 19.4, 22.4, 1.5, 8.5, 5.7, 6.7, 28.9, 28.10, 17.11, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Danmark	1.1, 18.4, 19.4, 21.4, 22.4, 17.5, 30.5, 9.6, 10.6, 25.12, 26.12
Deutschland	1.1, 19.4, 22.4, 1.5, 30.5, 10.6, 3.10, 25.12, 26.12
Eesti	1.1, 24.2, 19.4, 21.4, 1.5, 9.6, 23.6, 24.6, 20.8, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Éire/Ireland	1.1, 18.3, 22.4, 6.5, 3.6, 5.8, 28.10, 25.12, 26.12
Ελλάδα	1.1, 6.1, 11.3, 25.3, 26.4, 29.4, 1.5, 17.6, 15.8, 28.10, 25.12, 26.12
España	1.1, 19.4, 1.5, 15.8, 12.10, 1.11, 6.12, 25.12
France	1.1, 22.4, 1.5, 8.5, 30.5, 10.6, 14.7, 15.8, 1.11, 11.11, 25.12
Hrvatska	1.1, 6.1, 22.4, 1.5, 20.6, 22.6, 25.6, 5.8, 15.8, 8.10, 1.11, 25.12, 26.12
Italia	1.1, 6.1, 22.4, 25.4, 1.5, 2.6, 15.8, 1.11, 8.12, 25.12, 26.12
Κύπρος/Kıbrıs	1.1, 6.1, 11.3, 25.3, 1.4, 26.4, 29.4, 1.5, 17.6, 15.8, 1.10, 28.10, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Latvija	1.1, 19.4, 21.4, 22.4, 1.5, 4.5, 6.5, 23.6, 24.6, 18.11, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12, 31.12
Lietuva	1.1, 16.2, 11.3, 21.4, 22.4, 1.5, 5.5, 3.6, 24.6, 6.7, 15.8, 1.11, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Luxembourg	1.1, 22.4, 1.5, 30.5, 10.6, 23.6, 15.8, 1.11, 25.12, 26.12
Magyarország	1.1, 15.3, 19.4, 22.4, 1.5, 20.8, 23.10, 1.11, 25.12, 26.12
Malta	1.1, 10.2, 19.3, 31.3, 19.4, 1.5, 7.6, 29.6, 15.8, 8.9, 21.9, 8.12, 13.12, 25.12
Nederland	1.1, 21.4, 22.4, 27.4, 30.5, 31.5, 9.6, 10.6, 25.12, 26.12, 27.12
Österreich	1.1, 6.1, 22.4, 1.5, 30.5, 10.6, 20.6, 15.8, 26.10, 1.11, 8.12, 25.12, 26.12
Polska	1.1, 6.1, 21.4, 22.4, 1.5, 3.5, 9.6, 20.6, 15.8, 1.11, 11.11, 25.12, 26.12
Portugal	1.1, 19.4, 21.4, 25.4, 1.5, 10.6, 20.6, 15.8, 5.10, 1.11, 1.12, 8.12, 25.12
România	1.1, 2.1, 24.1, 26.4, 28.4, 29.4, 1.5, 1.6, 16.6, 17.6, 15.8, 30.11, 1.12, 25.12, 26.12
Slovenija	1.1, 2.1, 8.2, 21.4, 22.4, 27.4, 1.5, 2.5, 9.6, 25.6, 15.8, 31.10, 1.11, 25.12, 26.12

Slovensko	1.1, 6.1, 19.4, 22.4, 1.5, 8.5, 5.7, 29.8, 1.9, 15.9, 1.11, 17.11, 24.12, 25.12, 26.12
Suomi/Finland	1.1, 6.1, 19.4, 21.4, 22.4, 1.5, 30.5, 9.6, 22.6, 2.11, 6.12, 25.12, 26.12
Sverige	1.1, 6.1, 19.4, 21.4, 22.4, 1.5, 30.5, 6.6, 9.6, 22.6, 2.11, 25.12, 26.12
United Kingdom	Wales and England: 1.1, 19.4, 22.4, 6.5, 27.5, 26.8, 25.12, 26.12 Northern Ireland: 1.1, 2.1, 19.4, 6.5, 27.5, 5.8, 30.11, 2.12, 25.12, 26.12 Scotland: 1.1, 17.3, 18.3, 19.4, 22.4, 6.5, 27.5, 12.7, 26.8, 25.12, 26.12

V

(Announcements)

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of the single document amended following the approval of a minor amendment pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

(2018/C 466/14)

The European Commission has approved this minor amendment application in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 6(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ([1]).

The application for approval of this minor amendment is made public in the DOOR Commission database

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'SIDRA DE ASTURIAS'/'SIDRA D'ASTURIES'

EU No PDO-ES-0260-AM01 — 31.10.2017

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name(s)**

'Sidra de Asturias'/'Sidra d'Asturies'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Spain

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

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.8. other products listed in Annex I to the Treaty (spices, etc.)

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

The products to be protected by the Protected Designation of Origin 'Sidra de Asturias' are:

— *Sidra* ('cider'): The beverage obtained from the partial or full alcoholic fermentation of fresh apples or apple juice. Its minimum actual alcoholic strength must be 5 % by volume.

Cider with a sugar content of less than 30 g/l is 'dry' cider; between 30 and 50 g/l the cider is 'semi-dry'; and 'sweet cider' contains over 50 g/l (up to a maximum of 80 g/l).

The organoleptic properties of 'cider' are: a straightforward taste which may be dry, semi-dry or sweet; lasting bubbles and light foam of naturally occurring carbon dioxide; and a clean and balanced aroma with hints of raw or stewed apples. It is translucent and sparkling in appearance, and varying shades of yellow in colour.

— *Sidra natural* ('traditional cider'): The naturally carbonated beverage obtained from the partial or full alcoholic fermentation of fresh apples or apple juice, with no added sugar, produced using traditional methods. Its minimum actual alcoholic strength must be 5 % by volume.

'Traditional cider' is characterised by a straightforward taste, striking a balance between sharp and bitter and with a mild sensation of natural fizz. Its aroma is clean and fresh, with varietal or fruity notes and a slight tartness. It is translucent and sparkling in appearance, and it can be any one of various shades of yellow or the colour of straw.

([1]) OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

Permitted practices

1. Juices

a) The extraction of juices by pressing cider apples of an authorised variety or a blend of authorised varieties;

b) The use of refrigeration and inert gas to preserve the pure apple juices;

c) Filtration and clarification using authorised substances and pectic enzymes;

d) Correction of juices using authorised substances;

e) Concentration of juices obtained by pressing the varieties authorised for sweetening.

2. *Sidra* ('cider')

a) Blending of protected ciders;

b) Cidermaking practices: racking, clarification, filtration;

c) The use of refrigeration;

d) Correction using authorised substances;

e) The use of inert gases (nitrogen) to preserve ciders;

f) Fermentation with selected yeasts;

g) The addition of carbon dioxide gas before bottling, using only gas that is released naturally during the fermentation of the juices;

h) The addition of up to 80 g of sugar (in the form of sugar syrup, natural juice or concentrated apple juice) per litre for sweetening purposes, up to a maximum proportion of one part sweetening substance to ten parts unsweetened cider.

3. *Sidra natural* ('traditional cider')

a) Traditional cidermaking practices;

b) racking, clarification, filtration;

c) The use of refrigeration;

d) Correction using authorised substances;

e) The use of inert gases (nitrogen) to preserve ciders;

f) Fermentation with selected yeasts;

Banned practices

1. Juices

a) Any process that alters the natural sugar content of the pure apple juices;

b) Mixing pure juice with concentrate in any proportion;

c) Artificial flavouring of juices;

d) Pasteurisation.

2. *Sidra* ('cider')

a) Artificially increasing the natural alcohol content;

b) Correction and/or addition of unauthorised products;

c) The addition of water at any stage of production;

d) The addition of wine, fruit ferments and/or alcohol from any source;

e) The use of artificial sweeteners and dextrins;

f) The use of colourings other than caramel;

g) The use of esters, flavourings and similar substances of any type or origin;

h) Pasteurisation;

i) The addition of any carbon dioxide other than that naturally released in the cidermaking process.

3. *Sidra natural* ('traditional cider')

a) All practices listed under point 2;

b) The addition of carbon dioxide of any origin;

c) The use of sugar of any type or origin.

Sidra natural ('traditional cider') has the following physical and chemical properties:

Volatile acidity: < 2,0 g/l of acetic acid Alcoholic strength: > 5 % (v/v). Total sulphur dioxide: < 150 mg/l. In-bottle pressure (at 20 °C): > 0,5 atm.

Sidra ('cider') has the following physical and chemical properties:

Volatile acidity: < 2,0 g/l of acetic acid Alcoholic strength: > 5 % (v/v). Total sulphur dioxide: < 200 mg/l. In-bottle carbon dioxide pressure (at 20 °C): > 3 atm.

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

Both *sidra* ('cider') and *sidra natural* ('traditional cider') are made from cider apple varieties traditionally grown in the production area.

On the basis of their sharpness and concentration of phenolic compounds, the authorised varieties are classified into nine technological categories: sweet, bittersweet, bitter, semisharp, bitter-semisharp, semisharp-bitter, sharp, bittersharp and sharpbitter.

Technological classification

Sharp:

Blanquina, Limón Montés, Teórica, San Roqueña, Raxao, Fuentes, Xuanina, Regona, Prieta, Collaos, Josefa, Carrandona, Raxila Ácida, Collaina, Raxina Marelo, Perurico Precoz, Perurico, Raxona Ácida, Raxina Ácida, Arbeya, Reineta Caravia, Durón Encarnado, Fresnosa, Peñarudes, Perracabiella, Reineta Encarnada, Repinaldo de Hueso, San Justo and Sucu

Bittersharp:

Beldredo, Picón, Madiedo, Martina and Montoto

Bitter:

Clara, Amariega and Cladurina

Sharpbitter:

Meana, Lin, Cladurina Amargoácida and Rosadona

Semisharp-bitter:

Durcolorá and Colorá Amarga

Semisharp:

Solarina, De la Riega, Carrió, Perico, Perezosa, Durona de Tresali, Panquerina, Raxila Rayada, Antonona, Chata Encarnada, Durón d'Arroes, Maria Elena, Mariñana, Miyeres, Repinaldo Caravia, Reineta Pinta and Celso

Bitter-semisharp:

Montes de Llamera and Corchu

Sweet:

Ernestina, Verdialona, Raxila Dulce, Raxina Dulce, Raxona Dulce, Chata Blanca, Cristalina, Dura, Montés de Flor, Paraguas and Verdosa

Bittersweet:

Coloradona, Raxina Amarga and Raxarega.

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

The products protected by the PDO 'Sidra de Asturias'/'Sidra d'Asturies' (*sidra* or 'cider' and *sidra natural* or 'traditional cider') are made from cider apples of the varieties authorised under the PDO rules that have been grown on parcels of land registered with the Regulatory Board. The products must be made at ciderhouses located in the production area that are also registered with the Regulatory Board and have passed a number of tests examining their manufacturing and processing methods. These tests, which check the varieties used, growing techniques, raw materials, pressing, cidermaking processes, bottling and labelling, are to be conducted in accordance with the Regulatory Board's documented quality system procedure.

When making *sidra* ('cider'), particular care must be taken to ensure that when carbon dioxide is added, it is only the carbon dioxide released naturally in the fermentation process (and then collected, purified, compressed, filtered and stored) and that it is added before bottling. This entire process is to be monitored following the instructions laid down in the Regulatory Board's quality manual, which must include, as a minimum, the analysis technique to be used to detect carbon dioxide by identifying the stable light isotopes and the C^{13}/C^{12} ratio, which allow the origin of the added gas to be verified.

The certification process must include visual inspections, paperwork checks and product sampling. Certified ciders may be labelled with the Regulatory Board's logo and the words Denominación de Origen Protegida 'Sidra de Asturias'. The bottle will also be labelled with a serial number provided by the Board.

The cidermaking process consists of the following stages: washing and crushing the apples; pressing them to extract the pure apple juice; fermentation; racking; clarification; filtration using permitted products and materials; and finally bottling.

Sidra ('cider') may be carbonated using carbon dioxide released naturally during the cidermaking process, in accordance with the conditions laid down in this document, the product specification and the quality manual.

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

The reason for including bottling within the designated area as part of the PDO 'Sidra de Asturias' cider-making process is to protect the reputation of the product by ensuring both the authenticity of the product and its quality and characteristics. Beneficiaries of this scheme assume full and collective responsibility for ensuring these aspects through the Regulatory Board set up for this purpose.

This ensures that the products obtained can be subject to inspection and traceability measures, preventing any possibility of them being mixed with products from elsewhere. This is because the inspections carried out in the production area (under the responsibility of the PDO beneficiaries) are thorough and systematic, underpinned by a comprehensive knowledge of the product characteristics.

Moreover, since 'cider' can only be carbonated using the carbon dioxide that occurs naturally during the production process, suitable equipment needs to be in place alongside the bottling machinery. It would be inconvenient, and greatly complicate the inspection process, if the cider were to be transported to other bottling plants, which risks 'adulterating' the process.

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

To avoid misleading consumers, cider labels must comply with the Ministerial Order of 1 August 1979 regulating ciders and other beverages made from apples. Article 17 of this Order requires, among other things, that the bottle state whether the product is *sidra* ('cider') or *sidra natural* ('traditional cider').

As well as any information required under the applicable legislation, the PDO name ('Sidra de Asturias') must appear prominently on the front and back labels of bottled ciders.

The consumer can clearly distinguish between the different product types by their presentation, as different types of bottle stopper are used. The pressure in a bottle of *sidra* ('cider') is more than three atmospheres, clearly requiring a different kind of stopper. The types of glass bottle used for the two products are also different.

In any case, all protected ciders that meet the conditions laid down in the rules on using the name must be labelled with the words PDO 'Sidra de Asturias'. Furthermore, under the general rules on the labelling and presentation of food products, the labels must also state whether the product is *sidra* ('cider') or *sidra natural* ('traditional cider').

All bottles containing cider protected by this PDO must be dispatched with a numbered control label issued by the Regulatory Board.

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

The Autonomous Community of the Principality of Asturias is the apple-growing and cidermaking area for products with the Protected Designation of Origin 'Sidra de Asturias'. Asturias is a geographical and historical region of northern Spain comprising 78 municipalities: Allande, Aller, Amieva, Avilés, Belmonte de Miranda, Bimenes, Boal, Cabrales, Cabranes, Candamo, Cangas de Narcea, Cangas de Onís, Caravia, Carreño, Caso, Castrillón, Castropol, Coaña, Colunga, Corvera, Cudillero, Degaña, El Franco, Gijón, Gozón, Grado, Grandas de Salime, Ibias, Illano, Illas, Langreo, Las Regueras, Laviana, Lena, Llanera, Llanes, Mieres, Morcín, Muros de Nalón, Nava, Navia, Noreña, Onís, Oviedo, Parres, Peñamellera Alta, Peñamellera Baja, Pesoz, Piloña, Ponga, Pravia, Proaza, Quirós, Ribadedeva, Ribadesella, Ribera de Arriba, Riosa, Salas, San Martín de Oscos, San Martín del Rey Aurelio, Santirso de Abres, Santa Eulalia de Oscos, Santo Adriano, Sariego, Siero, Sobrescobio, Somiedo, Soto del Barco, Tapia de Casariego, Taramundi, Teverga, Tineo, Valdés, Vegadeo, Villanueva de Oscos, Villaviciosa, Villayón, Yernes and Tameza.

Although the defined geographical area has a total area of 10 560 km^2, Asturias is one of Europe's most mountainous regions. This means that the farmland available for growing apples is severely limited, with cultivation restricted to small valleys and hillsides throughout the defined area (i.e. the 78 municipalities listed above).

Due to the terrain and growing conditions in Asturias, farms are, to a greater or lesser extent, scattered throughout the different municipalities, meaning that that rural population centres are small and dispersed, as are the plots of land.

Cider apples were traditionally grown in Asturias following an extensive and mixed (cider apple-grassland pasture) farming model. Because farms in Asturias tend to be very small, this combination of livestock farming and growing apples for cider-making had a considerable social and economic impact on Asturian countryside life: apple-growing generated extra income on family farms, providing an environmentally sustainable activity that retains population, thus helping, to some extent, to hold back the rural exodus.

Just in the same way as cider apple orchards are spread out over the territory, ciderhouses were traditionally small-scale facilities on farms that made cider to be drunk by the farming family. This practice has gradually been abandoned, and modern ciderhouses are concentrated in locations that are close to infrastructure and have more suitable services for industrial activity.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

Historical:

Asturias is Spain's leading cider-producing region, accounting for 80 % of national production. As can be seen from writings by the geographer Strabo dating back to 60 BC, the practices of growing cider apples and making cider are deeply ingrained in the region's history.

Natural:

Over the centuries, using trees grown from seeds (without the use of grafts), Asturian farmers have gradually selected the most productive varieties that are best suited to the local environment and that yield the best cider apples. The varieties' different properties (sweet, bittersweet, bitter, semisharp, bitter-semisharp, semisharp-bitter, sharp, bittersharp and sharpbitter) and the resulting blends of these categories give Asturian ciders their unique semi-sharpness.

The fact that the designation covers two product types (sidra natural or 'traditional cider' and sidra or 'cider') reflects Spanish quality rules (Ministerial Order of 1 September 1979), which differentiate between these two products on the basis that carbon dioxide not naturally produced during the cidermaking process — i.e. from any source — can be added to the 'cider' product category.

Of the two types of cider covered by the designation of origin, sidra natural or 'traditional cider' is the basic product, while sidra ('cider') is made by adding the carbon dioxide recovered during the fermentation process (i.e. naturally occurring gas only) and a small amount of sugar syrup to 'traditional cider'. The raw material, production technology and industrial facilities are virtually the same, although 'traditional cider' dates back much further historically. 'Cider' with added carbon dioxide only appeared more recently as a result of research and developments in technology achieved in the nineteenth century.

In Spain, the name 'Asturias' has historically been linked to cidermaking and cider drinking, and the region now accounts for the bulk of domestic production.

Human factor:

Cider is the Asturian food and agriculture sector's third most important product in terms of turnover. *Sidra natural* or 'traditional cider' is produced at traditional ciderhouses, and there are now 106 commercial-scale ciderhouses in Asturias. Family tradition is particularly strong, with over 60 % of these ciderhouses having been inherited by their owners. The majority are run as sole traderships, with corporations and limited liability companies accounting for only around 10 % of ciderhouses. The Asturian market represents 93 % of total 'traditional cider' sales. Ten companies dominate cider production, together accounting for 61 % of the industry's total turnover. Around 80 % of production is for the domestic market, while some 13-14 % is exported and the remaining 7 % is consumed within the region of Asturias itself.

Reference to publication of the product specification

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

https://www.asturias.es/Asturias/descargas/PDF_TEMAS/Agricultura/Alimentaci%C3%B3n/sidra_de_asturias_modificado.pdf

CORRIGENDA

Corrigendum to Judgment of the Court of 17 September 2018 in Case E-10/17 Nye Kystlink AS Color Group AS and Color Line AS (Article 53 EEA — Article 54 EEA — Principle of equivalence — Principle of effectiveness — National rules on the limitation period for claims for damages)

(Official Journal of the European Union C 459 of 20 December 2018)

(2018/C 466/15)

On page 47, and on the cover, in the title:

for: '**Nye Kystlink AS Color Group AS and Color Line AS**',

read: '**Nye Kystlink AS v Color Group AS and Color Line AS**'.

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