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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 21 March 2017

on the economic policy of the euro area

(2017/C 92/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 136, in conjunction with Article 121(2) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation of the European Commission,

Having regard to the conclusions of the European Council,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Financial Committee,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic Policy Committee,

Whereas:

- (1) Economic recovery in the euro area continues, but remains fragile. There has been significant progress in recent years: since 2015, euro area gross domestic product (GDP) has recovered its pre-crisis level in real terms and unemployment has declined to its lowest level since 2010-2011. However, aggregate demand is sluggish, inflation is well below target, in spite of very accommodative monetary policy by the European Central Bank, and growth is hindered by the legacies of the crisis, such as persisting macroeconomic imbalances and a high level of indebtedness in all sectors of the economy, which require deleveraging and reduce resources available for consumption and investment. Additionally, while the growth potential of the euro area economy has been on a long-term downward trend, that trend has been further accentuated by the crisis. In spite of signs of improvement, the persistent investment gap and high level of unemployment risk further dampening growth prospects. The asymmetric nature of the rebalancing in the euro area economy has continued, with only net debtor countries correcting their imbalances, and is resulting in an increasing current account surplus. In the framework of the global agreement within the G20, the euro area Member States are called upon to use all policy tools, including fiscal and structural — individually and collectively — to achieve strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth.
- (2) Ambitious structural reforms should facilitate the smooth and efficient reallocation of human and capital resources and help to address the challenges posed by ongoing technological and structural changes. Reforms that create an enabling business climate, complete the Single Market and remove barriers to investment are necessary. Those efforts are crucial for increasing productivity and employment, strengthening convergence and enhancing the growth potential and adjustment capacity of the euro area economy. Structural reform implementation, by creating efficient markets with responsive price mechanisms, would support monetary policy through facilitating its transmission to the real economy. Reforms that remove investment bottlenecks and support investment can bring a double benefit by supporting economic activity in the short term and creating capacity for long-term sustainable and inclusive growth. Reforms that improve productivity are particularly important for Member States

with large deleveraging needs linked to high external debt, as faster growth helps to reduce the debt as a share of GDP. Boosting price- and non-price competitiveness would further contribute to external rebalancing in those countries. Member States with large current account surpluses can contribute to euro area rebalancing by introducing measures, including structural reforms, that facilitate channelling the excessive savings to domestic demand, in particular by strengthening investment. The current environment of low interest rates also offers additional opportunities in that regard, in particular in Member States with significant fiscal space.

- (3) Better coordination of the implementation of structural reforms, including those prescribed in the country-specific recommendations and those needed to complete the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), can create positive spillovers in the Member States and strengthen their positive short-term effects. Eurogroup thematic discussions have proved valuable for building common understanding of reform priorities in the euro area, sharing best practices, promoting reform implementation and structural convergence. Those discussions should continue in the Eurogroup, and be strengthened where possible, including by making effective use of agreed common principles and benchmarking. Those discussions should continue without prejudice to ongoing discussions in relevant Council formations, and while recognising the Union-wide relevance and nature of common challenges and experiences where applicable. In response to the Council Recommendation on the establishment of National Productivity Boards ⁽¹⁾ adopted on 20 September 2016, the National Productivity Boards can also contribute to fostering ownership and implementation of the necessary reforms at national level.

- (4) A strong coordination of national fiscal policies, based on common rules, is essential to arrive at an appropriate aggregate fiscal stance and for the proper functioning of the monetary union. The common fiscal rules are geared towards pursuing debt sustainability at national level, while providing room for macroeconomic stabilisation. Consequently, the national and aggregate fiscal stances of the euro area have to balance the double objective of ensuring long-term sustainability of national public finances and short-term macroeconomic stabilisation at both country level and the level of the euro area. At the current juncture of high uncertainty about the strength of the recovery and the level of spare capacity in the economy, when monetary policy has delivered substantial accommodation, fiscal policy at the level of the euro area is necessary to complement monetary policy in supporting demand, in particular investment, and moving out of low inflation while taking due account of ongoing debt sustainability concerns. The effectiveness of fiscal policy, including of spillover effects across countries, is enhanced by the context of low interest rates. In its Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Towards a positive fiscal stance for the euro area' issued on 16 November 2016, the Commission considers that for 2017, a fiscal expansion of up to 0,5 % of GDP is desirable at the level of the euro area as a whole in the present circumstances.

In July 2016, the Eurogroup concluded, on the basis of Commission analysis, that the broadly neutral aggregate fiscal stance in 2017 strikes an appropriate balance. In December 2016, the Eurogroup underlined the importance of striking an appropriate balance between the need to ensure sustainability and the need to support investment to strengthen the fragile recovery, thereby contributing to a more balanced policy mix. At the same time, government debt remains high and there is still a need to make public finances sustainable in the medium term in a number of Member States. For that reason, it is necessary to ensure appropriate differentiation of fiscal efforts across the Member States, taking into account fiscal space and the spillovers across euro area countries. Member States which are over-achieving their fiscal objectives could use their favourable budgetary situation to further strengthen their domestic demand and growth potential, depending on country specific circumstances, while respecting the medium-term objective, the national budgetary prerogatives and national requirements.

For instance, guarantees to the European Fund for Strategic Investments established by Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾ are a particularly effective way for Member States with fiscal space to maximise the impact on the real economy and recovery in the euro area. Member States that need further fiscal adjustments under the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) should make sure

⁽¹⁾ Council Recommendation of 20 September 2016 on the establishment of National Productivity Boards (2016/C 349/01) (OJ C 349, 24.9.2016, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2015/1017 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2015 on the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Investment Advisory Hub and the European Investment Project Portal and amending Regulations (EU) No 1291/2013 and (EU) No 1316/2013 — the European Fund for Strategic Investments (OJ L 169, 1.7.2015, p. 1).

to be compliant with SGP requirements for 2017. Under the corrective arm of the SGP, Member States need to ensure a timely and durable correction of their excessive deficits which provides fiscal buffers against unforeseen circumstances. Member States should pursue fiscal policies in full respect of the SGP, while making best use of the flexibility embedded within the existing rules. Structural reforms, in particular those that increase productivity, would support growth and improve sustainability of public finances. In addition, a decisive improvement of the composition and management of national budgets, on both the revenue and expenditure sides, by shifting resources towards tangible and intangible investment would increase the impact of budgets on demand in the short term and productivity in the longer term. Effective national fiscal frameworks are necessary to strengthen the credibility of Member States' policies and help strike the right balance between short-term macroeconomic stabilisation, debt sustainability and long-term growth.

- (5) Labour markets continue to recover gradually in the euro area, with a steady reduction of unemployment. However, the rates of long-term unemployment and youth unemployment remain high while poverty, social exclusion and inequality remain a serious concern in several Member States. Despite progress with reforms to improve the resilience and adjustment capacity of labour markets, significant differences across the euro area, which continue to challenge its smooth functioning, persist. Well-designed, fair and inclusive labour market, social protection and tax and benefit systems are necessary for a frictionless and constant reallocation of labour towards more productive activities, to support the integration or reintegration of those who are affected by transitions between jobs or are excluded from the labour market, to reduce segmentation, and to promote economic and social convergence, including by increasing the chances of quality employment. They will also result in more effective automatic stabilisation and stronger, sustainable and inclusive growth and employment which are important for addressing the social challenges in the euro area.

Necessary reforms encompass: (i) changes in employment protection legislation aiming at reliable contractual arrangements that provide flexibility and security for both employees and employers, promote labour market transitions, avoid a two-tier labour market and allow for labour cost adjustment when needed, an area where reform efforts have been particularly intense in recent years; (ii) enhancement of skills by improving the performance and efficiency of education systems and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, focusing on labour market needs; (iii) effective active labour market policies to help the unemployed, including the long-term unemployed, re-enter the labour market and increase labour market participation; and (iv) modern, sustainable and adequate social protection systems that contribute effectively and efficiently throughout the life-cycle to both social inclusion and labour market integration. Moreover, shifting taxation away from labour, in particular for low-income earners, and ensuring equitable tax systems can improve labour market outcomes. Euro area Member States that have implemented such reforms are more resilient and demonstrate better employment and social performance. The design of such reforms needs to take into account their potential social impact.

- (6) The establishment of the Banking Union has progressed, but it remains unfinished. In line with the roadmap of June 2016, as set out in the Council Conclusions of 16 June 2016, work is set to continue to complete the Banking Union with regard to risk reduction and risk sharing, including a European Deposit Insurance Scheme and making the common backstop for the Single Resolution Fund operational at the latest by the end of the Fund's transitional period as defined in Regulation (EU) No 806/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾. While the overall resilience of the euro area banking sector has increased since the crisis, pressure on banks has mounted due to a number of factors, such as high levels of non-performing loans, inefficient business models and overcapacity in some Member States, all resulting in low profitability and, in some cases, challenges to viability. That pressure impairs the ability of the banks to provide lending to the economy. Risks also extend to the real economy, where the level of public and non-financial private debt in some Member States remains elevated. There is a need for a continued orderly deleveraging in the private sector through working out, servicing and, if necessary, restructuring of debt of viable debtors under distress, and by resolving stocks of non-viable debt, so that capital can be reallocated more quickly and efficiently. In this context, dealing with still elevated levels of non-performing loans and following common principles in the design of insolvency frameworks for businesses and households, including by improving national insolvency procedures and out-of-court settlement frameworks, constitute key components of a successful and growth-friendly deleveraging process.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 806/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2014 establishing uniform rules and a uniform procedure for the resolution of credit institutions and certain investment firms in the framework of a Single Resolution Mechanism and a Single Resolution Fund and amending Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 (OJ L 225, 30.7.2014, p. 1).

- (7) During 2016, some progress was made on the initiatives presented in the Five Presidents' Report 'Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union' of 22 June 2015 prepared by the President of the European Commission, in close cooperation with the Presidents of the European Council, of the European Central Bank, of the Eurogroup and of the European Parliament, such as the increased role of the euro area dimension in the European Semester, the Council Recommendation on the National Productivity Boards and the establishment of the European Fiscal Board within the Commission. Work is also ongoing on improving transparency and reducing complexity of fiscal rules and, in November 2015, the Commission issued a proposal for a European Deposit Insurance Scheme. Moreover, there are broader challenges to address in the light of the Five Presidents' Report. On 1 March 2017, the Commission issued a White Paper on the Future of Europe, which also includes the future of the EMU. Agreeing on an operational way forward requires a shared sense of ownership and a common sense of purpose among all euro area Member States and the institutions of the Union, and also among non-euro area Member States, as a strong EMU will help to address the challenges facing the Union more forcefully and will have a positive impact on non-euro area Member States as well. In that regard, it is important for discussions on completing the EMU to be conducted in a manner that is open and transparent towards non-euro area Member States, in full respect of the Union's internal market, and for relevant initiatives to be open to non-euro area Member States on an equivalent basis where appropriate.
- (8) The Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee have been consulted on the employment and social aspects of this Recommendation,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS that in the period 2017-2018, euro area Member States take action within the Eurogroup, individually and collectively, to:

1. Pursue policies that support sustainable and inclusive growth in the short and the long term, and improve adjustment capacity, rebalancing and convergence. Prioritise reforms that increase productivity, improve the institutional and business environment, remove bottlenecks to investment, and support job creation. Member States with current account deficits or high external debt should raise productivity while containing unit labour costs. Member States with large current account surpluses should implement, as a priority, measures, including structural reforms and fostering investment, that help to strengthen their domestic demand and growth potential.
2. Aim for an appropriate balance in fiscal policies between the need to ensure sustainability and the need to support investment to strengthen the recovery, thereby contributing to an appropriate aggregate fiscal stance and a more balanced policy mix. Member States that, according to the Commission assessment, are at risk of not meeting their obligations under the SGP in 2017 should, on that basis, take, in a timely manner, additional measures to ensure compliance. Conversely, Member States that have outperformed their medium-term objectives are invited to continue to prioritise investments to boost potential growth while preserving the long-term sustainability of public finances. Member States that are projected to be broadly compliant with the SGP in 2017 should ensure compliance with the SGP within their national budgetary processes. Pursue fiscal policies in full respect of the SGP, while making the best use of the flexibility embedded within the existing rules. Overall, Member States should improve the composition of public finances by creating more room for tangible and intangible investment, and ensure the effective functioning of national fiscal frameworks.
3. Implement reforms that promote competitiveness, job creation, job quality, resilience and economic and social convergence, underpinned by an effective social dialogue. They should combine: (i) reliable labour contracts which provide flexibility and security for employees and employers; (ii) quality and efficient education and training systems and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies targeted at labour market needs; (iii) effective active labour market policies to support labour market participation; (iv) modern, sustainable and adequate social protection systems that contribute effectively and efficiently throughout the life cycle to social inclusion and labour market integration. Shift taxes away from labour, particularly for low-income earners and in Member States where cost competitiveness lags behind the euro area average, and make that tax shift budget-neutral in countries without the fiscal room for manoeuvre.
4. In line with the roadmap of June 2016, continue work to complete the Banking Union with regard to risk reduction and risk sharing, including a European Deposit Insurance Scheme and making the common backstop for the Single Resolution Fund operational at the latest by the end of the Fund's transitional period. Devise and implement an

effective euro-area wide strategy to complement prudential supervisory action to address viability risks within the banking sector, including as regards the high level of non-performing loans, inefficient business models and overcapacity. In Member States with large stocks of private debt, promote orderly deleveraging.

5. Make progress on completing EMU, in full respect of the Union's internal market and in an open and transparent manner towards non-euro area Member States. Further advance the ongoing initiatives and work on the longer-term issues for EMU, taking due account of the Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe.

Done at Brussels, 21 March 2017.

For the Council

The President

E. SCICLUNA

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

23 March 2017

(2017/C 92/02)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,0786	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,4387
JPY	Japanese yen	119,36	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,3780
DKK	Danish krone	7,4356	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,5303
GBP	Pound sterling	0,86273	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,5086
SEK	Swedish krona	9,5095	KRW	South Korean won	1 207,38
CHF	Swiss franc	1,0700	ZAR	South African rand	13,4933
ISK	Iceland króna		CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,4268
NOK	Norwegian krone	9,1478	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,4178
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	14 363,72
CZK	Czech koruna	27,021	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,7771
HUF	Hungarian forint	309,22	PHP	Philippine peso	54,309
PLN	Polish zloty	4,2685	RUB	Russian rouble	62,2001
RON	Romanian leu	4,5555	THB	Thai baht	37,320
TRY	Turkish lira	3,9038	BRL	Brazilian real	3,3608
AUD	Australian dollar	1,4132	MXN	Mexican peso	20,5962
			INR	Indian rupee	70,6095

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

COMMISSION DECISION
of 21 March 2017
to replace a member of the REFIT Platform Stakeholder group
(2017/C 92/03)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Commission Decision C(2015) 3261 final of 19 May 2015 establishing the REFIT Platform, and in particular Article 4 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Decision C(2015) 3261 final establishing the REFIT Platform (hereinafter 'the Platform') provides in Article 4 that the Platform will comprise a 'Government group' and a 'Stakeholder group' and that the members of the Stakeholder group shall consist of up to 20 experts, two of them representing the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and the rest from business, including from SMEs, and from social partners and civil society organisations having direct experience in the application of Union legislation. The experts in the stakeholder group shall be appointed in their personal capacity or to represent a common interest shared by a number of stakeholders.
- (2) The Decision provides in Article 4.4 that the Commission, on a proposal from the First Vice-President of the Commission, shall appoint members of the Stakeholder group selected from applicants having direct experience in the application of Union legislation, who have responded to the call for applications. The appointments shall ensure, to the extent possible, a balanced representation of the various sectors, interests and regions of the Union and gender. Article 4.5 of the Decision provides that Members shall be appointed until 31 October 2019. Pursuant to Article 4.6 of the Decision, Members who resign may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.
- (3) Commission Decision C(2015) 9063 final of 16 December 2015 appointing the Members of the Stakeholder group of the REFIT Platform⁽¹⁾ provides that, should any Member of the Stakeholder group cease to be a Member during the term of office of the Platform, the First Vice-President may nominate a replacement from the initial list of candidates who responded to the call for expressions of interest to become Member of the Stakeholder group,
- (4) Following the resignation of Mr Pierre Baussand as Member of the Stakeholder group as of 26 September 2016, the First Vice-President of the Commission has nominated Ms Nina Renshaw to replace Mr Baussand for the rest of his term of office,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole article

Ms Nina Renshaw is appointed Member of the Stakeholder group of the REFIT Platform until 31 October 2019.

Done at Brussels, 21 March 2017.

For the Commission

Frans TIMMERMANS

First Vice-President

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 425, 18.12.2015, p. 8.

ANNEX

Name	Nationality	Representing a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area	Current employer
Ms Nina Renshaw	UK	YES	European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

Explanatory Notes to the Combined Nomenclature of the European Union

(2017/C 92/04)

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

On page 95, between the explanatory note to CN subheading '**2103 90 30 Aromatic bitters of an alcoholic strength by volume of 44,2 % to 49,2 % vol containing from 1,5 % to 6 % by weight of gentian, spices and various ingredients and from 4 % to 10 % of sugar, in containers holding 0,5 litre or less**' and the explanatory notes to CN heading '**2104 Soups and broths and preparations therefor; homogenised composite food preparations**', the following text is inserted:

'2103 90 90 Other

This subheading includes products, which would otherwise fall within Chapter 22, prepared for culinary purposes and rendered unsuitable for consumption as beverages.

This subheading includes in particular 'cooking liquors' which are products referred to colloquially as 'cooking wines', 'cooking Port', 'cooking Cognac' and 'cooking brandy'. Cooking wines consist of ordinary wine or of de-alcoholised wine, or of a mixture of both, to which salt, or a combination of several seasonings (e.g. salt and pepper) has been added, rendering the product unsuitable for consumption as a beverage. In general, those products contain at least 5 g/l of salt.'

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

⁽²⁾ OJ C 76, 4.3.2015, p. 1.

V

(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Call for expressions of interest for the position of member of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority

(2017/C 92/05)

Applications are invited for the positions of 7 out of 14 members of the Management Board of the European Food Safety Authority established by Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety ⁽¹⁾. The Authority is located in Parma, Italy.

The European Food Safety Authority

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the keystone of the European Union system of risk assessment for food and feed safety. The Authority was established to provide scientific advice and support for Union legislation and policies in all fields that may have a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety, as well as closely associated questions in the field of animal health and welfare and plant health. It provides independent information on these matters and communicates on risks. Its mission also includes provision of scientific advice in many areas of food and feed law and whenever Union legislation so requires, including new food technologies such as GMOs. The Authority is widely recognised as the point of reference by virtue of its independence, the scientific quality of its opinions and public information, the transparency of its procedures and its diligence in performing its tasks. In addition to having its own specialist personnel, the Authority is supported by networks of competent organisations in the EU.

Legal background

In accordance with Article 25 of the abovementioned Regulation, 'the members of the Board shall be appointed in such a way as to secure the highest standards of competence, a broad range of relevant expertise and, consistent with these, the broadest possible geographic distribution within the Union'. In addition, four of the members of the Management Board 'shall have their background in organisations representing consumers and other interests in the food chain'.

Furthermore, recital 40 of the aforementioned Regulation stipulates that 'Cooperation with Member States is also indispensable' and recital 41 states that 'the Management Board should be appointed in such a way as to secure the highest standard of competence, a broad range of relevant expertise, for instance in management and in public administration, and the broadest possible geographic distribution within the Union. This should be facilitated by a rotation of the different countries of origin of the members of the Management Board without any post being reserved for nationals of any specific Member State.'

Role and operation of the Management Board

The responsibilities of the Management Board include, in particular:

- general monitoring of the work of the Authority to ensure that it carries out its mission and performs the tasks assigned to it in accordance with its mandate and within a culture of independence and transparency,
- the appointment of the Executive Director on the basis of a list of candidates drawn up by the Commission, and, if necessary, his or her dismissal,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.

- the appointment of the members of the Scientific Committee and Panels, which are responsible for providing the scientific opinions of the Authority,
- the adoption of annual and multiannual programmes of work of the Authority and the general report of annual activities,
- the adoption of the Authority's internal rules and financial regulation.

The Board operates by public meetings, private sessions, and correspondence. EFSA papers, Board correspondence and private sessions are in English. The Board meets four to six times per year, mainly in Parma.

Composition of the Management Board

The Management Board is composed of 14 members, plus a representative of the Commission, as stated in Article 25(1) of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 ⁽¹⁾. Four of the members shall have their background in organisations representing consumers and other interests in the food chain. The term of office of 7 members of the current Management Board expires on 30 June 2018, in accordance with Council Decision 2014/C 192/02 ⁽²⁾. The term of office of the other seven members will end on 30 June 2020, in accordance with Council Decision 2016/C 223/08 ⁽³⁾.

Current membership of the Board can be viewed on EFSA's website <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/people/mbmembers>

This publication concerns applications for the positions of those seven members of the Management Board whose term of office expires on 30 June 2018.

Qualifications for the position and selection criteria

The members of the Management Board shall meet the highest standards of competence, encompassing a broad range of relevant expertise and a commitment to act independently.

To qualify for the position, the candidates shall be nationals of an EU Member State and shall demonstrate:

1. that they have at least 15 years of experience in one or more of the 5 areas of competence listed below, including at least 5 years at a senior level:
 - provision of independent scientific advice and scientific and technical support for the preparation of European Union legislation and policies in all fields which have a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety,
 - management and public administration (including human resources, legal and financial aspects),
 - development of policies ensuring integrity, independence, transparency, ethical practices and high scientific quality advice while maintaining reliability with stakeholders,
 - effective communication and information to the public on scientific work,
 - ensuring necessary coherence between: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication functions;
2. that they have at least five years of experience gained from work in connection with food and feed safety, or other areas related to the Authority's mission, notably in the field of animal health and welfare, protection of the environment, plant health and nutrition;
3. their ability to operate in a multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary environment;
4. their commitment to act independently:

they are expected to observe the highest standard of ethical conduct, act honestly, independently, impartially, with discretion and without regard to self-interest, and avoid any situation liable to give rise to a personal conflict of interests.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 13.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 192, 21.6.2014, p. 2.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 223, 21.6.2016, p. 7.

The following criteria will apply for the evaluation of candidates, who will be assessed on the basis of comparative merits, and on their commitment to act independently:

- expertise and ability to contribute effectively to one or more of the areas of competence mentioned above,
- expertise in the field of food and feed safety, or other areas related to the Authority's mission,
- ability to operate in a multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary environment.

The short-list of candidates will also be analysed in view of the following requirements for the Board composition:

- well-balanced, collective expertise of the Management Board members,
- broadest possible geographical distribution based on the rotation of the different nationalities of the Management Board members.

Applicants are required to complete an online application form and a declaration of interest form that include specific commitments and declarations made on their honour. Once appointed by the Council, they will have to make an annual written declaration of interests and to declare at each meeting of the Management Board any interest which might be considered as prejudicial to their independence in relation to the items on the agenda.

The purpose of the Declaration of Interest form is to demonstrate the candidate's ability to exercise the function of member of EFSA's Management Board in line with EFSA's internal rules on independence (<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/values/independence.htm>) and the Code of Conduct of EFSA's Management Board (Code of Conduct of the EFSA Management Board). These rules stipulate that Board members shall refrain from involvement in any activity that could result in a conflict of interest or is likely to provoke the perception of a conflict of interest in the general public.

The particular situation of a candidate applying as a member having a background in organisations representing consumers or other interests in the food chain will be taken into account. See section below entitled: 'Members of the Management Board having a background in organisations representing consumers or other interest in the food chain'.

Participation in the Board meetings/Reimbursement and indemnities

Members will need to make a high level of commitment to participate in the meetings of the Management Board. They are asked to confirm in the application form their availability to actively participate in the Management Board. It is estimated that the Management Board will meet four to six times per year. Members of the Board are not remunerated, but they will be reimbursed for their normal travel costs and be entitled to a daily allowance. Accommodation costs will be paid by EFSA directly. They will also receive indemnities for the attendance of the meeting in accordance with Article 3 of the Rules of Reimbursement which states that: 'The special indemnity shall be of EUR 385 for each full day of meeting attendance. A half-day meeting or half-day attendance, shall result in half of the indemnity being paid.'

Members of the Management Board having a background in organisations representing consumers or other interests in the food chain

Candidates are asked to indicate and justify in their application if they wish to be considered as one of the four Board Members having a background in organisations representing consumers or other interests in the food chain. The justification should include details of their background in organisations representing consumers or other interests in the food chain.

Appointment and term of mandate

With the exception of the Commission representative, who is appointed by the Commission, members of the Management Board are appointed by the Council, in consultation with the European Parliament, from the list drawn up by the Commission on the basis of this call for expressions of interest. The term of office shall be four years and can be renewed once. Applicants should note that the Commission's list will be made public and that they have the right to object to publication of their names by contacting the Commission at the address indicated in the specific privacy statement for this call (see also the section below entitled 'Protection of personal data'). The exercise of this right will not prejudice the candidate's application. Individuals on the Commission's list who are not appointed may be invited to constitute a reserve list to be used in the event of the need to replace members who are unable to complete their mandate.

Equal opportunities

Great care will be taken to avoid any form of discrimination and applications from women are encouraged.

Application procedure and closing date

Applications shall comply with the requirements set out below; otherwise they will not be taken into consideration:

- (1) Interested persons are encouraged to apply via an online system by going to the website: https://ec.europa.eu/food/efsa/management-board_en

The online application must include two attachments:

- a) the declaration of interest form with a handwritten signature, the form may be found at the following address: https://ec.europa.eu/food/efsa/management-board_en
- b) a CV of minimum 1,5 pages and maximum 3 pages.

- (2) Upon successful submission of the online application, the online system will generate a registration number. If, however, no registration number is generated, the application has not been registered.

In the event of any technical problems, please send an email to sante-call-management-board-efsa@ec.europa.eu It is not possible to monitor the progress of the application online.

- (3) The application form, the declaration of interest form, the CV, and any supporting documents have to be written in an official language of the European Union. It would, however, be appreciated, without it being a requirement, if a summary of experience and other pertinent information could be provided in English in order to facilitate the selection procedure. All applications will be treated as confidential. Supporting documents must be submitted at a later stage, if requested.
- (4) If you wish to submit your application in an official language of the European Union other than English, you may fill in the application in that language or contact the call secretariat by email to sante-call-management-board-efsa@ec.europa.eu and request an application form in given language. You will receive a word application form.
- (5) All expressions of interest will be treated confidentially.
- (6) The final deadline for submission of applications is **19 May 2017**, 12:00 noon, Brussels time.
- (7) The application has to be completed and the deadline must be respected. We strongly advise applicants not to wait until the last few days before applying, since any fault of internet connection could result in a missed opportunity to submit the application before the deadline. Once the deadline for submission of application has passed, applications will not be accepted.
- (8) Applications sent by email and respecting the requirements set under point (3) will be accepted. Applications sent by post, fax or hand-delivered will not be accepted as a general rule, neither applications sent directly to the European Food Safety Authority.
- (9) In submitting an application, applicants accept the procedures and conditions as described in this call and in the documents to which it refers. In compiling their application, applicants may under no circumstances refer to any documents submitted in prior applications (example: photocopies of previous applications will not be accepted). Any misrepresentation in supplying the required information may lead to exclusion from the present call.
- (10) All candidates applying to this call for expressions of interest will be informed about the outcome of the selection process.

Protection of personal data

The Commission will ensure that candidates' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data⁽¹⁾. This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data. For more detailed information on the scope, purposes and means of the processing of their personal data in the context of this call, candidates are invited to consult the specific privacy statement published on the call webpage at the following address https://ec.europa.eu/food/efsa/management-board_en

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1.

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

(2017/C 92/06)

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

'THYM DE PROVENCE'**EU No: FR-PGI-0005-01364 — 18.9.2015****PDO () PGI (X)****1. Name(s)**

'Thym de Provence'

2. Member State or Third Country

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.8. Other products of Annex I to the Treaty (spices etc.)

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

'Thym de Provence' is an aromatic plant belonging to the species *Thymus vulgaris* L. of the *Labiatae* family. It is an aromatic shrub that is 10-30 cm in height and thickly branched, with ligneous lower stems. It is usually trained to grow in tufts or in small, very dense bushes.

The evergreen leaves, which are grey or green according to the season, and the young stems and calyces, are interspersed by glands filled with essential oil. The essential oil is phenolic and its principal components are carvacrol (minimum content 15 %), thymol and para-cymene (their precursor).

'Thym de Provence', a perennial plant, is cultivated in an open field or picked in an approved parcel in its natural environment.

'Thym de Provence' comes from the following varieties: VP83 (population thyme), variety *Carvalia*, variety *Thymilia*.

The list of authorised varieties may be revised on the basis of a revision protocol aiming at ensuring the following characteristics:

- phenolic profile (carvacrol content + thymol + para-cymene > 50 %),
- carvacrol content equal to or higher than 15 %,
- straight and ligneous plant.

After each amendment, this list is distributed to producers, the inspection body and the competent supervisory authorities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

'Thym de Provence' is presented in the form of dried or frozen leaves or fresh or dried branches. The branches may be sold in bulk or in bouquets.

It has the following characteristics:

— regardless of the form of presentation, the essential oil must contain at least 15 % of carvacrol,

additionally, depending on the form of presentation:

— for fresh branches: a maximum stem length of 16 cm,

— for dried branches: a maximum stem length of 16 cm and a maximum moisture content of 12 %,

— for dried leaves: a maximum moisture content of 12 %, a maximum proportion of stems of 4 % and a maximum proportion of small particles of 2 %,

— for frozen leaves: a maximum proportion of stems of 4 % and a maximum proportion of small particles of 2 %.

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 following operations must take place in the geographical area: harvesting, processing (drying/threshing, sorting, freezing) and making bouquets.

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 addition to the compulsory information provided for by the legislation in force, the labels affixed to the consumer units of 'Thym de Provence' must include the MDD (minimum durability date) as well as an insert with the name and address of the certifying body preceded by the words 'certified by'.

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

The department of Vaucluse: all municipalities.

The department of Bouches-du-Rhône:

— the following cantons in their entirety: Aix-en-Provence (1 and 2), Allauch, Aubagne, Berre-l'Étang, Châteaurenard, Ciotat, Gardanne, Marignane, Marseille (1 to 10), Martigues, Péligasse, Salon-de-Provence (1 and 2), Trets, Vitrolles,

— the canton of Istres, with the exception of the municipality of Fos-sur-Mer.

The department of Gard:

— the following cantons in their entirety: Bagnols-sur-Cèze, Pont-Saint-Esprit, Redessan, Roquemaure, Uzès, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon,

— the canton of Alès-2: the municipalities of Belvézet, Bouquet, Fons-sur-Lussan, Lussan, Seynes, Vallérargues,

— the canton of Alès-3: the municipality of Castelnau-Valence,

— the canton of Beaucaire, with the exception of the municipalities of Bellegarde, Fourques,

— the canton of Marguerittes: the municipalities of Manduel, Marguerittes, Poulx,

— the canton of Rousson: the municipalities of Barjac, Méjannes-le-Clap, Saint-Jean-de-Maruéjols-et-Avéjan, Saint-Privat-de-Champclos, Tharaux.

The department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence:

— the following cantons in their entirety: Château-Arnoux-Saint-Auban, Forcalquier, Manosque (1 to 3), Oraison, Reillanne, Valensole,

— the canton of Digne-les-Bains-2, with the exception of the municipalities of Champtercier, Digne-les-Bains,

— the canton of Sisteron, with the exception of the municipalities of Authon, Saint-Geniez,

- the canton of Riez: the municipalities of Bras-d'Asse, Le Castellet, Le Chaffaut-Saint-Jurson, Entrevennes, Estoublon, Mézel, Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, Puimichel, Puimoisson, Riez, Roumoules, Saint-Jeannet, Saint-Julien-d'Asse, Saint-Jurs,
- the canton of Seyne: The municipalities of Claret, Melve, Sigoyer, Thèze, Valernes, Vaumeilh.

The department of Ardèche:

- the canton of Bourg-Saint-Andéol in its entirety,
- the canton of Pouzin: the municipality of Rochemaure,
- the canton of Teil: the municipalities of Alba-la-Romaine, Aubignas, Saint-Andéol-de-Berg, Saint-Maurice-d'Ibie, Saint-Thomé, Le Teil, Valvignères,
- the canton of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc: the municipalities of Labastide-de-Virac, Orgnac-l'Aven, Saint-Remèze.

The department of Var:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Brignoles, Draguignan, Garde, Garéoult, Hyères, Ollioules, Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer, Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume, Seyne-sur-Mer (1 and 2), Solliès-Pont, Toulon (1 to 4),
- the canton of Crau: the municipalities of Hyères, La Crau,
- the canton of Flayosc, with the exception of the municipalities of Bargème, Bargemon, Brenon, Châteauvieux, Claviers, Comps-sur-Artuby, La Bastide, Le Bourguet, La Martre, La Roque-Esclapon, Trigrance,
- the canton of Luc, with the exception of the municipalities of Collobrières, La Garde-Freinet,
- the canton of Vidauban, with the exception of the municipality of: Le Muy.

The department of Hautes Alpes:

- the canton de Laragne-Montéglin in its entirety,
- the canton of Serres: the municipalities of Le Bersac, Bruis, Chanousse, L'Épine, Étoile-Saint-Cyrice, Eyguians, Lagrand, Méreuil, Montclus, Montjay, Montmorin, Montrond, Moydans, Nossage-et-Bénévent, Orpierre, Ribeyret, Rosans, Saint-André-de-Rosans, Sainte-Colombe, Sainte-Marie, Saint-Genis, Saléon, Savournon, Serres, Sorbiers, Tresléoux.

The department of Drôme:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Grignan, Tricastin, Montélimar-2,
- the canton of Dieulefit, with the exception of the municipalities of Bézardun-sur-Bîne, Bourdeaux, Bouvières, Comps, Crupies, Félines-sur-Rimandoule, Francillon-sur-Roubion, Mornans, Le Poët-Célar, Les Tonils, Orcinas, Rochebaudin, Saou, Soyans, Truinas,
- the cantons of Nyons et Baronnie, with the exception of the municipality of Chaudebonne,
- the canton of Diois: the municipalities of La Motte-Chalancon, Rottier,
- the canton of Montélimar-1: the municipalities of Ancône, Montélimar, Savasse.

5. Link to the origin

Specificity of the area

The geographical area of 'Thym de Provence' is part of a territory commonly called 'Provence' and situated in the south-east of France.

The most frequently occurring soil types are clay-limestone soils of varying density. They let the rain penetrate or trickle away and disappear easily. The soils are very often stony. These open, calcareous, dry and sunny environments called 'garrigues' are typical of Provence.

The geographical area is also characterised by a Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers and mild winters. There are a number of long periods of sunshine, and the occasionally frequent and sustained northerly/north-westerly wind keeps the humidity level low. Provence winters have rare periods of frost, which are usually short and mild.

Finally, the geographical area is characterised by a high density of spontaneously growing phenolic thyme that contains a substantial proportion of carvacrol and makes up near-pure populations that spread in more or less circular formations.

As a result of a long tradition of picking wild thyme that is practised even today and ancient methods of drying, sorting and making bouquets of thyme, the producers in the geographical area have developed a specific know-how.

The producers of 'Thym de Provence' have ensured that the population thyme growing spontaneously in its natural state in the area is reproduced through the varietal selection of phenolic thyme, the essential oil of which contains more than 15 % of carvacrol.

In addition, in the case of cultivated parcels, the producers limit watering, thereby ensuring a production method that is close to natural conditions.

The exploitation of the cultivated parcels is limited, since beyond a certain age, the thyme stems become too thick and the ratio of leaves to the weight of the wood (the thick stems) becomes insufficient. In the case of wild thyme, the pickers skilfully evaluate the size of the plants that can be picked in order to guarantee the same result.

Besides, the producers focus all their attention on the optimum harvesting stage and on the aerated storage of thyme before processing or drying, and they do this by relying on the dry climate of the geographical area.

As regards processing, the operators' know-how lies, in particular, in the rapid processing of the thyme after harvesting (drying the thyme leaves or freezing the thyme, depending on the form of presentation).

Drying is also an important step that helps control the humidity level and enables the handling of the product later on without the risk of degradation: if it is not dry enough, 'Thym de Provence' cannot be worked properly (the stems will not become detached from the leaves), while if excessively dry, too many stems will be broken during threshing. The drying phase is carried out taking into account the external climatic conditions, and it determines the appearance of the product and its preservation over time. It is underpinned by a genuine know-how and the use of highly specialised machines (visual evaluation of the fresh product, batch-specific sorting, etc.).

Making thyme bouquets likewise requires special skills of the producers, who estimate the humidity level of their product in order to limit the loss of leaves and the deterioration of the quality. This know-how offers the basis necessary for obtaining the expected final product.

By harnessing their specific equipment and their experience, the local operators are able to implement particularly efficient and rigorous sorting methods. Their knowledge of the product allows them to select the tools necessary to guarantee optimal sorting of the thyme and eliminate undesirable particles to the extent possible.

Specificity of the product

'Thym de Provence' is characterised by a characteristic strong aroma and taste: warm and pungent.

It is distinguished from other thymes, the great majority of which are 'mild' thymes or garden thymes that have a pure thymol chemotype and a weaker aromatic strength, with a smaller portion made up of cineolic thyme (*Thymus mastichina* L. *cineolifera*).

The other distinctive characteristics of 'Thym de Provence' include: cleanness, homogeneity of the leaves, near-total absence of impurities (for thyme presented as leaves).

When the thyme is sold in bouquets, the bouquets are regular, well-shaped and leafy.

These specificities confer a solid reputation on 'Thym de Provence'.

Causal link

The characteristics of the well-drained soils of the geographical area, together with the temperature regime, encourage the spontaneous growth of 'Thym de Provence' and its cultivation. In order to grow in good conditions and develop its aromatic strength, 'Thym de Provence' requires the heat and sunshine present in the geographical area.

The traditional varieties selected, which are specific to this climate, promote the secretion of a highly characteristic essential oil that is rich in carvacrol and accentuates the warm and pungent aromas typical of 'Thym de Provence'. The significant amount of carvacrol in the essential oil of the leaves is a secondary characteristic following from the adaptation of the plant to its environment, which is distinguished, in particular, by very dry summers.

The controlled irrigation makes it possible to limit grassing (which affects the final product's cleanness) and maintain low-humidity conditions close to those in the natural environment.

The harvesting, carried out at just the right time by the producers, brings out the aromas better and also affects the cleanness of 'Thym de Provence'.

The practices of drying or freezing the thyme rapidly after harvesting as well as the aerating storage ensure that thyme homogenous in colour is obtained and contribute to the fixing of the aromas. These crucial steps benefit from the local operators' experience, in particular from their ability to rapidly evaluate visually the quality of the freshly harvested product.

The cleanness of 'Thym de Provence' is guaranteed by the know-how linked to the working and sorting stage, which play an important part in ridding the plant of most of the stems, and by limiting breakage.

'Thym de Provence' presented in regular, well-shaped and leafy bouquets benefits from the know-how required to eliminate thick stems and evaluate the humidity, including choosing the right moment for this operation.

The presence of thyme in Provence, and the aromatic and gustative particularities of 'Thym de Provence', are often cited in literature: from Pliny the Elder in the 1st century to contemporary authors such as Marcel Pagnol (*Les Bucoliques*, Grasset, 1958). 'Thym de Provence' is a pillar of the gastronomic heritage of Provence, and it is widely marketed in different forms.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDC-IGP-ThymdeProvence.pdf>

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