REGULATION (EC) No 110/2008 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89

Technical file – Article 20

'Spišská borovička'

Geographical Indication

A. NAME AND CATEGORY: 'SPIŠSKÁ BOROVIČKA'

Category 19 – Juniper-flavoured spirit drinks

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRIT DRINK INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL PHYSICAL, CHEMICAL AND ORGANOLEPTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRODUCT AS WELL AS THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT DRINK AS COMPARED TO THE RELEVANT CATEGORY

Description of the spirit drink

Spišská borovička is a spirit drink with an alcohol content of 40 % vol., with the pronounced flavour and odour characteristic of common juniper (*Juniperus communis* L.) or *Juniperus oxycedris* L. It is a clear liquid free of sediment and turbidity containing approximately five dried berries or a sprig of common juniper. It is put up in 0.5 l or 0.7 l glass bottles with an alkork cap. The leaching of the juniper berries or common juniper sprig gives the spirit drink a pale yellow colour. Only natural raw materials - high-quality grain spirit, juniper distillate, juniper bonificateur, liquid invert sugar, treated drinking water and berries of common juniper or juniper sprigs from the defined geographical area - are used to produce Spišská borovička. The water used in the production of Spišská borovička comes from good-quality sources in the Sub-Tatra region and possesses a crystal-like purity and clarity, which results from having flowed long distances underground, carrying loamy-sandy to sandy gravel alluvium, and helps determine the organoleptic properties of the finished product.

'Spišská borovička' is distinguished from other drinks in the relevant category mainly by virtue of the raw materials from the defined geographical area that are used, the know-how of distilling that has evolved over many years, and special processes, such as traditional juniper

distillate production and the use of a special juniper bonificateur (flavour enhancer) and dried berries or sprigs of juniper.

The product's characteristic taste is imparted in particular by the defined proportion of juniper distillate in the finished product.

Chemical and physical characteristics Ethanol: 39.7–40.3 % vol.

Organoleptic characteristics

Appearance - a clear liquid free of sediment and turbidity, free of mechanical and other impurities, containing dried berries or sprigs of common juniper floating in it.

Colour – slightly yellowish; the juniper berries and sprigs are dark in colour.

Aroma and taste – pleasantly mild, typical of juniper, free of extraneous odours and flavours.

Specific characteristics of the spirit drink as compared to the relevant category

Spišská borovička is characterised by a typically intense but nonetheless natural and mild flavour and aroma of juniper berries, which it derives from a juniper distillate produced according to a traditional recipe and the addition of a special juniper bonificateur, which is a natural macerate of juniper berries enriched with juniper essential oil obtained during the distillation process. The juniper distillate's aroma and taste components are largely terpenes, which are what give Spišská borovička its characteristic aroma and bitterness. Specific character is conferred by the dried juniper berries or sprigs of common juniper added to each bottle during filling, which impart not only additional flavour but also a very pale colour.

A specific feature of the product is the long history of its production in the Spiš region, where the mountainous terrain and specific soil and climate conditions confer exceptional quality characteristics on the common juniper, giving it a higher content of terpenes, including pinene and sabinene, and a high juniper essential oil content in the fresh berries (calculated on dry matter), and a higher content of other aromatic substances. Thanks to the great skill of the old master distillers and constant improvements in production technology over the centuries of this traditional beverage's production in Spiš, we now have a traditional production method that guarantees Spišská borovička's unique flavour and specificity.

C. Definition of the geographical area concerned

The Spiš geographical area is a specific historical development of the Spišská župa, a county comprising 16 towns. It has a distinct natural environment, being a predominantly mountainous area with a very harsh climate. It comprises the modern-day districts of Spišská Nová Ves, Stará Ľubovňa, Poprad, Levoča, Kežmarok and Gelnica, through which flow the Hornád, Hnilec, Dunajec and Poprad rivers. It is bounded to the north by the Spišská Magura, Pieniny and Ľubovnianska Vrchovina mountains, to the south by the Volovské Vrchy, to the west by the Eastern and Belianske Tatras and to the east by the Ľubotínska Pahorkatina, the Spišsko-Šarišské Medzihorie and the Levočské Vrchy. The historical boundaries of the Spiš were established as far back as the 1st century. In the 12th and 13th centuries it expanded to encompass Zamagurie, Podolínec, Hniezdne and Stará Ľubovňa, forming a northern boundary which lasted without significant changes until the start of the 20th century. In the latter half of the 12th century Spiš achieved a degree of autonomy and became a separate county. Historically, Spiš was divided into three sub-areas. The Stará Ľubovňa area and Zamagurie constitute northern Spiš, with central Spiš being formed by the Poprad basin and the sub-Tatras. The land watered by the Hornád and its tributaries is known as southern Spiš.

D. Description of the method for obtaining the spirit drink

The process for obtaining the spirit drink begins with the reception and quality control of the raw materials, namely spirit, juniper distillate, juniper bonificateur, liquid invert sugar and dried berries or sprigs of common juniper.

The spirit used to produce Spišská borovička is produced in the defined geographical area. The production process calls for sophisticated distillation technology, which begins with the fermentation of the mash and its subsequent distillation by a complex distillation system involving five basic sections and different pressures, which enables heat to be used economically. The whole process begins in the mashing section and continues in the purification section, which leads to the rectifying section, from where the distillate flows into the final column through the refining section, the end product being a high-quality spirit drink. The grain comes predominantly from local growers and its quality, like that of the final product, is assured by a certified quality-control system meeting ISO 22000:2005 and HACCP standards.

Before entering the process, water is treated at a softening plant, where its carbonate hardness

is eliminated and it is subsequently demineralised by a reverse osmosis unit.

The juniper distillate is produced by distilling juniper mash. Juniper mash is prepared by milling the juniper berries in a table mill, placing the resulting meal in fermentation vats, adding lukewarm water and mixing thoroughly. Nutrients and yeast are added and the juniper mash is prepared. After fermentation, refined neutral spirit is added. A periodic still with a stirrer and a juniper oil trap is used to distil the fermented juniper mash and the refined spirit into a raw distillate. It is rectified to obtain the juniper distillate – a blended intermediate product. It is stored in wooden or stainless steel vessels.

Juniper aroma is produced by macerating juniper berries in spirit and adding the juniper oil obtained during the distillation process.

Liquid invert sugar with a density of 70-75° Brix is used for sweetening. It is prepared by dissolving the sugar in water in a stainless steel jacketed vat, with a stirrer, heated by high-pressure steam. As soon as the solution begins to boil, citric acid is added. After boiling, the syrup is filtered through a coarse filter into a storage tank.

Technological process

Prior to production drinking water is treated in a softening unit. A measured quantity of spirit is mixed with the requisite quantity of juniper distillate, bonificateur and liquid invert sugar and drinking water is added to bring it to the required gravity. After thorough mixing and control of the ethanol content it is siphoned into a storage tank, where it blends and stands for at least 14 days. After organoleptic and analytical testing at the works laboratory, the order is given for it to be drawn off for consumer packaging. In the final stage, the finished spirit drink is filtered and bottled, with juniper berries or sprigs of common juniper being added by hand.

The whole production process – from the selection of suppliers of raw materials through purchasing, input control, mixing, step-by-step control, filtration, bottling, sealing, labelling, output control, packaging for wholesale (in boxes) and storage – takes place in the defined geographical area so as to prevent changes to the resulting quality of the finished product when dried berries or sprigs of *Juniperus communis*, whose leaching rounds off the specific character of the finished product, are added. The spirit drink is produced and bottled in the same plant, and therefore no transport is needed. Although Spišska borovička production has

been carried out by a number of different undertakings in the Spiš region, the production process has remained more or less unchanged to this day.

E. Details bearing out the link with the geographical environment or the geographical origin

The Spiš region is a specific historical development. It has a distinct natural environment, being a predominantly mountainous area with a very harsh climate.

Soil and climatic conditions made for a natural abundance of common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), which was a prerequisite for its use in the production of the traditional distillate. This was initially used as a digestive elixir. Later, with the advent of still-houses and distilleries, it became a popular beverage accessible to the wider population.

Spišská borovička is a traditional product made in the Spiš region, which, owing to its specific character, manifested in its quality, has achieved renown in Slovakia and abroad. It has a production history dating back to the latter half of the 18th century. A 1773 map by a Major Batschek shows a still-house producing spirits just by Stará Ľubovňa Castle. Borovička has been produced at the distillery in Spišská Belá since 1778, as evidenced by an article by Michal Popovič entitled '*Z dejín mesta Spišská Belá od konca 18. storočia do začiatku 20. storočia. Hospodárske pomery mesta v 18. a 19. storočí*' ['From the annals of the town of Spišská Belá from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. The town's economy in the 18th and 19th centuries'], which appeared in *Spišská Belá, Vlastivedný zborník 11* in 1972. *'Although no large distilleries were established, the townspeople supplemented their incomes by distilling brandies and spirits from cheap domestic raw materials, namely potatoes and grain. This* [i.e. Spišská Belá] *is the birthplace of the region's speciality,* ***spišská borovička****, produced using the fruit of evergreen junipers.'*

From 1875 this distillery's tradition was perpetuated by the Kleinberger distillery, which produced the renowned Spišská borovička.

Production continued under the first Czechoslovak Republic, when a newspaper article by Michal Murcko reported the Henrich Morgenbesser distillery as producing liqueurs, brandies, rum and borovička. We are told by Ms Eleonóra Simáková of Hniezdne, who worked at the firm as a bookkeeper, that this was Spišská borovička, which was produced for the local market.

In 1940 the plant was taken over by Róbert Pavlovský, and the distillery became known as the "Manufactory of fine spirit drinks, high-grade slivovice, borovička and fruit distillates". A 1946 order of the Stará Ľubovňa district national committee and a 1948 order of the SNR Commission for Food and Supply placed the firm under national administration. The advanced technology of this distillery is attested by a plan of the distillery, a description of the distilling and rectification equipment, and a description of the production of the spirit and the equipment for the production of juniper distillate. After nationalisation in 1948, this equipment was transferred to the national enterprise Východoslovenské liehovary a likérky in Levoča, which later became White Lady. The original manufactory was located on the town square in Stará Ľubovňa in house number 17, which now belongs to Mr Marián Gurega, owner of the modern-day firm GAS Familia, s. r. o. When the building was rebuilt in 2002 authentic accounting documents were found.

The name of the spirit drink 'Spišská borovička' was specified in Annex A to the bilateral treaty concerning the Agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Swiss Confederation on the protection of indications of source, appellations of origin and other geographic names of 19 January 1976 and in Annex B to the Agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Austria on protection of data of origin, designations of origin and other indications of agricultural and industrial products of 20 January 1981.
At the time, Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia, which split on 1 January 1993 to become two independent states: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

Production has continued, the natural conditions have remained the same and the defined geographical area, conditions and principle underpinning production remain the same.

Spišská borovička is a traditional spirit drink not just for Slovaks but also for foreign visitors to Slovakia, who buy this speciality to take home as a gift.

F. Any requirements laid down by Community and/or national and/or regional provisions

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G. Name and contact address of the applicant.

GAS Familia, s. r. o. Stará Ľubovňa,
Prešovská 8, 064 01 Stará Ľubovňa, Slovak Republic

H. Inspection body

Spišská borovička is subject to regular inspections to check compliance and verify technical documentation, carried out by:

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Authorised by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic.