

PROTECTION OF THE FLEUR DE SEL

STATE OF PLAY

PROTECTION OF FLEUR DE SEL IS CLEARLY DEFINED IN SEVERAL MEMBER STATES

In Spain, the royal decree n° 1364/2011 of 14 November 2011- [Real Decreto 1634/2011](#) – defines Flor de sal (Fleur de sel) in its article 1 a) : « *Cuando la capa flotante de la sal cristalizada en la superficie del agua de los cristalizadores, formada exclusivamente por la acción del viento y del sol, se recolecta manualmente y sin lavar ni adicionar ningún ingrediente, se puede denominar "flor de sal"* ».

Non-official translation: « when the floating layer of the crystallized salt on the water surface of the crystallizers, formed exclusively by the action of wind and sun, is collected manually and without washing or adding any ingredient, it can be called "flower of salt" ».

In Portugal, the [ordonnance n°72/2008](#) of 23 January 2008 states : « *sal alimentar tal qual destinado ao consumo directo na alimentação humana é aquele que provém exclusivamente de salinas de traçado tradicional, tem as características indicadas no n.º 1 do anexo I e é produzida nas condições constantes do anexo II ao presente diploma e do qual faz parte integrante, denominando -se «Flor de sal», quando for recolhido manual, diária e exclusivamente da camada cristalina sobrenadante da solução salina dos cristalizadores* »

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Non-official translation: « *Food salt as such intended for direct consumption in human nutrition and coming exclusively from traditional trawling salt shall have the characteristics listed in Annex I, point 1, and shall be produced under the conditions laid down in Schedule II to this Act, of which it forms an integral part, it can be called "Fleur de sel", when it is collected manually, daily and exclusively from the crystalline layer supernatant of the saline solution in the crystallizers* »

In Croatia, [règlement 1904](#) of the Agriculture, fisheries and development Ministry defines “Cvijet soli” (Fleur de sel) as follows: *Cvijet soli je tanki sloj koji se stvara na površini ugušćene morske vode tijekom kontinuiranog isparavanja pri tradicionalnom načinu proizvodnje soli, a sadrži male količine joda. Izvorno se proizvodi u francuskoj pokrajini Guérande, ali može se proizvoditi i u bilo kojoj solani koja ima isti tip obrade, ugušćivanja slane vode.* »

Non-official translation: « *Fleur de sel comes from a thin layer formed on the surface of crushed seawater during continuous evaporation in traditional salt production. It contains small amounts of iodine. It was originally produced in the French region of Guérande, but it can also be produced in any salt marsh that uses the same technique, using salt water.* »



On the French Atlantic coast such as in Guérande, Ile de Ré and Noirmoutier, the harvest of Fleur de sel has always been done in a traditional way. Fleur de sel is manually harvested the day when it crystallizes and exclusively at the surface of the crystallizers.

« Fleur de sel » harvesting is done in the same way in Italy and Slovenia.

FRANCE - ONGOING WORK ON A TSG « FLEUR DE SEL »

In France, the AFPS – the French Association of producers of hand-harvested salt from the Atlantic – is working on a registration request for the protection of “Fleur de sel” as a Traditional Specialty Guarantee (TSG). The draft content of the TSG specification is based on the traditional production technique of the Fleur de sel and is fully compatible with the rules defined in the Spain and Portuguese legislations. Extract :
« *La Fleur de sel est le sel constitué des fins cristaux pyramidaux flottants et friables qui se forment à la surface de la saumure, dans les cristalliseurs utilisés pour la récolte de sel marin. Elle est cueillie manuellement, obligatoirement à la surface de la saumure de ces cristalliseurs à l'aide d'un outil adapté.* »

Non-official translation: « *Fleur de sel is the salt made up of the thin floating and friable pyramidal crystals that form on the surface of the brine, in the crystallizers used for the sea salt harvest. It is picked manually, necessarily on the surface of the brine of these crystallizers using a suitable tool.* »

THE THREAT TO THE « FLEUR DE SEL »

On 17 September 2018, France has accepted a request for the registration of the Protected Geographical Indication called « [Sel et Fleur de sel de Camargue](#) » which will now have to be examined by the European Commission.

The [specification](#) states clearly that « Fleur de Sel de Camargue » is not collected on the surface but that it is collected at the bottom and side of the crystallisers.

This technique is totally different from the one used by the producers that harvest Fleur de sel on the surface in a traditional way in Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. It is also not meeting the requirements set out in the Portuguese and Spanish laws.

ONGOING ACTIONS TO DEFEND THE « FLEUR DE SEL »

It is extremely important to act to protect the true definition and production process of the “Fleur de sel”. Here are the actions that are being undertaken.

APPEAL BEFORE THE FRENCH COURT : CONSEIL D’ETAT

The AFPS has brought a case before the Conseil d’Etat against the inter-ministerial decree that agrees to the PGI application for « Sel de Camargue »/« Fleur de sel de Camargue ».

WORK ON BUILDING AN OPPOSITION AT THE EU LEVEL THROUGH ANOTHER MEMBER STATE

An EU Member State (other than the one from which the PGI request originates) or a third country or a natural or legal person with a legitimate interest and established in a third country may lodge an opposition with the European Commission within 3 months of the publication of the application in the Official Journal of the EU.

[Artisanal Sea Salt Europe](#) is working on getting one or more Member States on board so that an opposition to the request for the registration of the PGI « Sel et Fleur de sel de Camargue » is tabled.

WORK ON A REGISTRATION REQUEST FOR A TSG « FLEUR DE SEL » TO BE TABLED BY ANOTHER COUNTRY THAN FRANCE

[Artisanal Sea Salt Europe](#) is currently working on drafting a specification for a TSG “Fleur de sel” that would be aligned with the traditional production method and the laws of several Member States.

The aim is to secure the support of one or more Member States so that such a request for registration is tabled quickly with the European Commission. This would help preventing the abuse of the name “Fleur de sel” by producers such as the ones from Camargue that do not meet the production requirements.