Transmission of an established geographical indication of spirit drinks

I. TECHNICAL FILE

1. Name and type

a. Name(s) to be registered

Békési Szilvapálinka (hu)

b. Category

9. Fruit spirit

c. Applicant country(ies)

Hungary

d. Application language:

Hungarian

e. Type of geographical indication:

PGI - Protected Geographical Indication

2. Contact details

a. Applicant name and title

Applicant name and title	Békési Pálinka Zrt.
Legal status, size and composition (in the case of legal persons)	
Nationality	Hungary
Address	Gőzmalom sor 12, H-5630 Békés
Country	Hungary
Telephone	+36 66 411 580
E-mail(s)	bekesipalinka@bekesipalinka.hu

b. Intermediary details

Intermediary name	Ministry of Agriculture
Address	Kossuth Lajos tér 11, H-1055 Budapest
Country	Hungary
Telephone	+36 (1) 795 7562
E-mail(s)	eredetvedelmiFO@fm.gov.hu

c. Interested party details

d. Competent control authority details

Competent control authority name	National Food Chain Safety Office, Directorate of Wine Qualification
Address	Budaörsi út 141-145, H-1118 Budapest
Country	Hungary
Telephone	+36 1346 09 30
E-mail(s)	bor@nebih.gov.hu

Competent control authority name	Békés County Government Office - Directorate of Food Chain Safety and Animal Health
Address	Szerdahelyi út 2, H-5600 Békéscsaba
Country	Hungary
Telephone	+36 66 540 230
E-mail(s)	bekes_megye@oai.hu

e. Control body details

3. Description of the spirit drink

Title – Product name	Békési Szilvapálinka
Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics	Chemical and physical characteristics: Organoleptic examination (colour, clarity, flavour, aroma): Clear, pale yellow colour from maturation in a wooden cask, preserving the typical flavour and aroma of plum, in addition to its mature character, with a pleasant fruit-stone flavour. Alcoholic strength: 40-86 % v/v Methanol content: maximum 1 200 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol as stipulated in point 9(b)(i) and (ii) of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 Hydrocyanic acid content: maximum 7 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol Total volatile substance content: minimum 200 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol Copper content: max. 10 mg/kg of finished product Organoleptic characteristics: Clear, pale yellow colour from maturation, preserving the typical flavour and aroma of plum, in addition to its mature character, with a pleasant fruit-stone flavour. Chemical and physical properties: The product’s chemical and physical properties comply with the specifications set out in category 9 of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008. Furthermore, no flavouring, colouring or sweetener shall be added to the pálinka, not even to round off the final taste of the

	product.
Specific characteristics (compared with spirit drinks of the same category)	‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ is made from plums (min. 50 % red plums) grown in the town of Békés and within the locations and administrative boundaries of the designated geographical area, with mashing, distilling, maturation and bottling also being carried out in this area. This is borne out by the unique micro- and macro-climate generated by the soil conditions (tightly bound Chernozem) of the Közép-Békés region that makes up the Békési Szilvapálinka geographical area and the Körös river and its source rivers (Fekete-Körös, Fehér-Körös, Sebes-Körös, Kettős-Körös, Hármas-Körös), the region’s temperature and fluctuations in temperature, distribution and amount of rainfall, and measurements and experience dating back centuries. The unique characteristics of the red plums grown here and the pálinka made from them are demonstrated not only by organoleptic tests, but also by laboratory results. The fruit’s qualities (sugar/acid ratio, aroma components) point to a plum variety unlike any other, with favourable parameters. Experiments and observations demonstrate that red plum rootstocks originating in Békés County but planted in other parts of the country produce plums with a different aroma and flavour to those planted in the area defined in the specification. This is due to the local micro- and macro-climate, as well as soil conditions, lending the red plum its specific flavour, which is also found in the pálinka.

4. Define geographical area

a. Description of the defined geographical area

The red ‘Vörös szilva’ plum, which provides the raw material for the product, grows very well in the Körös valley. This area includes the following settlements and boundaries in the environs of Békés outside the Békés city and administrative boundaries: Békéscsaba, Tarhos, Bélmegyer, Kamut, Murony, Mezőberény, Telekgerendás, Köröstarcsa, Kétsoprony, Vésztő, Doboz, Gyula, Gyulavári, Sarkad, Sarkadkeresztúr, Szabadkígyós.

‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ may only be mashed, fermented, distilled, matured, rested and bottled in distilleries located in the area defined here.

b. NUTS area

HU332	Békés

5. Method used to obtain the spirit drink

Title – Type of method	Selection and acceptance of fruit
Method	The basic ingredient of the pálinka shall be ripe, good-

	quality fruit. In terms of quantity, the plums received are accepted based on weight, while their quality is determined based on an organoleptic and analytical examination of the dry-matter content. The fruit which is received – with its origin documented – must be at optimum ripeness and free of any signs of rotting and foreign bodies (insecticide residue, earth, leaves, twigs). The first stage of the examination during acceptance must be to take an average sample of the fruit delivered. If a large batch arrives, one kilogram must be taken from every tenth tray; if there are only a few trays in the delivery, half a kilogram must be taken from each tray, and if the fruit arrives loose, the required quantity must be continuously taken during unloading. When the fruit is being accepted, the following inspections must be carried out: organoleptic examination (degree of ripeness, purity, signs of mould and decay, damage, bruising, variety characteristics); analysis of sugar content; determination of the expected alcoholic strength and pH measurement. The volume of plums to be mashed must contain at least 50 % red plums.

Title – Type of method	Mashing
Method	Foreign bodies must be removed and heavily soiled plums must be washed. The stone is removed from clean, uncontaminated ripe plums using a fruit de-stoner. In the case of clingstone varieties, efforts must be made to remove the stones as completely as possible. The mash is pumped into the fermentation containers using a mash pump. This is where ingredients are added to assist the fermentation process. A temperature must be selected for fermentation which ensures that the primary flavour elements are not adversely affected and that the secondary flavour elements are formed to the proper quality standard. During the supervised fermentation process, it is vitally important to set and maintain the temperature accurately (18-22 °C), as well as to achieve the optimum pH value (pH: 2.8-3.5), as this will ensure that when the yeast is added, the best result can be achieved from fermenting the plum mash without any error. The following ancillary materials may be used during mashing: - pressed or dried yeast; - acids for adjusting the pH; - nutritive salt for the yeast; - enzymes for releasing the aroma materials and sugars and for decomposing pectin; - anti-foaming agent.

Title – Type of method	Fermentation
Method	Using the yeast added to the mash ensures that the fermentation process is started rapidly, runs smoothly and is completed without any fruit sugar residue, as well as achieving the optimum aroma and alcohol, along with monitoring the temperature to ensure it remains constant (18-22 °C). The carbon dioxide which occurs protects the mash from the harmful effects of oxidation and from harmful micro-organisms. Therefore, the formation of a carbon dioxide cushion on the surface of the mash must be encouraged. Fitting a fermentation lock to the fermentation containers helps remove the carbon dioxide. The duration of the fermentation process is ideally 10-14 days, depending on the plums' content values. If possible, the fermented mash must be distilled as soon as possible. Otherwise, the basic technical conditions must be ensured for storing it until the distillation process starts (as cold as possible, using a fermentation lock and filling the containers right up). The fermentation processes and storage must be carried out using containers approved by the food industry.

Title – Type of method	Distillation
Method	In order to reduce the energy required for distillation, the fermented mash is transferred to a heating container where it is heated so as to prevent the loss of any alcohol and aroma. 'Békési Szilvapálinka' may be produced using distillation equipment suitable for double fractional distillation, based on the method with a boiler which also has a copper surface (distilling, refining), or using distillation equipment based on another technical solution which guarantees the appropriate organoleptic quality. It is vitally important to carefully separate the 'head' and 'tail' fractions, which exert an unpleasant influence on the flavour and aroma. The use of an anti-foaming agent is permitted during distillation. During distillation, part of the original stone content in stone fruits may be added in dried form to the mash in order to achieve the characteristic taste.

Title – Type of method	Maturation
Method	Maturation must be carried out in a wooden cask to ensure that the pálinka acquires new flavour elements, partly through oxidation and partly through dissolution. The distillate is matured in wooden casks which have been carefully prepared and cleaned, with a maximum capacity of 1 000 litres. The wooden casks used for maturation must be placed in a location with a moderate degree of

	humidity and at a uniform temperature. They must be protected from the risk of frost, direct sunshine and radiant heat. If the external temperature is above 25 ºC, the air in the storage location must be kept humid using a water spray at least once a week. The maturation time in a wooden cask is at least three months. The vessel used for storage must be made of a material with which the constituents of pálinka will not react or which cannot release any material that is damaging to health.

Title – Type of method	Production, treatment and bottling of pálinka
Method	In keeping with the very strict regulation on bottled products (± 0.3% v/v), the alcoholic strength of the distillate carefully matured in a still must be adjusted to the level suitable for consumption by adding good-quality drinking water. The water may be distilled, demineralised, permuted or softened. The alcoholic strength may only derive from the alcohol originating from the distillation of the fruit used as the raw material. The matured pálinka may be cooled and filtered. If necessary, further treatment may also be carried out using appropriate processing aids to refine the product and remove any heavy metals. The pálinka can then be bottled. The bottling process may take place only in the relevant geographical area in order to ensure the traceability of the protected-origin product and full protection of the registered geographical indication. Once the appropriate alcoholic strength has been set, the plum pálinka may be poured into new or washed glass or ceramic bottles and can be closed using a sealed aluminium screw-cap closure or a cork compliant with food packaging criteria. The permitted packaging unit is no more than 1 litre. Any larger volume than this may only be packaged as a one-off sample, by way of a gift. The sealed product may also be placed in a decorative box. That this is a separate agro-meteorological region of Hungary explains why ‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ and its raw material (mash) reach maturity here, which avoids having to transport them in bulk to other regions. Bottling (labelling) guarantees the product’s quality and removes the risk of it being turned into pálinka sold in bulk. That way, ‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ is fully traceable. That is why

	bottling should take place exclusively in the relevant geographical area. 'Békési Szilvapálinka' produced in accordance with the specification may be transported in bulk within the geographical area only between the premises of the producer(s). Bulk transport outside the geographical area is not allowed. Bottling must take place in the geographical area, in keeping with tradition and in order to eliminate the risk of it being turned into pálinka sold in bulk. Bulk transport out of the area defined in point 4 of the specification presents a serious risk of 'Békési Szilvapálinka' being mixed with other plum pálinka and of a considerable deterioration in quality due to other risk factors during transport. Inspection by the National Tax and Customs Administration is based on CN codes, which are the same for all plum pálinka. The National Food Chain Safety Office operates a regional inspection system. Quality is fully ensured if bottling also takes place in the defined geographical area, since the tax stamp placed on the bottle guarantees its integrity and traceability.

6. Link with the geographical environment of origin

Title – Product name	Békési Szilvapálinka
Details of the geographical area or origin relevant to the link	There are written records available from the middle of the 20th century describing the production of this spirit, with some of them referring back to the middle of the 19th century. The process of harvesting the fruit and fermenting were typical activities carried out by smallholdings and households. From the very start, separate distilleries were used to produce pálinka, at first along with supervision and taxation from the landowner. However, from the 1920s, alcohol meters appeared in state-supervised distilleries, thereby making production traceable.
Specific characteristics of the spirit drink attributable to the geographical area	The start of plum-growing in Békés county can be dated back to the early 1870s. The 'Vörös szilva' plum grows very well in the hard soil and climatic conditions of the Körös valley. Other plum varieties, such as Stanley, Ageni and Besztercei, also grow well. The 'Vörös szilva' variety has a lovely appearance, but this stone fruit is primarily suitable for making pálinka and only of inferior quality for eating.
Causal link between the geographical area and the	More detailed literary references to the history of 'Békési Szilvapálinka' can be found in the following documents:

product	Antal Durkó: Békés Nagyközség Története (Történeti és kulturális monográfia) [History of Békés Administrative District (Historical and cultural monograph)], 1939 ‘There are currently 720 “hold” (approx. 415 ha) of land given over to gardening, with the Gyümölcs-termelők Egyesülete in Békés involved in productive work aimed at improving the fruit.’ (p. 183) ... ‘In the 1850s more pálinka was still made from grape marc than from plums.’ (p. 202) … ‘Központi Szeszfőző Szövetkezet. Small-scale producers have already been using it for several decades to sell their fruit produce or to make pálinka... Békési Kisgazdák Szeszfőző Szövetkezete: Formed in 1923. This enterprise has two distilleries. Its aim is to ensure an adequate sale for the fruit from small-scale producers in Békés.’ (p. 237) Békés Város Néprajza [Ethnography of the town of Békés] (1983) ‘Peasant folk could not stand fine fruit trees. They only planted those which they could easily handle: including the Vörös szilva and Bercencei varieties of plums ...’ In the past the fruit produce was primarily made into pálinka. Among the food industries, the distillery sector was the first to grow to become ‘large-scale’. The Békési Mezőgazdasági Szeszgyár and, even more so, the two distillery cooperatives Békési Szeszfőző Szövetkezet and Békési Központi Szeszfőző Szövetkezet, evolved from peasant pálinka distilling. It is possible to view in the Mátyás Jantyik Museum in Békés some of the pálinka bottles produced and used in the town. The oldest bottles were made in the mid-19th century. Extract from the bottle’s inscription: ‘I’m called Green Bottle when I have pálinka in me, but if I don’t have any pálinka in me, I’m just a piece of earthenware.’ Kertészeti lexikon [Horticultural lexicon] (1963): description of the ‘Vörös szilva’ plum Common name: red plum There are countless varieties of this plum in Hungary, which are largely widespread. The largest volume is grown in the area between the rivers Danube and Tisza. It also grows very well along the Körös river. It is ready for market in the middle or second half of August. The fruit has a lovely appearance, but is only of inferior quality for eating. The fruit is moderately large, with an oval shape. Its skin is red and is covered by a light purple bloom. Its flesh is floury, with a slightly fruity aroma. It contains a

	stone. The shoots sprouting from under the tree are used as apricot rootstock because it has been found that this makes the apricots long-lived. Its seed grows poorly. According to the records kept on distilleries by the Békéscsaba Excise Office, a significant quantity of red plums was processed at the locations mentioned above from 1955. According to the excise records, in 1955 distilleries in Békéscsaba distilled 25 632 hl/degrees of alcohol from 555 411 kg of mash, with red plums accounting for 98.0 % of this volume. In 1958, the Békés and Gyula district distilleries produced 154 045 hl/degrees of pálinka from 3 078 761 kg of mash, with red plums accounting for 88.2 % of this volume. In 1958, the Földműves Szövetkezet had three distilleries operating in Békés. The three distilleries jointly processed 975 000 kg (31.66 % of the total volume) of fruit mash to produce 43 864 hl/degrees of alcohol (28.47 % of the total volume of alcohol produced). The plants in Békés, Mezőberény and Köröstarcsa processed jointly 1 980 000 kg of mash, which is equivalent to 89 998 hl/degrees of alcohol. Géza Balázs: A magyar pálinka [Hungarian pálinka], Aula (1998) The author describes in his book the pálinka-distilling boiler made from a steam engine, which was used in the Békés distillery. References: Antal Durkó: Békés Nagyközség Története (Történeti és kulturális monográfia) [History of Békés Administrative District (Historical and cultural monograph)], 1939 Géza Balázs: Géza Balázs: Pálinka, a hungarikum [Pálinka, Hungaricum], Állami Nyomda Részvénytársaság Budapest, 2004 (ISBN 9789638567437) Jenő Tamás: Pálinka. Pálinkák és más nemes párlatok [Pálinka. Pálinka and other fine spirits], Alexandra Kiadó, 2003 (ISBN 9633686105) Géza Balázs: A magyar pálinka [Hungarian pálinka], Aula Kiadó, Budapest, 1998, page 29 Géza Balázs: Az égetett szeszesitalok megjelenése [The appearance of spirits], Néprajzi látóhatár VI. 1997

7. Requirements under EU, national or regional legislation

Title	
Legal reference	Act XI of 1997 on the protection of trademarks and geographical indications
Description of the requirement(s)	The law stipulates the regulations governing the national process for protecting trademarks and geographical

	indications for spirit drinks, the considerations used to examine the technical and material basis for the application for protection, the procedure for objections, the provisions on deadlines and the provisions for sharing the remit between the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office and Ministry of Agriculture. In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 110/2008, the law governs the national phase of the EU protection process.

Title	
Legal reference	Act LXXIII of 2008 on pálinka, grape marc pálinka and the Pálinka National Council
Description of the requirement(s)	The law defines the basic regulations governing the production of pálinka, grape marc pálinka and pálinka spirits made using special procedures. The law stipulates the tasks of the Pálinka National Council and its operational basis in order to ensure uniform regulation of geographical indications.

Title	
Legal reference	Government Decree No 158/2009 of 30 July 2009 on the detailed rules on protecting the geographical indications of agricultural products and foodstuffs and on verifying the products
Description of the requirement(s)	This government decree contains the implementing provisions of Act XI of 1997 on the protection of trademarks and geographical indications and defines in detail the provisions governing the national procedure for protecting the geographical indications of agricultural products, foodstuffs and spirit drinks, as well as the system for examining products. The government decree defines the method for verifying compliance with the product descriptions and the system for amending the product descriptions, pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008. Proof of origin from a geographical area: The following documents provide proof of origin from a geographical area: In the case of primary producers, proof of origin of the fruit is provided by a purchase receipt, which has the primary producer’s certificate number on it. In every other case, a statement needs to be provided as proof of origin of the fruit during acceptance. To track the pálinka’s production, documents providing proof of production in line with current excise regulations may be used. Minimum requirements and procedures for verifying the product’s essential features and production method:

	The entire production process must operate alongside a quality control system capable of ensuring product identification and tracking, as well as a final inspection and product safety. The product's development must be documented in an appropriate manner from acceptance of the fruit, through the manufacturing process, up to the final product. During acceptance, the documents proving that the raw material originates from the protected geographical area must be verified. Verification points: 1. Acceptance of raw material: Quality of the raw material: - state of ripeness: ripe/overripe; - state of health: must be completely health (free of mould and rot, no damage or bruising); - purity: free of foreign bodies (insecticide residue, earth, leaves, twigs, stones, metal); - volume of red plums: at least 50 % of all the plums used. 2. Inspection of mash: - pH 2.8-3.5. 3. Daily fermentation inspection: - optimum temperature (18-22 °C). 4. Inspection at the end of fermentation: - alcoholic strength (5-10 % v/v); - residual sugar content (less than 5 g/litre). 5. Inspection of pálinka due for bottling and removal from storage: Pálinka due for bottling and removal from storage must be inspected using organoleptic and analytical methods. (a) Organoleptic testing (colour, clarity): clear, slight yellowish colour from maturation, with an appropriate plum flavour and aroma. (b) The analytical examination covers the following aspects: - Alcoholic strength: minimum 40 % (v/v); - Methanol content: maximum 1 200 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol as stipulated in point 9(b)(i) of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008; - Hydrocyanic acid content: max. 7 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol; - Total volatile substance content: minimum 200 g/hl of 100 % vol. alcohol;

	- Copper content: max. 10 mg/kg of finished product. 6. Inspection of finished product: - each batch of the bottled product must be inspected; - organoleptic examination (colour, clarity, flavour, aroma): clear, slight yellowish colour from maturation, with an appropriate plum flavour and aroma; - packaging: labelling, seal, tax stamp in line with specifications; - volume, alcoholic strength discrepancies according to the relevant regulations.

Title	
Legal reference	Government Decree No 22/2012 of 29 February 2012 on the National Food Chain Safety Office
Description of the requirement(s)	The government decree stipulates the legal position of the National Food Chain Safety Office as the central administrative body for inspecting product compliance and its procedural system, as well as the connection between the lower-level administrative bodies and the system used for the distribution of tasks.

Title	
Legal reference	Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89
Description of the requirement(s)	EU framework regulation

8. Supplement to the geographical indication

9. Specific labelling rules

Title	Supplement to the geographical indication and/or specific labelling rules
Description of the rule	In addition to the elements specified in the legislation, the designation also contains the following: • ‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ (as part of the designation); • ‘oltalom alatt álló földrajzi jelzés’ [protected geographical indication] (separate from the name). Even before Hungary joined the European Union, Act XI of 1997 on the protection of trademarks and geographical indications granted protection to spirit drinks and pálinka

	as national geographical indications. To this day, EU protection can be applied for on the basis of national protection. Under the national protection system, ‘Békési Szilvapálinka’ qualifies as a designation of origin (PDO). Producers could therefore legitimately display the term ‘védett eredetmegjelölés’ (‘protected designation of origin’) on their products. We consider it possible to cease displaying the term ‘protected designation of origin’ only after a suitable transition period. The transition period allows producers to use up labels already printed, in order to prevent substantial economic losses.

II. Other information

1. Supporting material

2. Link to the product specification

Link:	