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Transmission of an established geographical indication of spirit drinks

Vodka of Finland
EU No: PGI-FI-02040
Submitted on 15.1.2018
PGI

1. TECHNICAL FILE

1.1. Name and type

1.1.1. Name(s)

Suomalainen Vodka (fi)

Finsk Vodka (sv)

Vodka of Finland (en)

1.1.2. Class

15. Vodka

1.1.3. Applicant country(ies)

Finland

1.1.4. Application language:

Finnish

1.1.5. Geographical indication type:

PGI - Protected Geographical Indication

1.2. Contact details

1.2.1. Applicant name and title

Applicant name and title	Alcoholic Beverage Industries' Association / Finnish Food and Drink Industries' Federation
Legal status, size and composition (in	

the case of legal persons):	
Nationality	Finland
Address	PL 115 Pasilankatu 2 00241 HELSINKI
Country	Finland
Telephone	+358 9 1488 7226
E-mail(s)	pekka.heikkila@etl.fi

1.2.2. Intermediary details

Intermediary name	Leena Seppä/Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Address	PL 30 00023 VALTIONEUVOSTO [Government]
Country	Finland
Telephone	+358295162373
E-mail(s)	leena.seppa@mmm.fi

1.2.3. Interested parties details

1.2.4. Competent control authorities details

1.2.5. Control bodies details

1.3. Description of the spirit drink

Title - Product name	Suomalainen Vodka/Finsk Vodka/Vodka of Finland
Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics	Vodka of Finland is a spirit drink that is produced from ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin and that belongs to category 15 (vodka) of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008. It is distilled in Finland from either Finnish grain or potato. Finnish vodka is

	typically based on barley (more than 95% produced from barley). The alcoholic strength by volume of Vodka of Finland is at least 37.5% and not more than 60%. The methanol content is less than 2 g/hl. Vodka of Finland (category 15) is clear and colourless as well as transparent, and it has a very light and delicate aroma when produced from cereals. There is a very slight feeling of warmth in the vodka's after-taste but no unpleasant burning sensation, and the vodka feels light in the mouth, without any oiliness. The product may not be dyed, and flavouring is authorised only with natural flavouring agents obtained from the fermentation of the raw materials. In addition, certain organoleptic characteristics other than the predominant taste may be given to the product.
Specific characteristics (compared with spirit drinks of the same category)	The raw materials used to make Vodka of Finland have grown in northern conditions, where the growing period is short but the days are long. This confers on the raw materials and the beverage their specific characteristics. One of the principal raw materials of Vodka of Finland is barley, which is hardly used in other parts of the world. Groundwater or spring water so clean that no further chemical processing is necessary is used in the dilution process. The authenticity of Vodka of Finland may be identified on the basis of the water it contains.

1.4. Define geographical area

1.4.1. Description of the defined geographical area

Finland

1.4.2. NUTS area

1.5. Method of obtaining the spirit drink

Title – Type of method	
Method	Vodka of Finland is produced from Finnish cereals – barley almost exclusively – or potatoes. The ethyl alcohol in Vodka of Finland obtained from barley is produced according to the continuous distillation method, which gives the product its natural purity and efficiently removes any impurities from the ethyl alcohol. Batch distillation may also be used. The production of ethanol starts with the milling, elutriation and mashing of the barley. The milled barley is elutriated using water, and the mashing process converts the barley flour into sugar. The sugary mash is pumped into the continuous fermentation process to feed the yeast. This continuous process and the sourness of the yeast strain characterise ethanol production. The fermented mash is added to the continuous distillation process, where several columns are used to produce neutral ethanol. The first columns separate the dregs from the water and enrich the raw ethanol. After this other columns distil and separate (rectify) most of the impurities and concentrate the ethanol nearly to its final strength. The last column purifies the final product and creates the typical neutral profile.

	The water used in the product is pure spring water or groundwater that has not been treated in any way (no chemical purification). The above-mentioned distillation principles generally apply also when potato or cereals other than barley are used as the raw material. The raw materials of the vodka, with the exception of sweeteners, must be Finnish. The following production steps must take place in the defined geographical area: distillation, rectification, blending and the adding of any flavourings. The product may be bottled outside the geographical area.

1.6. Link with the geographical area

Title - Product name	Suomalainen Vodka/Finsk Vodka/Vodka of Finland
Details of the geographical area or origin relevant to the link	Consumers view Vodka of Finland as a spirit drink with a good quality and reputation, where the special characteristics of brightness, purity and low methanol content result from the raw materials used in the product, the distillation method applied and the groundwater or spring water used for diluting the product. Finland is situated between latitudes 60° and 70° N, and one third of Finland lies north of the Arctic Circle (66.50) – at the same latitudes as South Greenland, Alaska and Northern Siberia, among

	others. The Finnish climate has both oceanic and continental characteristics. Finland is the world's northernmost agricultural zone, where the cold winter helps maintain the purity of the soil. The characteristics of Vodka of Finland result from the northern growing conditions of the raw materials (a short and intensive growing period, the clean air), the clear source water or groundwater (that does not require any chemical treatment), production methods passed on from one generation to the next (the skills and knowledge of local operators) and the distillation methods. The special growing conditions consist of long summer days, when the short growing period is very efficient and intensive. The growing period in Finland lasts for only 120-180 days, which is about half less than in Central Europe. Finland's northern climate and freezing winters mean that the soil remains clean. Studies have shown that the use of pesticides is lesser in Finland than in other European countries. According to studies conducted by the European Food Safety Authority EFSA in 2013, 75% of the food produced in Finland does not contain any pesticide residues, while the figure for all of the EU is 58%. Only well under 1% of the samples exceeded the Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/scientific_output/files/main_documents/4038.pdf. It has been found that the cell count of barley grains is higher than in barley

	growing in southern farming areas. A high cell count means that the cell wall of the barley is thicker. The enzyme activity of the diverse types of barley grown in Finland is high. This feature is typical of the variety and it is enhanced by the growing conditions in Finland. The high-enzyme barley and malt cultivated in Finland are known worldwide. In Finland, the average cereal harvest is smaller and the protein content of cereals generally higher than in more southern farming areas. This is due to a very large extent to the use of spring cereal species. They have a high trace element and bioactive element content. The water used for Vodka of Finland is Finnish groundwater or spring water. It does not require any chemical treatment. The water is obtained from rainwater and snow melt water that filters through the soil's layers of sand and gravel. As it filters through the soil, the water is cleansed of harmful bacteria and minerals and trace elements leach into it from the soil. This means that the water used to dilute the vodka contains minerals from the soil. The authenticity of Vodka of Finland may be identified on the basis of the water it contains, by analysing the substance levels in the water. The water is clear, colourless and odourless, with a fresh taste. These specific characteristics distinguish it from other water complying with EU requirements. The water meets the quality requirements of the Household Water Decree (1352/2015), meaning that it is suitable for human consumption and food production. The use of fertilisers and plant protection products in groundwater areas has been restricted in order to protect the groundwater.
Specific characteristics of the spirit	Vodka of Finland has a long history. Its

drink attributable to the geographical area	production is referred to in historical material dating from the 16th century. The first distillation plant was established in 1842. Vodka of Finland has been produced in Finland for several centuries. Its long-standing reputation among consumers is based to a large extent on the production area. Vodka of Finland and its production were mentioned for the first time already in the 16th century, and the product became very popular in the 18th century. Finnish alcohol companies have been making Finnish vodka since 1840. The decree of 1865 banning home distillation marked the start of the spirits industry. There were 83 distillation, i.e. spirits, plants in Finland in 1875. Their number decreased later on as operations became more rationalised, and the Prohibition Act in force from 1919 to 1932 brought production to a temporary halt. Production picked up rapidly after that and old production traditions resumed. Vodka of Finland is still made to a large extent in the production plant of an alcoholic-beverage company owned by the Finnish State, using ethanol from the company's barley distillery. The Rajamäki plant was established in 1888, originally as a yeast factory, but it was authorised to operate as a distillery right from the start. In 1920, the plant was transferred to the ownership of the Finnish State. The Finnish State built a distillery in the village of Koskenkorva in 1941. Since Finnish alcohol policy has traditionally been highly regulated (e.g. a sales monopoly), alcohol production, too, was taken over by the State-owned company. Nowadays production is liberalised and the sales monopoly has been decoupled from production and import operations.

	On several occasions, Finnish vodkas have won prizes at the most important international spirits competitions, which are organised by spirits industry organisations and the press. Here are a few examples: International Wine & Spirits Competition (2008, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015), San Francisco World Spirits Competition (2001, 2008, 2010 - 2014), the SIP Awards (2010, 2012, 2013, 2015), International Spirits Challenge (2013, 2015) and Vodka Masters (2008, 2009, 2010). Vodka of Finland is an extremely important export item for the Finnish food industry. Vodka of Finland is in very high demand worldwide, precisely because of its strong reputation. Spirit drinks were the second most important Finnish food export in 2014. The value and amount of exports were, respectively, about EUR 140 million and about 70 000 tonnes, which substantially exceeds the domestic consumption of these products. Vodka of Finland is sold in 135 countries and the product is linked strongly to Finland on the international market. Vodka of Finland was protected as a geographical indication in 1995 in the Treaty of Accession of Finland to the European Union.
Causal link between the geographical area and the product	

1.7. Requirements in EU, national or regional

Title	
Legal reference	- National requirements: Decree on Alcoholic Beverages and Spirits (1344/1994), Section 4, as amended and valid as from 12 February 2015. The Decree does not contain a requirement to bottle the product in Finland. - Treaty of Accession of Finland to the European Union, 1995
Description of the requirement(s)	https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1994/1344

1.8. Supplement to the geographical indication

1.9. Specific rules on labelling

Title	
Description of the rule	The product may be referred to as ‘Suomalainen Vodka’, ‘Finsk Vodka’ and/or ‘Vodka of Finland’.

2. OTHER INFORMATION

2.1. Supporting documents

2.2. Link to the product specification

Link:	