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A word from EFOW's President

Riccardo Ricci Curbastro



Dear Readers,

The wine package adopted in December 2025, due to enter into force in the coming weeks, marks an important milestone for our sector. It demonstrates the European Union's capacity to listen and to act decisively and rapidly at a time of profound structural, market, and climatic change.

EFOW thanks the European Commission's for the chosen method, i.e. the establishment of a High-Level Group on Wine Policy. This initiative proved its strategic value, fostering an informed and forward-looking discussion that translated into clear, actionable recommendations. Commissioner Hansen deserves our full recognition for the attention he has devoted to the wine sector and for his swift determination to deliver a targeted reform when urgency was paramount.

This achievement is also the result of exemplary institutional cooperation. I would like to warmly thank Mrs Herranz García, rapporteur on this file, together with the shadow rapporteurs, as well as the Danish Presidency and the Member States, for their constructive engagement and their ability to work rapidly. The reform now on the table delivers concrete new tools for the sector. It is now up to each Member State and each GI wine to take informed decisions and deploy these instruments to respond to the ongoing market crisis and mounting climatic challenges.

Looking ahead, it is essential that the upcoming CAP post-2027 reform does not undo the achievements of the wine package. Both the measures and the spirit of the agreement must be fully preserved. The tools, flexibility, and

framework established by this package represent a real step forward for the sector, providing Member States and stakeholders with the instruments they need to tackle market and climate challenges effectively. Preserving these achievements will be crucial to ensure the long-term resilience and competitiveness of European wine. This is why we need a strong, well-funded and truly common agricultural policy for the future.

At the same time, we must remain clear-eyed about the international environment in which European wine operates. The geopolitical landscape is increasingly tense and marked by rising protectionism. This is particularly worrying for a sector whose strength, identity, and growth are intrinsically linked to exports. The European Commission's free trade agenda is therefore not optional, it is essential. It must be supported with ambition, and clarity. Taking full advantage of new markets, such as Mercosur and India, while preserving and stabilising key destinations like the United States, is critical.

In this context, let me underline that GIs are not trade irritants; they are pillars of value, authenticity, and rural development. Defending them internationally is inseparable from defending the future of European wine.

This newsletter is dedicated to explaining the novelties of the wine package for GI wines and features an exclusive interview with Mrs Herranz García, rapporteur on the wine package.

I wish you an enjoyable read.

Riccardo Ricci Curbastro

Wine Package: what are the concrete impacts for Geographical Indication wines from 2026?

Following many months of intense discussions and strong involvement from the wine sector, the European institutions reached a political agreement on the “Wine Package.” This targeted reform of the Common Market Organization (CMO) and the CAP Strategic Plans was approved in trilogue by the European Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament on 4 December 2025. Its entry into force will take place shortly, once formal adoption is complete, and the texts are published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

For Geographical Indication (GI) wines, this reform represents an important milestone. It does not disrupt the existing system, but introduces expected structural adjustments: greater flexibility, strengthened market management tools, and more targeted support. The framework relies on optional instruments, which Member States and GI producer groups will be able to activate depending on their territorial realities. The reform also recognises more clearly the economic role of GI producer groups in managing the sector.

Plantations and replantings: toward a more sustainable and comprehensive regulation

Key point: The system of vine-planting authorisations is now permanent, with the previous plan to end it in 2045 abandoned. Plantings will henceforth be regulated on a long-term basis, with a review scheduled every ten years. This approach reflects the EU’s commitment to maintain oversight of vineyard areas, better manage supply, and prevent structural imbalances in the sector.

- 2 The reform also strengthens the tools available to control new plantings. Member States will be able to choose to restrict, or even fully suspend, authorisations for new plantings, whether for PDOs, PGIs, or wines without a GI. These measures can be applied at the regional level or to a specific geographical indication. Member States may also restrict new planting authorisations if there is a risk of exploitation of the reputation of, or confusion with, a protected geographical indication, to protect its integrity.

National powers are further expanded. Authorities will be able to establish caps on planting authorisations by area or by PDO/PGI, in particular in regions facing overproduction or





already subject to crisis management measures (distillation, green harvesting, grubbing up). They may also define eligibility criteria to prevent excessive yields from worsening imbalances.

In the event of major climatic or sanitary hazards (frost, hail, disease), Member States may extend the validity of planting authorisations by up to twelve additional months. During this extended period, producers will be able to renounce to their authorisation without penalty. As a transitional measure, authorisations granted before 1 January 2025 may also be abandoned without sanction until 31 December 2026, subject to notification to the national authorities.

Another harmonisation: For the current campaign, planting and replanting authorizations will remain valid until the end of the wine-growing season, i.e., 31 July 2026.

Regarding replantings, the reform introduces long-awaited flexibility. The validity period is extended to eight years, giving producers more time to plan work, smooth out investments, and consider climatic constraints. The absence of penalties for non-use further enhances this flexibility. To preserve the integrity of geographical indications, Member States may regulate replanting in GI areas, to prevent the use of replanting rights arising from grubbing up carried out outside those areas.

Market and crisis management: new economic levers

The extension of Article 172 bis is a major step forward for GI wines. Subject to representativeness criteria and competition law rules, GI producer groups and interbranch organisations may now publish non-binding guidance prices.

In practice, these collective indicators may cover not only grapes but also musts and bulk wines via a GI. Without setting prices, these indicators will offer shared benchmarks to help producers structure negotiations and better defend the value of their products.

The reform clarifies and strengthens crisis management tools in the wine sector. In the case of a duly justified crisis, Member States may mobilise targeted national state aid, not only for crisis distillation but also for green harvesting and, importantly, for grubbing up. In return, operators benefiting from grubbing up aid may not obtain new planting authorisations for ten years, and existing authorisations will



be cancelled to prevent rapid vineyard reconstruction and ensure the measure's effectiveness. Furthermore, grubbing up is now recognised as a structural measure and may be integrated into Members States' wine national programmes.

The framework aimed at improving and stabilising the functioning of the common wine market is also strengthened. Interbranch organisations and GI producer groups thus see their role reinforced in economic management and anticipation of market imbalances.

Sustainability, climate adaptation, and promotion

The Wine Package significantly strengthens support for climate change adaptation. Aid may cover up to 80% for varietal conversion, and up to 100% for measures against vine pests such as flavescence dorée. Higher co-financing rates are also provided for investments directly linked to climate-related challenges.

Promotion policy also evolves significantly. Promotion programmes may now be extended up to nine years. Access is facilitated for small producers, and wine tourism is explicitly included as an eligible action, with direct access for GI producer groups.

Labelling: expected simplification

For wines exported outside the EU, the nutritional declaration and the list of ingredients will not be required where the legislation of the destination country does not impose such obligations. The reform also introduces improvements for labelling on the European market: language obligations are relaxed, and mandatory information may be displayed once only, without repetition between the front label and back label. These simplifications respond to a long-standing request from the sector and facilitate wine sales within the EU.

What's next?

For EFOW the challenge is now clear: to ensure that these advances are not only preserved but also reinforced within the framework of the future post-2027 CAP reform. The Wine Package represents an important step, but it cannot be considered an endpoint.

Interview

Ms. Esther Herranz García is a Member of the European Parliament for the Partido Popular and a member of the European People's Party (EPP) Group. She served as an MEP from 2002 to 2019 and returned to the European Parliament in 2024, where she co-chairs, alongside French MEP Éric Sargiacomo, the Intergroup on Wine, Quality Products and Spirits.

She was the European Parliament's rapporteur for the Wine Package.

What lessons can be drawn from the work of the High-Level Group on Wine Policy?

The most important and obvious lesson from this process is the benefit of engaging the sector when regulating its activities.

Establishing an open and structured dialogue with representatives of the different governments, as well as with the various stakeholders and interests within the sector, made it possible to reach a set of recommendations agreed by all parties. This provided much-needed clarity ahead of the proposed changes to the legislative framework that the sector requires to address the crisis it is currently facing.

This approach should serve as a model for understanding the challenges affecting other sectors as well.

Direct, face-to-face dialogue is always beneficial when dealing with complex situations. I know that the European Commission has taken note of the success of this High-Level Group, and I am confident that it will, on the one hand, maintain it in some form as a permanent forum for dialogue and, on the other, replicate it for other agricultural sectors.

Could you explain how the Wine Package will help the sector address the current challenges?

The crisis affecting the sector can essentially be understood around three main pillars: 1) first, a decline in consumption driven by factors such as changing consumer habits, competition from other beverages ; 2) second, the impact of geopolitical uncertainty and trade disputes on exports of our wines to third countries; 3) and third, the effects of climate change on harvests in traditional production areas.

Through this legislative package, the European Commission has proposed measures to tackle each of these challenges, and the European Parliament has contributed by introducing additional measures.



Esther Herranz García
Member of the European Parliament (PPE)

With regard to declining consumption, the package includes, among other initiatives, consumer-focused labelling for alcohol-free wines and wines with reduced alcohol content. In addition to providing greater clarity on what each category represents, the aim is to help wine reach new consumers. Furthermore, to better balance supply and demand, the Commission included grubbing-up, green harvesting and distillation among the measures that Member States may finance. From the Parliament's side, we succeeded in ensuring that grubbing-up, as is already the case for green harvesting, can also be financed through EU funds, with the objective of guaranteeing a level playing field for winegrowers across all Member States. In line with this approach, the growth of planting authorisations is also limited and may, if necessary, be reduced to zero.

To support the opening of new markets and facilitate exports, the package reforms the conditions governing promotion and communication activities in third countries. The final agreement significantly improves on the Commission's original proposal by allowing promotion programmes to run for up to nine years (three years, renewable on two occasions). Funding for these programmes may reach up to 80% as a general rule (60% from EU funds and 20% from national funds), and up to 90% for small operators (with up to 30% coming from national funds). Member States will also be required to facilitate access to these measures for small operators through non-discriminatory criteria or simplified procedures.

In addition, the new definition of third-country markets allows major markets such as the United States, Brazil or India to be divided into regions, providing greater flexibility and more opportunities for programme beneficiaries. Measures to facilitate exports also include the simplification of labelling requirements for wines intended for export.

To address the challenges posed by climate change, the Wine Package includes, among other measures, higher co-financing rates for investments aimed at climate adaptation, extensions of authorisations in cases of force majeure, and 100% funding for collective interventions against highly contagious diseases such as flavescence dorée.

It should also be highlighted that the Wine Package introduces many other measures that benefit the sector by providing greater certainty and future opportunities. These include: the removal of the end date for the planting





authorisation system; changes to facilitate the uptake of electronic labelling; priority access to simplified procedures for replanting authorisations; measures to promote wine tourism and direct sales; an extension of the scope of price guidance drawn up by interbranch organisations to cover bulk wine and grape must prices; and the possibility of mandating the removal of abandoned vineyards for plant-health reasons and fire prevention purposes.

I believe that, with this package, we have succeeded in equipping both Member States and the sector with a broad and flexible toolbox to address the specific challenges facing the wine sector in each region. I am confident that it will be used effectively and hope that, in a few years' time, we will be able to speak about the recovery of the sector once this crisis has been overcome.

What measures still need to be implemented to ensure that the next CAP reform fully benefits the wine sector?

Looking ahead to the post-2027 reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, the key priority for the sector will be to ensure that sectoral interventions genuinely reflect its needs and that the new architecture fully incorporates all the measures included in the Wine Package.

In addition, there are issues that were left unresolved and which, unfortunately, the Council did not agree to include on this occasion. I intend to continue advocating for greater inter-annual budgetary flexibility for the wine sector funds. I firmly believe it is both appropriate and necessary that every euro allocated to the sector can actually be invested in it. To achieve this, the ability to carry over unspent funds into the following budget year is essential.

In the face of health-related pressures, a structural decline in consumption, the risk of over-regulation at EU level, climate risks and the fragility of the internal market, what do you see as the key areas of focus for the future of the European wine sector, and what safeguards should the EU put in place?

From Brussels, but also from national capitals and regions, we must continue to promote the Mediterranean diet, of which wine has historically been a part. It is essential to provide accurate information on responsible consumption and to avoid unjustified alarmism around a product with such deep cultural roots as wine. At the same time, the sector itself must adapt to new consumer preferences and lifestyles by offering new products and formats.

I am a strong advocate of education around responsible consumption, something I have consistently promoted both from my seat in the European Parliament and in the positions of responsibility I

previously held in my region, La Rioja. Younger generations are increasingly opting for other beverages, such as beer. While I also consider beer to be an excellent product, and European beers to be of very high quality, both beverages should be able to coexist, and wine must regain some of the ground it has lost.

In a context of growing protectionism, how can the European Union safeguard its wine exports, seize opportunities in emerging markets, and protect its geographical indications and production standards?

The defence of our geographical indications and products is not merely a matter of commercial interest. It is about protecting our agri-food heritage, our European identity and our know-how. Our agri-food products, and particularly those of high quality, represent a European asset that must be safeguarded and preserved. They are recognised and valued worldwide for their standards and quality, and as such must be defended against any threat that seeks to undermine them.

In the current context, the EU must continue to pursue trade agreements that allow us to expand our exports while ensuring robust protection for our geographical indications. As a long-standing supporter and close observer of our primary sector and food industry, I am confident that our products, thanks to their quality and high standards, can compete successfully in any market. The figures bear this out: the EU is a net exporter of agri-food products, with geographical indications at the forefront.

That said, trade negotiations must be conducted with due caution. I believe the safeguard regulation accompanying the Mercosur agreement is an example that should be replicated when concluding future trade agreements. It is essential to strike a balance that provides security for our producers.

Promotion also plays a crucial role in this regard. In 2014, I served as rapporteur for the regulation on the promotion of agricultural products, and I am fully aware of the positive

impact that promotional campaigns have had, and continue to have, for many of our products in third countries. The EU and the Member States must continue to support the promotion of our products beyond our borders, while also encouraging internal consumption. The Commission's intention to promote the consumption of European products is welcome and, in my view, could prove highly significant.

We are operating in a rapidly changing global environment in which protectionism is increasing, but consumer appreciation for our products is not diminishing. This is why we must adapt our policies to ensure that our products continue to reach as many markets as possible.

Given the administrative difficulties that complicate intra-EU wine trade, the creation of a one-stop shop for alcohol taxation is often proposed. Do you believe this project has realistic prospects of success, and what steps should the European wine sector take to facilitate its implementation?

Tax policy remains an area where there is still considerable ground to cover. Competence over taxation lies largely with the Member States, and any progress requires broad consensus.

As a Member of the European Parliament, I support any initiative that aligns with the priorities of simplification and enhancing the competitiveness of our economic operators. We must continue working at EU level to remove these barriers and build a stronger single market. In this context, a one-stop shop for wine taxation would be consistent with similar models that are already in place. To improve competitiveness and enable operators to expand, we should promote all measures that contribute to consolidating the single market, removing bureaucratic obstacles and reducing administrative costs for the sector.

“Because origin matters”

EFOW is a Brussels-based organisation representing wines with an Appellation of Origin or Geographical Indication from the European Union. As the voice of the European origin wines towards European and international institutions, it is actively lobbying for a better protection and promotion of these wines within the EU and throughout the world.

Its current members are the national associations in charge of origin wines from France (CNAOC), Germany (DWV), Italy (FEDERDOC) and Spain (CECRV), as well as the Port and Douro Wines Institute (IVDP) from Portugal.



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