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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 8 February 2023

on Union disaster resilience goals

(2023/C 56/01)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 6(5) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Union Civil Protection Mechanism ('Union Mechanism'), established by Decision No 1313/2013/EU, aims to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the Member States and facilitate coordination in the field of civil protection to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters.
- (2) Pursuant to Article 6(5) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, the Commission is to establish and develop Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection in cooperation with Member States, and adopt recommendations to define them as a non-binding common baseline to support prevention and preparedness actions in the event of disasters which cause or are capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects.
- (3) The geographical scope of the Union disaster resilience goals covers the Union and its Member States and the Participating States to the Union Mechanism ⁽²⁾ pursuant to Article 4(4a) and Article 4(12), of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.
- (4) The Union is facing more frequent and severe natural and man-made disasters. Climate change and environmental degradation are exacerbating the Union's risks by increasing the frequency and intensity of weather-related events, harmful pollution, water scarcity and biodiversity loss. Furthermore, disasters increasingly have effects across borders and sectors. In addition to claiming lives and impacting human health, disasters undermine economic prosperity and cause irreparable losses to the environment, the biodiversity and cultural heritage. Disaster resilience should therefore be strengthened at Union level and in the Member States. The Union disaster resilience goals are to contribute to strengthen disaster resilience and improve the capacity of the Union and its Member States to withstand the effects of current and future disasters. Comprehensive and integrated approaches to disaster risk management are key to strengthening resilience.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924.

⁽²⁾ In light of Article 28(1), of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, where reference is made to Member States, it is to be understood as including Participating States as defined in Article 4(12) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, and Türkiye are participating in the Union Mechanism.

- (5) Strengthening disaster resilience should be underpinned by specific horizontal principles and approaches.
- (6) The Union disaster resilience goals annexed to this Recommendation were established in cooperation with the Member States.
- (7) Particular attention was paid to the specific needs of vulnerable groups in the establishment of the Union disaster resilience goals. Their needs should be taken into account in the implementation and review of the Union disaster resilience goals.
- (8) Synergies and complementarity with relevant international resilience frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and other sectoral Union resilience building initiatives should be sought in the implementation, and further development of the Union disaster resilience goals to improve the overall capacity of the Union and its Member States to withstand the effects of natural and man-made disasters.
- (9) Cooperation therefore needs to be deepened and expanded to national and appropriate sub-national authorities beyond the area of civil protection, as well as with essential services providers, including the transport sector, and stakeholders in the private sector, non-governmental bodies, the research community and experts in cultural heritage. The timely release of data in an accessible, interoperable and reusable way will facilitate the cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation.
- (10) Such cooperation may also include civil-military cooperation in line with Decision 1313/2013/EU ⁽³⁾.
- (11) Competent authorities of Member States, the Commission and relevant Union agencies within their respective mandates should be ready to respond to different types and scales of natural and man-made disasters, including industrial, maritime and other transport-related accidents, health emergencies and crisis situations characterised by uncertainty, and disruptive events that could challenge civil protection operations or business continuity.
- (12) Pursuant to Article 6(5) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, the Union disaster resilience goals are to be based on current and forward-looking scenarios, including the effects of climate change on disaster risks, data on past events and cross-sectoral impact analysis with particular attention given to vulnerable groups. At the same time, disaster management planning and scenario-building, set out in Article 10 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, are to take into account the work carried out in relation to the Union disaster resilience goals. The development of goals and the scenario-building are therefore closely interlinked. While scenarios will provide evidence and risk-specific information that should underpin the formulation of goals, the Union disaster resilience goals should in turn identify areas that are important for disaster resilience and thus inform scenario-building.
- (13) The Union disaster resilience goals should therefore be continuously reviewed and revised in the light of the progress made in their development and implementation, new circumstances and changing needs.
- (14) Reporting pursuant to Article 34(2) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU should provide regular information inter alia on the progress made towards the Union disaster resilience goals,

⁽³⁾ The use of military means under civilian lead as a last resort may constitute an important contribution to disaster response. Where the use of military capacities in support of civil protection operations is considered to be appropriate, cooperation with the military should follow the modalities, procedures and criteria established by the Council or its competent bodies for making available to the Union Mechanism military capacities relevant to civil protection and should be in line with the relevant international guidelines.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

SUBJECT MATTER AND PURPOSE

1. Pursuant to Article 6(5) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, this Recommendation establishes Union disaster resilience goals in the area of civil protection as well as general principles for their implementation, reporting and review.
2. The Union disaster resilience goals are a non-binding common baseline to support prevention and preparedness actions in the event of disasters which cause or are capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects, to improve the capacity of the Union and its Member States to face such disasters and withstand their effects. The goals identify priority areas and related specific objectives to strengthen the disaster resilience of the Union Mechanism and of the Member States.

HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES UNDERPINNING DISASTER RESILIENCE

3. The risk landscape is changing rapidly. The impacts of more frequent and intense natural and man-made disasters cascade across borders and sectors and cause human and economic losses. To preserve the ability of civil protection actors to effectively manage a wide range of future disruptive events, disaster resilience needs to be strengthened.
4. Strengthening disaster resilience in the area of civil protection should be:
 - (a) **comprehensive**: by covering the **full disaster management cycle**, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery;
 - (b) **anticipatory**: by reducing underlying disaster risks where possible and ensuring adequate preparedness to respond effectively and efficiently to disasters;
 - (c) **cross-sectoral and transboundary**: by promoting an approach that takes into consideration interdependencies between multiple risks, ensures coherence amongst relevant policy sectors and encourages cooperation between Member States sharing common risks. Cooperation and coordination should foster coherence, optimise synergies and promote consistent action across sectors, levels of governance, including regions, authorities and stakeholders.
 - (d) **knowledge and evidence-based**: by relying on a solid understanding of disaster risks, including on the economic, environmental and social impacts of disasters. For such purpose, research and innovation should be supported and knowledge sharing, including of good practice results from research, data-exchange, continuous evaluation and learning should be fostered.
 - (e) **inclusive**: to ensure no one is left behind by taking into account the specific needs and drivers of vulnerability of people such as gender, age, economic, educational and social background, disabilities; and geographic exposure to specific risks;
 - (f) **sustainable**: by taking into account nature-based solutions, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on disaster risks and the prevention and mitigation of the environmental impact of disasters paying special attention to minimising the environmental impact of civil protection operations.

THE UNION DISASTER RESILIENCE GOALS

5. Strengthening disaster resilience in the area of civil protection calls for action in the following areas:
 - (a) anticipate - improving risk assessment, anticipation and disaster risk management planning;
 - (b) prepare - increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population;
 - (c) alert - enhancing early warning;
 - (d) respond - enhancing the Union Mechanism response capacity;
 - (e) secure - ensuring a robust Civil Protection System.

6. The Union disaster resilience goals listed in paragraph 5 are set out in the Annex to this Recommendation.
7. Member States and the Commission are encouraged to take the necessary actions and measures under the Union Mechanism to achieve the Union disaster resilience goals. They are encouraged to foster cooperation with national, regional and international partners, civil society organisations and private sector stakeholders.
8. They are encouraged to ensure synergies and complementarity with relevant international, European or national resilience frameworks, strategies, plans and programmes to further strengthen the overall capacity of the Union and the Member States to withstand the effects of disasters.
9. In particular, in accordance with Article 6(1), point (c), of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, Member States are to take the Union disaster resilience goals and the risks related to disasters which cause or are capable of causing multi-country transboundary effects into account when they further develop and refine disaster risk management planning at national or appropriate subnational level, including as regards cross-border cooperation.
10. Member States are encouraged to participate in the peer reviews on the assessment of risk management capability referred to in Article 6(1), point (e) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU to support the implementation of the Union disaster resilience goals.
11. The Commission, through the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, established in accordance with Article 13 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, and other measures under the Union Mechanism should support the implementation of the Union disaster resilience goals.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

12. The Union disaster resilience goals should be continuously reviewed and revised in the light of the progress made in their implementation and as a consequence of new circumstances and changing needs, by taking into account the scenario-building and disaster management planning referred to in Article 10(1) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.
13. For the purposes of the biennial reporting, pursuant to Article 34(2) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States is encouraged to establish a methodology to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the Union disaster resilience goals. Such a methodology should include an analysis of the state of play and baselines for each of the areas covered by the goals and identify suitable indicators.
14. Member States are encouraged to provide the Commission with relevant information on the implementation of the Union disaster resilience goals.

Done at Brussels, 8 February 2023.

For the Commission
Janez LENARČIČ
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

Union disaster resilience goal No. 1: Anticipate - Improving risk assessment, anticipation and disaster risk management planning

A good understanding of existing and emerging risks is a pre-condition to prevent or mitigate the adverse consequences of disasters. Member States and the Commission should therefore continue to improve their capability to identify and assess disaster risks, particularly those with potential transboundary and cross-sectoral impacts. Europe-wide disaster scenarios should improve the Union's capacity to anticipate future crises and risks to life and health. Member States and the Commission should also build on sector-specific and multi-sector risk assessments⁽¹⁾. Member States and the Commission should take anticipatory action by enacting concrete preventative and preparedness measures and risk management planning, at the Union and national and appropriate subnational levels. Member States should seize the support available under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (the 'Union Mechanism') and other Union funds⁽²⁾ to promote smart investments in disaster prevention to protect citizens from disasters, adapt to climate change and advance the green transition.

Objective: To improve, by 2030, the Union and the Member States' capability to identify and assess relevant disaster risks with potential transboundary and cross-sectoral impacts and use that information to reinforce disaster prevention and preparedness activities, including risk reduction strategies, disaster anticipation, risk management planning as well as response activities.

To support and monitor the implementation of this goal, the following specific objectives should be pursued:

Specific objectives**1.1 To improve the Union-wide scenario-building capability:**

By the end of 2023, the Commission, in cooperation with Member States should finalise the development of key transboundary cross-sectoral scenarios covering 16 main hazards to which the Union is exposed.

Member States should ensure that their disaster scenarios feed into Europe-wide scenarios.

Scenarios should inform subsequent Union and Member States' prevention, preparedness, including disaster risk reduction strategies, disaster anticipation and risk management planning and response activities.

Beyond 2023, scenarios should be continuously updated and expanded as needed.

1.2 To improve the assessment of risk:

The Commission should further improve the Union's overview of natural and human-made disaster risks in accordance with Article 5(1), point (c), of Decision 1313/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽³⁾ in order to provide a comprehensive European perspective to disaster risk. The Union's overview of disaster risks should build on national, sub-national and cross-border risk assessments in the area of civil protection and relevant Union-wide risk assessments⁽⁴⁾ as well as on sector-specific and multi-sector risk assessments carried out in accordance with Union law.

⁽¹⁾ Risk assessments, at different governance levels and by different actors depending on the case, are contained for example in Directive (EU) 2022/2557 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 on the resilience of critical entities and repealing Council Directive 2008/114/EC (OJ L 333, 27.12.2022, p. 164); Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU (OJ L 314, 6.12.2022, p. 26); Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 1); Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks (OJ L 288, 6.11.2007, p. 27).

⁽²⁾ Relevant Union funds are for example the Resilience and Recovery Facility, Cohesion Policy Funds, Agriculture and Rural Development Fund, the Technical Support Instrument, Horizon Europe and the LIFE programme.

⁽³⁾ Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924).

⁽⁴⁾ Union-wide risk assessments include for example the European climate risk assessment, further to point 14 of the 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change', COM(2021) 82 final of 24 February 2021.

The assessment of risk at Union level should be based on improved identification and cross-sectoral analysis of key and emerging risks, their cascading effects, particularly exposed or vulnerable areas and groups and consider areas in the Union facing similar risks.

Member States should further improve the assessment of risk as appropriate at national and sub-national levels and for cross-border risk. Risk assessments in Member States should follow a multi-hazard approach. Member States should include a review of emerging risks and an assessment of cross-border risks, the impacts of climate change and cascading effects. National, sub-national and cross-border risk assessments in the area of civil protection should build on and support risk assessments conducted in related policy areas.

1.3 To improve the **anticipatory capability**:

Member States and the Commission should further strengthen foresight and risk anticipation activities in addition to scenario-building, such as horizon-scanning, analysis and research, to allow early identification of current and new risks and challenges and to support the undertaking of adaptive, preventative or preparedness action for impending disruptive events.

1.4 To improve **risk management planning**:

The Commission should ensure that the Union Mechanism capacities' needs and gaps assessment are based on cross-sectoral risk assessments and scenarios and follow a multi-hazard approach.

Member States should ensure that strategies, frameworks or risk management plans at national and as appropriate sub-national levels, follow a multi-hazard approach. The strategies, frameworks or plans should be based on relevant scenarios, cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation and should ensure adaptation, prevention and preparedness.

Member States should further develop risk management plans for cross-border risks on the basis of improved cooperation in cross-border areas.

To that end, the Commission and Member States should take into account as appropriate, the impacts of climate change, the cascading effects of disasters and the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

1.5 To improve the capability of civil protection to **develop preventative actions**:

Member States' civil protection authorities should enhance their prevention activities, including 'build-back better' action following disasters ⁽⁵⁾ to achieve a high level of protection against disasters.

Union disaster resilience goal No. 2: Prepare - Increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population

A risk-aware and prepared population is a crucial component of disaster resilience because individuals and communities are often the first affected and the first to respond to disasters. Public awareness of risks and sufficient knowledge of how to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters greatly reduce the negative consequences of disasters. It should increase public knowledge of disaster risks and prevention measures; improve individuals' and communities' self-protection, behaviour and preparedness to respond to disasters and foster a culture of risk prevention and trust in civil protection authorities. With the support of the Commission, Member States should step up public communication efforts to bring disaster prevention and preparedness to the everyday life of citizens and promote civic engagement and volunteer-based initiatives for disaster prevention and preparedness. Member States should cooperate, as appropriate, with local and regional authorities, partners, including the private sector and civil society organisations, also in a cross-border context.

Objective: To significantly increase, by 2030, the level of disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the population of the Union in each of the Member States.

To support and monitor the implementation of this goal, the following specific objectives should be pursued:

⁽⁵⁾ 'Building-back better' after a disaster implies that possible prevention, disaster risk reduction, greening and other sustainable development principles and design features are taken into account, instead of merely rebuilding in the same manner as before the disaster.

Specific objectives

2.1 To increase the **overall level of risk awareness**:

Member States should further develop risk awareness raising strategies and step-up risk awareness raising actions to ensure that the level of risk awareness of regional and key national risks increases amongst the population. Risk awareness raising strategies should also cover, as appropriate, seasonal residents.

The Commission should support Member States' risk awareness actions and complement them, where relevant, with risk awareness raising actions at Union level.

— By 2030, 90 % of the population of the Union ⁽⁶⁾ should be well aware of disaster risks in their region.

2.2 To improve **public access to disaster risk information**:

Union and Member States' authorities should ensure that the population in the Union can easily access information on disaster risks and their possible impacts.

Union and Member States' authorities should take the specific needs and circumstances of vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities into account when they provide disaster risk information.

2.3 To increase the **awareness and adoption of risk prevention and preparedness measures** amongst the population:

Member States should ensure that the population, including vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities, become better aware of risk prevention measures and of the action they can take in the face of the most common disasters. As a result, the share of the population that has adopted prevention and preparedness measures should increase.

The Commission should support Member States' risk prevention and public preparedness actions and complement them with relevant action at Union level.

2.4 To enhance the **culture of risk prevention** amongst the population:

Member States should take action:

- (a) to ensure that knowledge on risk prevention, trust and confidence in competent civil protection authorities and understanding of the mission of civil protection improves amongst the population;
- (b) to ensure the ability of the population to assess the reliability of disaster risk information, including the ability to identify authoritative sources of such information and alerts;
- (c) to reinforce public engagement and volunteer participation in civil protection.

The Commission should support Member States' actions to enhance a culture of risk prevention and complement them with relevant action at Union level.

Union disaster resilience goal No. 3: Alert - Enhancing early warning

Effective early warning and monitoring systems are critical to anticipate and prepare for disasters. They help public authorities and people threatened by disasters to act in good time to minimise injury, loss of life and damage to property, the environment and cultural heritage. Early warning systems should be regularly assessed and improved at Union level and in Member States. Key functions of early warning systems, such as forecasting, detection, monitoring of hazards and their impact, and the timely and easily understandable warning of the population including of vulnerable groups, should be strengthened. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) should proactively support Member States and assist the civil protection authorities with on-demand and rapid impact assessments for detected or forecast events.

Objective: To enhance, by 2030, the effectiveness and interoperability of early warning systems in the Union to allow a timely and effective response to disasters and avoid or reduce their adverse impacts, placing particular focus on strengthening early warning for risks with multi-country transboundary impacts and key national risks.

⁽⁶⁾ On the basis of the definition of population in Eurobarometer surveys in the area of civil protection: Member State residents from 15 years of age.

To support and monitor the implementation of this goal, the following specific objectives should be pursued:

Specific objectives

3.1 To improve the **forecasting, detection and monitoring** capability:

The Commission, notably the ERCC, relevant Union agencies and the Member States should improve their capacity to forecast, detect and monitor hazards and impacts, including through better coordination for transboundary and cross-border risks and better integration and interoperability of systems.

Detection and forecasting systems should integrate climate change and environmental degradation considerations where relevant.

3.2 To improve **public warning**:

Member States should enhance their public warning systems to allow better risk, emergency and crisis communication of anticipated impacts and of action to be taken. Coordination among concerned authorities and services should be fostered. Clearly established information flows and responsibilities should be defined. Public warning in Member States should be based on enhanced arrangements for warning in transboundary and cross-border disasters.

Member States should ensure that public warning takes multi-lingual needs of the population into account, is inclusive and adapted to the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including of persons with disabilities.

Alerts should reach the population at risk in a timely and effective manner.

Member States should ensure that public warning signals and messages are clearly understood by the population.

Union disaster resilience goal No. 4: Respond - Enhancing the Union Civil Protection Mechanism's response capacity

Requests for assistance are becoming more frequent and response needs are becoming more diverse. The Union Mechanism should be prepared to respond to emerging risks and a likely increase in multi-country transboundary disasters. The Union Mechanism should therefore be strengthened with the appropriate type and number of resources to continue to effectively support Member States to respond to disasters that overwhelm their national capacities. The Union Mechanism's response capacity needs should be regularly reviewed. The Commission together with Member States should continue to develop relevant response capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool and rescEU as needed.

Objective: To further develop, by 2024, the Union Mechanism's response capacity in the areas of response to wildfire, flood, search and rescue needs, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events (CBRN) and emergency health. Moreover, by 2024, this goal and its specific objectives will be further developed and capacities added in areas such as temporary shelter, emergency energy supplies and transport.

To support and monitor the implementation of this goal, the following specific objectives should be pursued:

Specific objectives ⁽⁷⁾

4.1 In the area of **wildfire response** ⁽⁸⁾:

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to needs in six Member States simultaneously with aerial forest fire fighting capacities once national capacities are overwhelmed, for a minimum of 1 day and a maximum of 7 days.

⁽⁷⁾ The definition of the specific objectives are based on the technical minimum requirements of response capacities in the given areas as defined in the relevant Commission Implementing Decisions as well as on operational experience and Member States' expert feedback on the deployments of these capacities.

⁽⁸⁾ Due to production issues, it is expected that the aerial forest fire fighting capability should reach full capacity by 2030.

In parallel, the Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond simultaneously to needs in four Member States with overwhelmed national response capacities with ground wildfire fighting capacities, for a minimum of 7 days and a maximum of 14 days.

Additionally, the Union Mechanism should be able to deploy firefighting advisory and assessment teams for tactical advice to two simultaneous requests for assistance due to wildfires.

4.2 In the area of **flood response**:

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to a flooding event affecting at least three Member States simultaneously with overwhelmed national response capacities. Such response should cover at least the total capability to pump at least 20 000 m³ water/hour, for up to 21 days.

In addition, the Union Mechanism should be capable of ensuring flood containment, waste management, dam assessment and search and rescue operations in a flooding situation.

4.3 In the area of **search and rescue response**:

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to carry out search and rescue operations in at least four Member States simultaneously in different environments and types of disasters. Such response covers operations for 24 hours per day for 7 days in medium urban search and rescue conditions and for 10 days in heavy urban search and rescue conditions.

Additional capability should be deployable for specific mountain and cave search and rescue operations as well as experts in the areas of volcanology, seismology, dam assessment and structural engineering.

4.4 In the area of **CBRN response**:

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to requests from three Member States simultaneously for decontamination needs for at least 14 continuous days for a total of 500 persons, including 50 injured persons, 15 000 m² of outdoor surfaces and 200 m² of indoor surfaces per hour, assuming that the decontamination can be performed with water, including capability to decontaminate critical equipment or evidence.

In addition, the Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to requests from two Member States simultaneously for radiological and nuclear radiation monitoring for at least 10 continuous days for a total of 100 persons, 10 vehicles, 10 000 m² outdoor surface and 1 000 m² indoor surface, per hour.

Furthermore, the Union Mechanism should ensure it has the capability to provide specific CBRN related advice through deployment or reach back.

4.5 In the area of **emergency health response** ^(*):

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to requests from three Member States simultaneously to respond to the need to treat for a minimum of 2 weeks a total of 800 outpatients per day, via Emergency medical team type 1 (EMT1): Outpatient Emergency Care modules, establish operating theatres for a total of 60 inpatients, via Emergency medical team type 2 (EMT2): Inpatient Surgical Emergency modules. Such response includes the minimum capability to treat 45 minor surgical operations a day for 2 weeks.

The Union Mechanism should be at least able to respond to requests from five Member States simultaneously for medical evacuation needs with a total capacity of 24 intensive care patients and 200 non-intensive care patients a day as well as six highly infectious disease patients a day for a maximum of 14 days.

The Union Mechanism should at least be able to respond to requests from three Member States simultaneously for mobile laboratory analysis, including potential CBRN capabilities, with a total capacity of 150 samples a day for a maximum period of 14 days.

^(*) The emergency health response targets exclude the EMT2 rescEU capacity, which is under development and is expected to become fully operational after 2024.

In addition, the Union Mechanism, in cooperation with Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), should ensure the availability and access to critical medical countermeasures, in particular therapeutics and medical devices, to address serious cross-border health threats.

Furthermore, the Union Mechanism should be able to provide specific public health and epidemiological advice through onsite deployment of relevant experts and, as needed, through reach back expertise.

Union disaster resilience goal No. 5: Secure - Ensuring a robust Civil Protection System

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and civil protection authorities in the Member States should continue to reinforce their business continuity. Alongside, they should adapt their business continuity planning to cross-sectoral transboundary disasters. To this end, the ERCC and civil protection authorities in the Member States should ensure cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation and foster partnerships with partners such as the private sector, civil society and volunteer organisations. The Union Mechanism should support the conduct of stress tests to test business continuity of emergency operations centres and work with Member States on the follow-up of lessons learnt and recommendations.

Objective: To ensure, by 2027, the business continuity of the ERCC and civil protection counterparts in the Member States and to maintain their core functions, including in serious circumstances of disaster scenarios with cascading cross-sectoral and cross-border impacts, concurrent and recurrent disasters, prolonged emergencies and new emerging disaster risks.

To support and monitor the implementation of this goal, the following specific objectives should be pursued:

Specific objectives

5.1 To improve the business continuity planning capability:

The ERCC and Member States' counterparts should regularly revise plans and procedures to make them more flexible and adaptable to the expected consequences of current and future disasters. Plans and procedures should be based on scenarios and impact analysis. They should, as appropriate, cover issues such as: staff management, regular training and exercises, supply chain management and equipment needs, stockpiling, redundancies, resilience and security of information and communications technology (ICT) systems.

5.2 To improve the cross-sectoral coordination capability:

The ERCC and Member States' counterparts should:

- (a) enhance cross-sectoral cooperation and interoperability of procedures to allow rapid, effective and efficient scaling-up of response measures by competent civil protection authorities, other relevant services and partners, including essential service providers, civil society organisations, volunteers and academia, as appropriate;
- (b) maintain and create cross-sectoral networks and arrangements among authorities and with relevant partners in between disasters.

5.3 To improve the cross-border coordination capability:

The ERCC and Member States' counterparts should:

- (a) enhance cross-border cooperation and interoperability of procedures, systems and tools to allow efficient and effective information exchange, facilitate operational decision-support and Host Nation Support;
- (b) maintain and create cross-border arrangements among civil protection authorities and other relevant other services.

5.4 To improve the disaster risk **communication and information management** capability:

The ERCC and Member States' counterparts should:

- (a) enhance the interoperability of systems and procedures that support the civil protection response and the coordination of response measures across relevant authorities and partners;
- (b) ensure that communication and information management systems and procedures support coherent risk, emergency and crisis communication among relevant authorities and with relevant external partners.

5.5 To improve the **post-disaster evaluation** capability:

The ERCC and Member States' counterparts should:

- (a) carry out lessons-learnt systematically after a disaster strikes. Lessons-learnt should cover the entire disaster management cycle (prevention, preparedness response and recovery). Lessons-learnt should include civil protection authorities and, as appropriate, other relevant authorities, services and partners involved in the management of the disaster assessed;
 - (b) ensure that lessons-learnt are disseminated and implemented as appropriate, across the entire disaster management cycle.
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II

(Information)

INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**Communication from the Commission — Guidelines on State aid for climate, environmental
protection and energy 2022**

**Acceptance by all Member States of the Commission's proposal of the appropriate measures
pursuant to Article 108(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**

*(Pursuant to Article 32(1) of Council Regulation (EU) 2015/1589 of 13 July 2015 laying down detailed rules for the
application of Article 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ⁽¹⁾)*

(2023/C 56/02)

In point 468 of the Communication from the Commission — Guidelines on State aid for climate, environmental protection and energy 2022 ⁽²⁾, the Commission proposed as appropriate measures that Member States amend, where necessary, existing environmental protection and energy aid schemes in order to bring them into line with these guidelines no later than 31 December 2023 (point 468(a) of the Communication). The Commission requested the Member States to give their explicit unconditional agreement to the appropriate measures proposed in point 468(a) within 2 months from the date of publication of these guidelines in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (point 468(b) of the Communication).

All Member States have given their explicit and unconditional agreement to the proposed appropriate measures.

Pursuant to Article 23(1) of Council Regulation (EU) 2015/1589, the Commission hereby takes note of the unconditional and explicit agreement to the appropriate measures by all Member States.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 248, 24.9.2015, p. 9.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 80, 18.2.2022, p. 1.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration
(Case M.10924 – PROXIMUS / ETHIAS / JV)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2023/C 56/03)

On 8 February 2023, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the ‘Competition policy’ website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32023M10924. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

14 February 2023

(2023/C 56/04)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,0759	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,4332
JPY	Japanese yen	142,14	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,4457
DKK	Danish krone	7,4514	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,6962
GBP	Pound sterling	0,88125	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,4270
SEK	Swedish krona	11,1010	KRW	South Korean won	1 362,59
CHF	Swiss franc	0,9870	ZAR	South African rand	19,1656
ISK	Iceland króna	153,30	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,3314
NOK	Norwegian krone	10,8778	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	16 303,53
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,6786
CZK	Czech koruna	23,749	PHP	Philippine peso	58,992
HUF	Hungarian forint	382,45	RUB	Russian rouble	
PLN	Polish zloty	4,7623	THB	Thai baht	36,387
RON	Romanian leu	4,9010	BRL	Brazilian real	5,5552
TRY	Turkish lira	20,2779	MXN	Mexican peso	20,0122
AUD	Australian dollar	1,5411	INR	Indian rupee	89,1227

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

COUNCIL

Notice for the attention of Zimbabwe Defence Industries, an entity to which restrictive measures provided for in Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP, as amended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/339 and in Council Regulation (EC) No 314/2004, concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Zimbabwe, apply

(2023/C 56/05)

The following information is brought to the attention of the entity that appears in Annex I to Council Decision 2011/101/CFSP ⁽¹⁾, as amended by Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/339 ⁽²⁾, and in Annex III to Council Regulation (EC) No 314/2004 ⁽³⁾, concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Zimbabwe.

The Council of the European Union has decided that the entity that appears in the abovementioned Annexes should continue to be included in the list of persons and entities subject to restrictive measures provided for in Decision 2011/101/CFSP and in Regulation (EC) No 314/2004.

The attention of the entity concerned is drawn to the possibility of making an application to the competent authorities of the relevant Member State(s), as indicated in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 314/2004, in order to obtain an authorisation to use frozen funds for basic needs or specific payments (cf. Article 7 of the Regulation).

The entity concerned may submit a request to the Council before 1 November 2023, together with supporting documentation, that the decision to include it on the abovementioned list be reconsidered. Any such request should be sent to the following address:

Council of the European Union
General Secretariat
RELEX.1
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Email: sanctions@consilium.europa.eu

The attention of the entity concerned is also drawn to the possibility of challenging the Council's decision before the General Court of the European Union, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 275, second paragraph, and Article 263, fourth and sixth paragraphs, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 42, 16.2.2011, p. 6.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 47, 15.2.2023, p. 51.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 55, 24.2.2004, p. 1.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Commission notice on current State aid recovery interest rates and reference/discount rates applicable as from 1 March 2023

(Published in accordance with Article 10 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 794/2004 ⁽¹⁾)

(2023/C 56/06)

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 basispoints 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 basispoints to the base rate.

Modified rates are indicated in bold.

Previous table published in OJ C 12, 13.1.2023, p. 9.

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
1.3.2023	...	3,06	3,06	1,10	3,06	7,43	3,06	2,92	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	15,10	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	3,06	7,62	3,06	8,31	2,96	3,06	3,06	3,52	
1.2.2023	28.2.2023	2,56	2,56	0,79	2,56	7,43	2,56	2,92	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	15,10	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	7,62	2,56	8,31	2,44	2,56	2,56	2,77	
1.1.2023	31.1.2023	2,56	2,56	0,36	2,56	7,43	2,56	2,92	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	15,10	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	2,56	7,62	2,56	8,31	2,44	2,56	2,56	2,77	

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 140, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

V

(Announcements)

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

INFORMATION NOTICE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Entry into force of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Republic of Chile concerning amendments to Appendix I to the Agreement on Trade in Spirit Drinks and Aromatised Drinks (Annex VI), annexed to the Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Chile, of the other part

(2023/C 56/07)

The Republic of Chile has notified its approval of the adoption of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Republic of Chile concerning amendments to Appendix I to the Agreement on Trade in Spirit Drinks and Aromatised Drinks (Annex VI), annexed to the Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Chile, of the other part.

This Agreement therefore enters into force on 9 March 2023 ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 287, 28.7.2022, p. 4.

INFORMATION NOTICE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Entry into force of the Agreement in the form of an exchange of letters between the European Union and the Republic of Chile concerning amendments to Appendices I, II, V and VIII to the Agreement on Trade in Wines (Annex V), annexed to the Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Chile, of the other part

(2023/C 56/08)

The Republic of Chile has notified its approval of the adoption of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Republic of Chile concerning amendments to Appendices I, II, V and VIII to the Agreement on Trade in Wines (Annex V), annexed to the Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Chile, of the other part.

This Agreement therefore enters into force on 9 March 2023 ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 287, 28.7.2022, p. 19.

Publication of an application for registration of a name pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2023/C 56/09)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘Nordhessische Ahle Wurst / Nordhessische Ahle Wurst’

EU No: PGI-DE-02173 – 18.5.2016

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s)

‘Nordhessische Ahle Wurst / Nordhessische Ahle Wurst’

2. Member State or Third Country

Germany

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.2. Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)

3.2. Description of the product to which the name under point 1 applies

‘Nordhessische Ahle Wurst’ is an air-dried or air-dried and smoked hard pork sausage which is produced in the region of North Hessen. The consistency and mouthfeel are somewhat crumbly and more tender than in the case of typical hard sausages. This tender mouthfeel is preserved regardless of the level of drying or age of the sausage. It is sold as ‘soft’, ‘firm’, or ‘hard’ according to the degree of maturation. ‘Nordhessische Ahle Wurst’ comes in the following forms: ‘Feldkieker’, ‘Dürre Runde’ and ‘Stracke’.

As regards chemical requirements, the guidelines on meat and meat products apply as appropriate:

For ‘Stracke’ and ‘Dürre Runde’: Analysis values: meat protein that is free of connective-tissue protein: at least 12 %; meat protein that is free of connective-tissue protein, as a percentage of meat protein: histometrically at least 65 % vol., chemically at least 75 %

For ‘Feldkieker’: Analysis values: meat protein that is free of connective-tissue protein: at least 12,5 %; meat protein that is free of connective-tissue protein, as a percentage of meat protein: histometrically at least 70 % vol., chemically at least 80 %

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

The size and weight of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' vary depending on its form. Once filled, a fresh 'Stracke' weighs between 500 g and 3 000 g, a 'Dürre Runde' between 350 g and 1 000 g and a 'Feldkieker' between 800 g and 3 000 g. During the maturing process, drying causes the sausage to lose at least 30 % of its weight. The sausage is initially a dark red, with white flecks of fat visible. As the sausage matures, the red becomes more intense.

The taste is marked by a slight sourness and a distinctive mature aroma.

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

The production of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' places particular demands on meat quality. The sausage is predominantly made from dry, more solid pork from older animals. The pigs are fattened for longer than usual specifically for the production of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'. At the time of slaughter, the pigs must have an average live weight of at least 125 kg or an average carcass weight of at least 100 kg (the average carcass weight in Germany in 2016 was approximately 94 kg).

It has been proven that long transport routes entail stress for the animals, which affects the quality of the meat at slaughter. The release of the hormone adrenaline in pigs changes the development of the meat's pH value after slaughter, and its water absorption. Both factors have a decisive impact on the maturation of the sausage and its consistency and thereby on the quality of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'. The standard transport time from farm to slaughterhouse is therefore limited to two hours. Slaughter takes place exclusively within the geographical area.

The pigs are differentiated not by breed but by carcass weight, as pigs fattened in North Hessen are predominantly crosses of a large range of breeds.

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

Slaughter takes place exclusively within the geographical area. The meat is cut up and processed at the production plant in the geographical area. The maturing process and the subsequent drying process take place in suitable environments in the geographical area.

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

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

In accordance with legal requirements. In addition, the name and address of the producer is shown either on the label on the sausage, on a directly attached display sign or by similar means.

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

The geographical area is North Hessen, with the following rural districts: Hersfeld-Rothenburg, Kassel, Marburg-Biedenkopf, Schwalm-Eder, Waldeck-Frankenberg, Werra-Meißner, and the city of Kassel.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link with the geographical area stems from the reputation and the distinctive quality of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst', which is attributable to the processing of freshly slaughtered pork. The production of the sausage filling must be completed at the latest 12 hours after slaughter. It is produced from boneless, low-sinew pork which is taken from the whole animal. The pork must therefore be of high quality. This includes, for example, using older pigs which have a greater carcass weight, which distinguishes 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' from the production of all other types of sausage available in Hessen.

The maturing process, which takes place in specially adapted rooms that are still traditionally built from clay today, is a further factor. The specific climate improves the quality of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'. Rooms known as 'Wurschthimmel' ['sausage canopies'] are also common. Here, sausages are hung from the ceiling to mature. Climate chambers and climate rooms, in which technological equipment is used to control the temperature and humidity, are also suitable. These different maturing methods are also frequently combined.

The taste is marked by a slight sourness and a distinctive mature aroma. It is formed by reducing the pH value during maturation of the meat, by using salt and saltpetre and by slow maturation in the specific climate of the maturing rooms. The main spices used are pepper, nutmeg and additional local flavours depending on the district, such as caraway, mustard seed and garlic. The addition of local flavours does not affect the typical characteristics, the appearance or the texture of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'.

The product's strong reputation is derived from its long tradition and particular taste and the trend for regional produce and a return to traditional products. It is reflected in the existence of numerous publications and events celebrating 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'.

In his work *Nordhessisches Küchenbrevier* [A guide to North Hessian cuisine], the author Heinrich Keim, alongside a collection of recipes involving 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst', also included a 'Nordhessische Wurstologie' [a catalogue of North Hessian sausages]. In his work *Nordhessische Ahle Wurst: Eine Wurst mit Kultstatus* ['Nordhessische Ahle Wurst': a sausage with cult status], he devoted an entire essay to the sausage speciality.

It is not only in literature that 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' continues to play a major role. Numerous activities have developed around the North Hessian sausage speciality. Various societies have been founded to preserve its original production method. The first was the Förderverein Nordhessische Ahle Wurst e.V. in 2005. In 2004, the association Slow Food Germany added 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' to its 'Ark of Taste' in order to promote its traditional production method and secure it as a cultural asset.

On the initiative of the butchers' guilds, the first 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' Championships took place in 2011, for which 130 North Hessen guild firms presented over 300 sausages and competed for awards. The competition has been held every two years since. The results are widely reported, for example in the *Deutsche Handwerks Zeitung* or the regional daily newspaper *Hessisch-Niedersächsische Allgemeine*.

Since 2011 the Förderverein Nordhessische Ahle Wurst e.V. has organised an annual 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst Day'.

The good reputation which 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' enjoys in the region and further afield stems from the fact that it is a traditional product which has been made in the geographical area for centuries and has in the meantime gained a cult status.

Large parts of North Hessen were historically characterised by forest and agriculture, and this is still the case today. Pigs could be farmed by almost anyone, as the pigs were driven into the forest for fattening, so additional feed for the pigs was often not required. The associated home slaughter made a significant contribution towards supporting the rural population.

The publication *Ahle Wurst – Das europäische Schmeckewöhlerchen der Grimm-Heimat Nordhessen* [Ahle Wurst – the European delicacy from the home of the Brothers Grimm] traces the origins of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' all the way back to Roman times and the Hermanduri tribe, who preserved chopped meat using salt from a saltwater river (probably the Werra) and traded it with the Romans.

Home slaughtering and the lack of refrigeration meant that the freshly slaughtered meat had to be processed immediately. This is the reason for the special consistency of 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'.

The tradition of producing 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst' still exists today. Following the continued decline of home slaughter, the established butchers preserved the tradition of producing hard sausage. Knowledge regarding the production of North Hesse sausage specialities is still widespread. Every butcher still has his or her own seasoning for 'Nordhessische Ahle Wurst'.

Reference to publication of the product specification

<https://register.dpma.de/DPMAregister/geo/detail.pdfdownload/40957>

Publication of an application for registration of a name pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2023/C 56/10)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ within 3 months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Haricot de Soissons'

EU No: PGI-FR-02805 - 11.10.2021

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s)

'Haricot de Soissons'

2. Member State or Third Country

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.6 Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

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

'Haricot de Soissons' is a dried large-seed white bean of the botanical species *Phaseolus coccineus*, with the following characteristics:

- a large seed with a weight per thousand seeds of greater than 1 400 grams
- a kidney shape
- uniform colour, from white to ivory
- a minimum length of 17 mm and a minimum width of 10 mm
- a moisture content of between 12 % and 17 %.

It is sold exclusively as a dried bean.

After soaking for at least 12 hours, it holds together very well during cooking.

After it has been cooked, the bean's tender, melt-in-the-mouth texture and its fine skin which is imperceptible to the taste are the main organoleptic characteristics of the product.

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

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

The production stages from sowing to harvesting and threshing are carried out in the defined geographical area of 'Haricot de Soissons'.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

'Haricot de Soissons' is packaged in consumer sales units.

It is prohibited to batch-package beans harvested over several years. The product is stored in a dry place away from light.

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

In addition to the mandatory information required by the rules on the labelling and presentation of foodstuffs, the labelling must display the registered name of the product and the European Union PGI logo in the same visual field.

The labelling must also contain the words '*Phaseolus coccineus*'.

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

The area of the 'Haricot de Soissons' protected geographical indication covers the territory of the following districts and municipalities within the department of Aisne:

- the districts of Château-Thierry, Laon and Soissons, in their entirety;
- the municipalities of: Archon, Autels, Berlise, Brunehamel, Chaourse, Chéry-lès-Rozoy, Clermont-les-Fermes, Cuiry-lès-Iviers, Dagny-Lambercy, Dizy-le-Gros, Dohis, Dolignon, Grandrieux, Lislet, Montcornet, Montloué, Morgny-en-Thiérasche, Noircourt, Parfondeval, Raillimont, Renneval, Résigny, Rouvroy-sur-Serre, Rozoy-sur-Serre, Sainte-Geneviève, Soize, Thuel, Vigneux-Hocquet, Ville-aux-Bois-lès-Dizy, Vincy-Reuil-et-Magny.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link with the geographical area rests on the reputation and specific characteristics of 'Haricot de Soissons' resulting from natural and human factors found in the geographical area. Its cultivation is well suited to the soil and climate conditions, which yield beans having the characteristics for which they are renowned and which consumers, including restaurateurs, have come to expect.

The production area is an area of plains and valleys located in the department of Aisne. The municipality of Soissons is situated at the heart of the production area.

The main feature of the geographical area is a semi-maritime climate with a continental influence, characterised by frequent rainfall (an average of 123 days per year), but the amount of rainfall remains average (approximately 700 millimetres per year), with generally moderate temperatures and restricted temperature ranges, meaning that heatwaves and severe winters are uncommon.

The risk of frost in autumn can be managed by the rules for the harvest applied by producers.

The geographical area is distinguished by almost ubiquitous watercourses and wetlands. The landscape is thus carved out by the Aisne, Ailette, Marne and Serre valleys.

The soils in the geographical area are fine-grained and rich in nutrients. They act as a filter, are not prone to capping or compacting and have good water retention capacity.

Since the 18th century the department of Aisne has been known for producing dried beans. Several species and varieties of dried beans have been grown in the area, but only 'Haricot de Soissons' is still grown today by producers who have expertise passed down over generations.

The producers apply their expertise throughout the stages of growing 'Haricot de Soissons':

- The seed is sown on parcels selected for their agronomic characteristics in a period allowing crop freezing to be prevented. The gap between the rows promotes ventilation and optimum insolation of the plant.
- 'Haricot de Soissons' comes from varieties of the species *Phaseolus coccineus*, producing climbing plants which are hardy and very robust.
- Staking makes it possible to support the plant's vertical growth.

— The optimum period for harvesting occurs when the pods are dry and are predominantly brown in colour. Harvesting is carried out either by picking the pods in one or more passes or the entire plant at least 3 weeks after the stems have been cut.

— Threshing, sorting and storage protect the quality and conservation of the beans.

'Haricot de Soissons' has a large kidney-shaped seed which is uniform in colour from white to ivory and a moisture content of between 12 % and 17 %.

The specific features of 'Haricot de Soissons' are:

- a thin skin which is imperceptible after soaking for at least 12 hours and then cooking;
- excellent cooking characteristics;
- a tender and melt-in-the-mouth texture after cooking.

The qualities of 'Haricot de Soissons' are linked to the natural factors of the area and to the expertise of producers.

The fine skin and the uniform white-to-ivory colour of 'Haricot de Soissons' come from the combination of moderate heat during the growing cycle, as well as strong growth thanks in particular to light soils which warm up quickly and have good water retention capacity.

The soils have a relatively well-balanced texture, with the clay content not exceeding 45 % and the sand content not exceeding 75 %, which are ideal for sowing and growing 'Haricot de Soissons'.

Staking allows the plant to develop over its entire height and to benefit from optimum sunshine and ventilation, making it possible to take advantage of frequent rainfall without creating health issues.

The harvesting of the pods in one or more passes or the entire plant at least 3 weeks after the stems have been cut is borne out by the plant flowering from June to September. Knowing the stage of ripeness of the bean ensures its tenderness and melt-in-the-mouth texture, as well as its imperceptible skin after cooking.

The threshing of the pods to separate the beans is part of the expertise required to preserve the whole of the bean without damaging or breaking it.

The reputation of 'Haricot de Soissons' has been built over several centuries.

Trade in dried beans grew because of the existence of producers and traders around Soissons, which helped to develop the product. 'This small administrative division [the *généralité* of Soissons] abounds in various types of produce. In particular, it is rich in edible foodstuffs such as seeds of all species, in which there is considerable trade, and in vegetables such as beans which are exported far and wide and artichokes which are sent to Paris.' (Report of 22 February 1787 on manufacture, industry and trade in the *généralité* of Soissons)

In 1804, Grimod de la Reynière, a French gastronomy critic, referred to the historical reputation of 'Haricot de Soissons' thus: 'Soissons is regarded as the region of France producing the best beans.' In the same way, the inventory of the Conseil National des Arts Culinaires states that 'Soissons white beans are one of the most popular vegetables among Parisians in the 18th century.'

Statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture from 1928 show that the species *Phaseolus coccineus* is predominantly used by producers, adapted to the region's natural factors.

When referring to local products and traditional recipes, the inventory of culinary heritage of France (Albin Michel/CNAC – Picardie Region – 1999 edition) cites 'Haricot de Soissons' as a specific product of the region.

'Haricot de Soissons' appears in the *Larousse gastronomique* (1996 edition, drawn up under the aegis of a gastronomy committee chaired by Joël Robuchon), a reference work on gastronomy, its history and culinary techniques.

The current position of the 'Haricot de Soissons' sector rests on the existence of independent producers and a cooperative set up in 2003, which brings together more than 80 % of producers.

The reputation of 'Haricot de Soissons' is documented in the press and in Aisne's tourist material.

'Haricot de Soissons' also features on the menu of gastronomic restaurants. For example, the chef Lucas Vannier offers a fillet of sea bream accompanied by a compote of Haricots de Soissons with tomato confit.

The 'Haricot de Soissons' festival, set up by the city of Soissons in 2005, is very successful and attracts 50 000 to 60 000 visitors. It offers various events and culinary tastings.

Reference to publication of the specification

<https://extranet.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDC-Haricot-de-Soissons-propre.pdf>

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