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II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.7752 — ACE/Chubb)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2015/C 375/01)

On 6 November 2015, 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 language 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 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 32015M7752. EUR-Lex is the online access to the European law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.7585 — NXP Semiconductors/Freescale Semiconductor)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2015/C 375/02)

On 17 September 2015, 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) in conjunction with Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in English language 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 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 32015M7585. EUR-Lex is the on-line access to the European law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

IV

*(Notices)*NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND
AGENCIES

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DECISION

of 10 November 2015

**adopting the Council's position on draft amending budget No 8 of the European Union for the
financial year 2015**

(2015/C 375/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 314 thereof, in conjunction with the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, and in particular Article 106a thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 ⁽¹⁾ and in particular Article 41 thereof,

Whereas:

- the Union's budget for the financial year 2015 was definitively adopted on 17 December 2014 ⁽²⁾,
- on 20 October 2015, the Commission submitted a proposal containing draft amending budget No 8 to the general budget for the financial year 2015,
- in order to facilitate Member States' cash flow management at year-end and alleviate the financial burden on national treasuries in a timely manner, draft amending budget No 8 to the general budget for 2015 needs to be adopted without delay. Therefore, it is justified to shorten, in accordance with Article 3(3) of the Council's Rules of Procedure, the eight-week period for the information of national Parliaments laid down in Article 4 of Protocol No 1,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The Council's position on draft amending budget No 8 of the European Union for the financial year 2015 was adopted on 10 November 2015.

The full text can be accessed for consultation or downloading on the Council's website: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

Done at Brussels, 10 November 2015.

*For the Council**The President*

P. GRAMEGNA

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 69, 13.3.2015, p. 1.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

11 November 2015

(2015/C 375/04)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,0716	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,4213
JPY	Japanese yen	131,90	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,3060
DKK	Danish krone	7,4604	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,6344
GBP	Pound sterling	0,70600	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,5236
SEK	Swedish krona	9,3290	KRW	South Korean won	1 238,51
CHF	Swiss franc	1,0783	ZAR	South African rand	15,2006
ISK	Iceland króna		CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	6,8235
NOK	Norwegian krone	9,2230	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,6205
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	14 551,32
CZK	Czech koruna	27,022	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,6634
HUF	Hungarian forint	311,70	PHP	Philippine peso	50,475
PLN	Polish zloty	4,2215	RUB	Russian rouble	69,0860
RON	Romanian leu	4,4366	THB	Thai baht	38,446
TRY	Turkish lira	3,0929	BRL	Brazilian real	4,0013
AUD	Australian dollar	1,5183	MXN	Mexican peso	17,9011
			INR	Indian rupee	70,9780

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

Interpretative Notice on indication of origin of goods from the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967

(2015/C 375/05)

(1) The European Union, in line with international law, does not recognise Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, namely the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and does not consider them to be part of Israel's territory ⁽¹⁾, irrespective of their legal status under domestic Israeli law ⁽²⁾. The Union has made it clear that it will not recognise any changes to pre-1967 borders, other than those agreed by the parties to the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) ⁽³⁾.

(2) The application of existing Union legislation on indication of origin of products to products originating in Israeli-occupied territories has been the subject of notices or guidance adopted by the relevant authorities of several Member States. There is indeed a demand for clarity from consumers, economic operators and national authorities about existing Union legislation on origin information of products from Israeli-occupied territories ⁽⁴⁾. The aim is also to ensure the respect of Union positions and commitments in conformity with international law on the non-recognition by the Union of Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967. This notice also aims at maintaining open and smooth trade, is not hindering trade flows and should not be construed to do so.

(3) This Notice does not create any new legislative rules. While this Notice reflects the Commission's understanding of the relevant Union legislation, enforcement of the relevant rules remains the primary responsibility of Member States. According to the case-law, while the choice of penalties remains within their discretion, Member States must ensure that penalties for infringements of provisions of Union law are effective, proportionate and dissuasive ⁽⁵⁾. The Commission ensures, as guardian of the Treaties, compliance with these obligations of Member States if need be by way of infringement proceedings. This Notice is without prejudice to other requirements established by Union legislation, and to the interpretation which the Court of Justice may provide.

⁽¹⁾ See Case C-386/08 *Brita* [2010] ECR I-1289, paragraphs 47 and 53.

⁽²⁾ Under Israeli law, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights are annexed to the State of Israel, whereas the West Bank is referred to as 'the territories'.

⁽³⁾ See, inter alia, the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the MEPP adopted in 14 May 2012, 10 December 2012, and 17 November 2014.

⁽⁴⁾ The interpretation in this Notice as to what constitutes origin information in conformity to the Union legislation will apply to any future provision having content similar to the provisions currently in force and covered by this Notice.

⁽⁵⁾ See, inter alia, Case 68/88 *Commission v Greece* [1989] ECR 2965, paragraphs 23 and 24; Case C-326/88 *Hansen* [1990] ECR I-2911, paragraph 17; Joined Cases C-387/02, C-391/02 and C-403/02 *Berlusconi and Others* [2005] ECR I-3565, paragraph 65.

(4) Several pieces of Union legislation currently provide for mandatory indication of origin of the product in question. The requirement often relates to the designation of the 'country of origin' ⁽⁶⁾, but sometimes other expressions, such as the 'place of provenance', for foods, are also used ⁽⁷⁾. Subject to any specific provision to the contrary in the relevant provisions of Union legislation, in principle determination of the country of origin of foods will be based on the Union's non-preferential rules of origin laid-down in customs legislation ⁽⁸⁾.

(5) When the indication of origin of the product in question is explicitly required by the relevant provisions of Union law, it must be correct and not misleading for the consumer.

(6) When the indication of origin is not mandatory, if the origin is provided on a voluntary basis, the information must be correct and not misleading for the consumer ⁽⁹⁾.

(7) Since the Golan Heights and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) ⁽¹⁰⁾ are not part of the Israeli territory according to international law, the indication 'product from Israel' ⁽¹¹⁾ is considered to be incorrect and misleading in the sense of the referenced legislation.

(8) To the extent that the indication of the origin is mandatory, another expression will have to be used, which takes into account how these territories are often known.

(9) For products from Palestine ⁽¹²⁾ that do not originate from settlements, an indication which does not mislead about the geographical origin, while corresponding to international practice, could be 'product from the West Bank (Palestinian product)' ⁽¹³⁾, 'product from Gaza' or 'product from Palestine'.

⁽⁶⁾ See, for example: **for cosmetics** Article 19(1)(a) of Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on cosmetic products, (OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 59); **for fresh fruit and vegetables**: Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671), and Article 6 and Part A 4(B) of Annex I to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 543/2011 of 7 June 2011 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 in respect of the fruit and vegetables and processed fruit and vegetables sectors (OJ L 157, 15.6.2011, p. 1); **for fish**: Article 38 of Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 1); **for wine**: Article 119(1)(e) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013, and Article 55 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 607/2009 of 14 July 2009 laying down certain detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2008 as regards protected designations of origin and geographical indications, traditional terms, labelling and presentation of certain wine sector products (OJ L 193, 24.7.2009, p. 60); **for honey**: Article 2(4) of Council Directive 2001/110/EC of 20 December 2001 relating to honey (OJ L 10, 12.1.2002, p. 47); **for olive oil**: Article 4 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 29/2012 of 13 January 2012 on marketing standards for olive oil (OJ L 12, 14.1.2012, p. 14); **for beef and veal**: Articles 13 to 15 of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97 (OJ L 204, 11.8.2000, p. 1); **for pre-packaged poultrymeat from third countries**: Article 5 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultrymeat (OJ L 157, 17.6.2008, p. 46); **for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry**: Annex XI to Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004 (OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18), and Articles 5 to 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013 of 13 December 2013 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry (OJ L 335, 14.12.2013, p. 19).

⁽⁷⁾ Article 2(2)(g) and Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

⁽⁸⁾ Recital 33 and Article 2(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

⁽⁹⁾ Article 6(1) of Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive') (OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22), which mentions also 'geographical or commercial origin' as one element which may render a practice misleading, and Articles 26(3) and 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

⁽¹⁰⁾ There have been no Israeli settlements in Gaza since 2005.

⁽¹¹⁾ Or comparable expressions, such as 'originating in', 'product of' or 'made in', which may also be used depending on the context.

⁽¹²⁾ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

⁽¹³⁾ If need be also mentioning East Jerusalem.

(10) For products from the West Bank or the Golan Heights that originate from settlements, an indication limited to 'product from the Golan Heights' or 'product from the West Bank' would not be acceptable. Even if they would designate the wider area or territory from which the product originates, the omission of the additional geographical information that the product comes from Israeli settlements would mislead the consumer as to the true origin of the product. In such cases the expression 'Israeli settlement' or equivalent needs to be added, in brackets, for example. Therefore, expressions such as 'product from the Golan Heights (Israeli settlement)' or 'product from the West Bank (Israeli settlement)' could be used.

(11) In any event, in accordance with Union consumer protection legislation, indication of origin becomes mandatory when, as regards food, the omission of that information would mislead the consumer as to the true origin of the product⁽¹⁴⁾, and, as regards all other goods, when information is omitted that is material, according to the context, to take an informed transactional decision and thereby causes or is likely to cause the average consumer to take a transactional decision that he would not have taken otherwise⁽¹⁵⁾. In such cases the examples in previous paragraph would be relevant.

(12) Information on origin is often available to economic operators in various forms⁽¹⁶⁾. In many cases information on the origin of products can be found on customs documentation. If they benefit from preferential treatment on importation, the products will be accompanied by proof of preferential origin issued by Israel⁽¹⁷⁾, or by the Palestinian authorities⁽¹⁸⁾. Other documents such as invoices, delivery notes and transport documents may provide an indication of the origin products. If the information is not readily available from accompanying documents, economic operators may request information on origin, directly from their suppliers or importers.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Article 26(2)(a) and (3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Article 7(1) of Directive 2005/29/EC

⁽¹⁶⁾ See, for example, for foods, as regards the relationship between retailers and their suppliers, Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011.

⁽¹⁷⁾ See, on this point, Notice to importers – Imports from Israel into the EU (OJ C 232, 3.8.2012, p. 5).

⁽¹⁸⁾ A range of products from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, are covered by the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, signed in Brussels on 24 February 1997 (OJ L 187, 16.7.1997, p. 3).

V

*(Announcements)*PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION
POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration**(Case M.7817 — OBI/bauMax Standort Steyr)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2015/C 375/06)

1. On 4 November 2015, the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾ by which the undertaking OBI Group Holding SE & Co. KGaA ('OBI', Germany) and its affiliated undertakings, belonging to the Tengelmann group (Germany), acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation control bauMax Steyr, one retail store belonging to bauMax AG (Austria), by way of purchase of assets and other means.
2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:
 - for OBI: operation of do-it-yourself retail stores and operation of a franchise system for do-it-yourself retail stores in several countries in Europe and in Russia,
 - for bauMax Steyr: operation of one do-it-yourself retail store.
3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.
4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by email to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference number M.7817 — OBI/bauMax Standort Steyr, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

Prior notification of a concentration**(Case M.7573 — DMK/DOC Kaas)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2015/C 375/07)

1. On 5 November 2015, the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾ by which the undertaking DMK Deutsches Milchkontor GmbH ('DMK', Germany) acquires within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) of the Merger Regulation control of the whole of DOC Kaas BV ('DOC Kaas', the Netherlands) by way of conclusion of a swap and purchase agreement.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

- DMK: develops, produces and distributes a broad range of dairy products including basic milk products, cheese, whey-based products, baby food, ice cream, health products and dairy ingredients for food manufacturing,
- DOC Kaas: develops, produces and distributes Dutch-type cheese and other types of hard and semi-hard cheese. To a smaller extent, DOC Group also produces and distributes cream and whey-based products.

3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved.

4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by email to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference number M.7573 — DMK/DOC Kaas, to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application 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

(2015/C 375/08)

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⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'SLAVONSKI KULEN'/'SLAVONSKI KULIN'**EU No: HR-PGI-0005-01216-20.3.2014****PDO () PGI (X)****1. Name(s)**

'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin'

2. Member State or Third Country

Republic of Croatia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Product type**

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

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

'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' is a preserved sausage made from a mixture of the highest quality pork cuts, back fat, salt and spices stuffed into the caecum of a pig. The stuffed intestine is submitted to consecutive processes of fermentation, cold smoking, drying and maturation over the course of at least 150 days.

Irrespective of the different time windows when its production may begin, by the end of the production process of a minimum of 150 days, 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' of all producers must exhibit the physico-chemical and organoleptic properties laid down in point 3.2.

From the outside, 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' appears cylinder-shaped, with a form that may vary depending on the size and volume of the pig's caecum. It is uniformly light to dark brown in colour without any blemish, wrinkle or crack, bound together with a string made out of hemp fibres which cuts into the caecum's natural folds. A cross-section reveals well-intermingled particles of meat and fat without any vestigial remnants of connective tissue. The meat is light to dark red in colour, whereas the fat is white to orange in colour, and the 'kulen' has no or only a slightly pronounced dark outer edge.

The sausage has a pleasant aroma: that of deciduous wood smoke on the outside and fermented pork, paprika and garlic with a mild hint of smoke on the inside. It has a firm consistency, is not friable, lends itself well to slicing and is easy to chew. Its flavour is intense, characterised by the taste of fermented aged pork, salty and hot, but without any acidity or bitterness.

When 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' is placed on the market, it must weigh at least 900 g and have the following physico-chemical properties: water content of no more than 40 %, fat content of no more than 35 % and water activity (aw) of under 0,90.

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

'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' is produced solely from the meat of pigs farrowed and fattened in the geographical area referred to under point 4. The progeny of pigs of the autochthonous Black Slavonian breed, pure-bred and

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

domestically reared Large Yorkshire and Swedish Landrace breeds, two-breed crosses and back-crosses of these breeds and three-breed crosses of these breeds with the Duroc breed must be used. Castrated males and females (gilts and separated young sows) aged between 12 and 20 months and having a final weight of at least 140 kg must be used.

Only the following categories of pork are used in 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin': first (I) — the leg (without the shank), loin and back parts of the longissimus dorsi muscle; second (II) — shoulder blades (without forelegs); and third (III) — neck, and firm back fat (no more than 10 %). A cleaned and drained caecum serves as the sausage casing. The filling is seasoned with table salt, hot and sweet red paprika and garlic.

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

All phases of production of 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin', including fattening of the pigs, must take place within the geographical area specified in section 4. The production process includes the preparation of the stuffing, fermentation, cold smoking, drying and maturation. The production cycle runs from 1 November to 31 March every year.

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

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

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

'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' is produced in a limited part of the Croatian region of Slavonia. This area falls within the administrative boundaries of the towns and municipalities of the following counties:

Vukovar-Srijem County: entire; the following towns and municipalities of Osijek-Baranja County: Belišće, Donji Miholjac, Đakovo, Našice, Osijek, Valpovo, Antunovac, Bizovac, Čepin, Donja Motičina, Drenje, Đurđenovac, Erdut, Ernestinovo, Feričanci, Gorjani, Koška, Levanjska Varoš, Magadenovac, Marijanci, Petrijevi, Podgorač, Podravska Moslavina, Punitovci, Satnica Đakovačka, Semeljci, Strizivojna, Šodolovci, Trnava, Viljevo, Viškovci, Vladislavci and Vuka; Slavonski Brod-Posavina County: entire; Požega-Slavonia County: entire; the following towns and municipalities of Sisak-Moslavina County: Lipovljani, Kutina (the villages of Banova Jaruga, Međurić, Jamarica and Janja Lipa), Novska and Jasenovac; the following towns and municipalities of Bjelovar-Bilogora County: Garešnica (the villages of Duhovi, Gornji Uljanik, Uljanik, Uljanički Brijeg and Hrastovac), Dežanovac, Končanica, Đulovac, Sirač and Daruvar; the following towns and municipalities of Virovitica-Podravina County: Virovitica, Slatina, Orahovica, Crnac, Čačinci, Čađavica, Gradina, Lukač, Mikleuš, Nova Bukovica, Pitomača (the villages of Stari Gradac, Starogradački Marof and Križnica), Sopje, Suhopolje, Špišić Bukovica, Voćin and Zdenci.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link between 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' and its geographical area is based on the following factors: the traditional know-how of local producers and climatic conditions favourable to natural processing and preservation of the meat.

Historical evidence suggests that production of 'kulen' in Slavonia dates back over 200 years. Slavonia, as an area with a strong tradition of crop-growing and stock-farming, has always offered good conditions for pig breeding and the processing of pigmeat. More intensive commercial development of pig rearing in Slavonia began with the withdrawal of the Turks and the establishment of the Military Frontier in the 17th Century, when the rearing of pigs for consumption by the military and major consumer centres began on a large scale. At first pigs were reared mainly for bacon and lard, and only somewhat later, with the development of the butcher's trade, did other products such as sausages and 'kulen' take off.

Slavonia has a moderate continental climate with cold winters and hot summers. Pig slaughter and production of 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' traditionally take place in winter, when the low air temperatures provide good natural conditions for the processing of meat. The average mean air temperature between November and March is 0,2-6,9 °C, which ensures good natural protection from meat spoilage.

The restrictions imposed with regard to the origin of the pigs stem from the tradition of production of 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' and the reputation of the product on the market. 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' is a product of the Slavonian tradition of slaughtering heavy home-reared pigs at the onset of winter in order to

produce meat, lard and dry-cured meat products that would sustain the local community throughout the following year. The traditional Slavonian pig-slaughter comprised all the steps, from the actual slaughter of the animal to the production, smoking and drying of traditional preserved meat products. Pig slaughtering was an important social event attended by relatives, friends and neighbours and followed by a feast of song and dance. 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' was made from the meat of pigs bred on the same private farm or bought from neighbouring farms. This tradition continues to the present day. There is no evidence to suggest that 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' has ever been made from pork produced anywhere else but Slavonia.

'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' derives its organoleptic and physico-chemical properties from the production method and the tradition and know-how of the locals. The production of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' has always relied on the specific know-how and skill of local producers in selecting the raw material and the production process. Only selected highest-quality cuts and back fat from locally reared older and heavier pigs are used in the production process. Production follows a traditional recipe that calls for a mixture of condiments of exclusively natural origin: sweet and hot red paprika, garlic and table salt. The fat accounts for only a small part (up to 10 %) of the filling, which means that owing to its high meat content 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' is a particularly high-value sausage but also one of the hardest to dry.

The stuffing of the filling in a pig's caecum, which has a comparatively large diameter, and the handling of the resulting heavy-weight sausage entail additional skills and knowledge on the part of the producer for tying up the product by hand and smoking, drying and maturing it for a relatively long period of time. This makes the production of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' more complex in technological terms and more time-consuming compared with other sausages.

The specific production method gives 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' a specific appearance and properties. 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' is stuffed into a pig's caecum, which is tied up with a twine in a characteristic pattern. The product is mildly surface-smoked in the smoke of hornbeam, ash or beech. The inside is distinguished by a harmonious mosaic of meat and fat particles pressed through grinder plates with 6-12 mm holes. The careful cold-smoking in deciduous wood smoke gives 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' its mild smoky finish, while the aroma and taste of characteristically salty and spicy fermented mature pork come from the traditionally used condiments, the high content of lean meat and the special technique of drying and maturing the product for several months.

It is thanks to the selection of top-quality ingredients, the traditional recipe, the production process and its timing, which have been preserved through generations to this day, that 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' boasts its distinctive characteristics and maintains its link with the local community. The reputation of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' stems from the product's role in Slavonian heritage, its name and its economic importance.

In the past, 'kulen' was a highly prized commodity; something that could be served to a dear friend or given to an important person as a gift. Since production used to be relatively small-scale, i.e. one 'kulen' per pig, the product would be set aside for special occasions and important guests. 'Kulen' is also referred to in the works of many authors chronicling the haps and mishaps in the lives of Slavonians and describing their way of life. Higher production and the increased purchasing power of the local population have led to banquets being organised and 'kulen' being offered as gifts more often nowadays. It is practically impossible to imagine public celebrations, church festivities, national holidays, traditional ceremonies and family get-togethers in which 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' does not feature. The custom of giving 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' as a gift has survived to this day (*Izravna prodaja seljačkih proizvoda*, Agrarno savjetovanje, Zagreb, 2005, p. 127).

The reputation of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' is also linked to its name. The name 'Slavonski kulen' was first mentioned in 1968 in the Vinkovački list newspaper (Vinkovački list No 15, 12.4.1968, p. 5). It should be noted that in different Croatian dialects 'kulen' is referred to as 'kulin', 'kuljen' and 'kulijen'. However, 'kulen' and 'kulin' are the most common, with the former being the preferred name among speakers of Štokavian (the official Croatian, ijekavian, dialect) and the latter among speakers of the ikavian dialect. Today the names used in trade and commercial documents (invoices, product labels, price lists) include either 'Slavonski kulen' or 'Slavonski kulin'.

There are farms in Slavonia for which production of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' represents an important source of income. On the domestic market, the demand for the product exceeds the supply. Furthermore, 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' is one of a handful of products that can make farms in Slavonia, particularly those rearing pigs, competitive on the market.

The specificity of 'Slavonski kulen'/ 'Slavonski kulin' in comparison with other products stems from the use of traditional production technology, which has been retained to the present day, the quality of the raw materials (choice cuts of mature meat from autochthonous or domesticated pigs), natural condiments and a traditional time of production.

All of the above serves to illustrate the importance of 'Slavonski kulen'/'Slavonski kulin' to the people of Slavonia, who consider it to be not only a traditional foodstuff, but also an integral part of their cultural traditions and heritage.

Reference to publication of the product specification

(second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014 of 13 June 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽¹⁾).

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 36.

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