



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

New EU rules for ‘Organic Wine’ agreed

Brussels, 08 February 2012 - New EU rules for “organic wine” have been agreed in the Standing Committee on Organic Farming (SCOF), and will be published in the Official Journal in the coming weeks. With the new regulation, which will apply from the 2012 harvest, organic wine growers will be allowed to use the term “organic wine” on their labels. The labels must also show the EU-organic-logo and the code number of their certifier, and must respect other wine labelling rules. Although there are already rules for “wine made from organic grapes”, these do not cover wine-making practices, i.e. the whole process from grape to wine. Wine is the one remaining sector not fully covered by the EU rules on organic farming standards under [Regulation 834/2007](#).

After the vote in the SCOF, EU Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural development Dacian Cioloș stated: *“I am delighted that we have finally reached agreement on this dossier, as it was important to establish harmonized rules guaranteeing a clear offer to consumers who are more and more interested in organic products. I am pleased that we emerge with rules which make a clear difference between conventional and organic wine – as is the case with other organic products. As a result, consumers can be sure that any “organic wine” will have been produced using stricter production rules.”*

The new rules have the advantage of improved transparency and better consumer recognition. They will not only help to facilitate the internal market, but also to strengthen the position of EU organic wines at international level, since many other wine producing countries (USA, Chile, Australia, South Africa) have already established standards for organic wines. With this piece of legislation, the EU organic farming is now complete and covers all agricultural products.

The new regulation establishes a subset of oenological (wine-making) practices and substances for organic wines defined in the Wine Common Market Organisation (CMO) [regulation 606/2009](#). For example, sorbic acid and desulfuration will not be allowed and the level of sulphites in organic wine must be at least 30-50 mg per litre lower than their conventional equivalent (depending on the residual sugar content). Other than this subset of specifications, the general wine-making rules defined in the Wine CMO regulation will also apply. As well as these wine-making practices, “organic wine” must of course also be produced using organic grapes – as defined under [Regulation 834/2007](#).

Background

There are no EU rules or definition of “Organic wine”. Only grapes can be certified organic and only the mention “wine made from organic grapes” is currently allowed.

In the 2004 Organic Action Plan, the Commission pledged to establish specific organic rules for all agricultural production, including wine-making. In this context, the “OrWine” research project was financed under the 6th Framework Programme. Based on its findings, legal proposals for defining organic wine were first tabled in Standing Committee for Organic Farming (SCOF) in June 2009, but remained deadlocked and were withdrawn in June 2010. Work resumed in 2011 and the draft received a favourable opinion from the SCOF on 8 February 2012.

Key parts of the proposals

The new rules on organic wine-making rules introduces a technical definition of organic wine which is consistent with the organic objective and principles as laid down in Council Regulation ([EC 834/2007](#)) Organic production. The regulation identifies oenological techniques and substances to be authorized for organic wine.

These include: **maximum sulphite content** set at 100 mg per litre for red wine (150 mg/l for conventional) and 150mg/l for white/rosé (200 mg/l for conventional), with a 30mg/l differential where the **residual sugar content** is more than 2g per litre.

For more information:

[MEMO/12/81](#)

Contact :

[Roger Waite](#) (+32 2 296 14 04)