

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF VINE AND WINE**

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# **INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF WINES**



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## **FOREWORD**

*The present standard is a recommendation from the O.I.V. to the Member States. Its aim is to ease international exchange and to ensure fair information to consumers.*

*It is inspired by the standard established by the Codex Alimentarius for the labelling of foodstuffs and beverages.<sup>1</sup>*

*The provisions concern the compulsory information which appears on the labelling of pre-packed wines in view of their sale to the consumer, as well as optional information left to the discretion of manufacturers or Member States. They have gradually been adopted through the progress of the group Wine Regulation and Quality Control and the Commission III, at the 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, 65<sup>th</sup>, 68<sup>th</sup>, 72<sup>nd</sup>, 73<sup>rd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> General Assemblies of the International Office of Vine and Wine in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1993 and 2003 and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine in 2005, 2006, 2010 and 2011.*

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<sup>1</sup> General Codex Standard for the labelling of pre-packed foodstuffs (Codex Stan 1-1985).

## **1. GENERAL MEASURES**

### **1.1. Definitions:**

“Label” means any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a package (container) of wine.

“Single Field of Vision”: All parts of the surface of the package (container), excluding the base, which may be seen at the same time without having to turn the package (container).

### **1.2 Scope**

#### **1.2.1 The Product**

The labelling standard for wines applies to products fitting the definition of wine as laid down by the *Code International des Pratiques Oenologiques* of the O.I.V., namely:

*Wine is exclusively the beverage resulting from the complete or partial alcoholic fermentation of fresh grapes, whether crushed or not, and from the grape must. Its acquired alcoholic strength should not be less than 8.5 p. 100 vol.*

*Nevertheless, considering climatic conditions, soil or grape variety, special qualitative factors or individual traditions specific to certain vineyards, the total minimum alcoholic strength can be reduced to 7 p. 100 vol. by special legislation of the region in question.*

The present standard does not apply to special wines defined by the said Code. However, flor wines which meet the present definition of wine are also subject to the application of the present standard.

**1.2.2** Labelling is compulsory for pre-packed wines which are to be sold to the consumer.

**1.3.** Labelling must include compulsory information to which optional information can be added. Only information from these two categories is authorised.

**1.4.** *Misleading information.* The use of any information, sign or illustration which is misleading about the origin and/or the nature of the product is forbidden.

## **2. COMPULSORY INFORMATION**

### **2.1. *The denomination of the product***

#### **2.1.1 The use of the word "wine".**

The use of the word "wine" or, (without prejudice to article 2.1.2.2) other substitutive recognised indication, is obligatory in the labelling of the product which respects the definition quoted in article 1.2.1. It may be completed by mentioning its type or particular classification. Subject to the provisions which the Member States make compulsory for their own production, no opposition can be made to the release onto the market of the product which respects this definition and which is presented under the single name "wine".

Without prejudice to the particular provisions made for certain products which bear in their name the word "wine" alongside complementary information, the word "wine" used alone can only apply to the product defined in article 1.2.1.

#### **2.1.2. Recognised appellation of origin or recognised geographic indication**

##### **2.1.2.1. Definitions**

###### **Recognised Geographic Indication**

It is the name of the country, the region or the place used in the designation of a product originating from this country, region, place or area defined to this end under this name and recognised by the competent authorities of the country concerned.

As far as wine is concerned, the recognition of this name:

- is linked to a quality and/or to a characteristic of the product attributed to the geographic milieu including natural or human factors; and
- is subordinate to the grapes being harvested in the country, region, place or defined area.

As far as spirits of a vitivinicultural origin are concerned, the recognition of this name:

- is linked to a quality and/or a characteristic that the product acquires as a result of a decisive phase of its production; and
- is subordinate to this decisive phase being carried out in the country, region, place or defined area.

###### **Recognised Appellation of Origin**

It is the name of the country, region or the place used in the designation of a product originating from this country, region, place or area as defined to this end, under this name and recognised by the competent authorities of the country concerned.

As far as wine and spirit beverages from a vitivinicultural origin are concerned, the recognised appellation of origin

- refers to a product whose quality or characteristics are due exclusively or essentially to the geographic milieu, including natural and human factors, and
- is subordinate to the harvest as well as its transformation in the country, region, place or defined area.

**2.1.2.2.** When a wine benefits from a recognised appellation of origin or from a recognised geographic indication such as defined above, and figures on a list published by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, the use of this recognised appellation of origin or the recognised geographic indication on the label, conforming to the laws of the producer country, is obligatory.

In this case the recognised appellation of origin or the recognised geographic indication can constitute the denomination of the product and take the place of the word "wine".

To avoid confusion with other designations it is recommended that the use of a complementary mention characterising the product, such as "Appellation of Origin..." is made compulsory.

## **2.2. *Information on alcoholic strength***

Information on acquired alcoholic strength in percentage per volume of the product is compulsory on the labelling with a tolerance of 0.5 p. 100 vol.

However, this tolerance is raised to 0.8 p. 100 vol for wine that is to be laid down, and flor wines.

## **2.3. *Information on additives***

This indication only takes into account additives that are not present in wine in its natural state in significant amounts.

It concerns:

- sulphur dioxide when this additive exceeds **10** mg/l expressed in total SO<sub>2</sub>,
- sorbic acid.

However the States can dispense with this indication when the national legislation does not require the complete declaration of the ingredients in foodstuffs, subject to the fact that exemptions were granted because (i) the foodstuff has a well-known composition, (ii) the absence from the list of ingredients is not detrimental to the consumer and (iii) the information provided on the label informs the consumer about the nature of the foodstuff.

## **2.4. *Nominal Volume***

### **2.4.1. *Objectives***

Pre-packaging by volume of pre-packed wines must be carried out in such a way that the batches of these pre-packed wines satisfy the following directives in respect of their nominal volume:

- 2.4.1.1.** *The actual volume* must not be, on average, less than the nominal volume.
- 2.4.1.2.** *The proportion of pre-packages* having a negative error greater the value provided for in point 2.4.2.5. must be sufficiently small to allow the batches to satisfy the control checks defined in point 2.4.5.

**2.4.2. Definitions**

- 2.4.2.1.** *The pre-package* is the combination of the product and the individual package in which it is wrapped.

A product is pre-packed when it is placed in a package, whatever its nature, without the purchaser being present, and is of such a type that the quantity of the product contained in the package has a predetermined value and cannot be modified without the package being opened or noticeably modified.

- 2.4.2.2.** *The nominal volume* is the quantity of the product that the pre-packaged container is deemed to contain.
- 2.4.2.3.** *The actual volume* of the product is the volume that the pre-package really contains at a temperature of 20°C whatever the temperature the filling was carried out at, the control being carried out at 20°C.
- 2.4.2.4.** *The negative error* of the content of a pre-packaged container is the difference between the actual volume and the nominal volume.

The present dispositions have no effect on a fiscal scale.

- 2.4.2.5.** *The maximum tolerable negative error* for the quantity of the product is fixed in accordance with the following table:

Nominal volume in ml	50	100	187	200	250	375	500	700	750
Maximum tolerable negative error in ml	4.5	4.5	8.4	9	9	11.25	15	15	15

Nominal volume in ml	1000	1500	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	9000	10000
Maximum tolerable negative error in ml	15	22.5	30	45	60	75	90	135	150

**2.4.3. Range**

The products targeted in paragraph **1.1.1.** can freely circulate in the Member States of the O.I.V. if they are contained in pre-packaging presenting nominal volumes hereafter presented in litres.

0.187\*            0.375            0.750            1.500

On a complementary and optional basis to the Member States there is a supplementary list of nominal volumes (expressed in litres) to which all the rules relative to labelling and control checks apply.

0.050	0.100	0.200	0.250	0.500
0.700	1.000	2.000	3.000	4.000
5.000	6.000	9.000	10.000	

With a view to ensuring fair play, the Member States will endeavour to stop the use of containers of other nominal volumes in their domestic markets.

However, they may admit certain traditional nominal volumes applying to containers of a style typical of their origin, and providing that this does not result in consumer confusion or unfair competition with regard to other similar products.

\* The Member States who does not accept the volume 0.187 l nevertheless undertake to accept it for in-flight and maritime sales.

#### **2.4.4. Requirements for checking batches of pre-packages**

The checking of pre-packages shall be carried out by *sampling*. This is done on the actual volume of each pre-package of the sample and on the average of their actual volumes.

For each of these checks, the sampling procedures are provided for below:

The *batch* shall comprise all the pre-packages of the same nominal quantity, of the same type, of the same production run, packed in the same place and subjected to the same control checks which are to be inspected. Its size is *limited* to 10,000.

- Samples are drawn at random from the batch;
- The actual volume of the pre-packages can be measured directly using volumetric measuring instruments, or indirectly by weighing the contents of the pre-package and by measuring its volumetric mass;
- Irrespective of the method used, the error made in measuring the actual volume of a pre-package shall not exceed one-fifth of the tolerable negative error for the nominal volume in the pre-package;
- When the weight of the package is sufficiently variable to introduce an error greater than that fixed above, the control check is destructive, it means the opening of pre-packages.

##### **2.4.4.1. Checking of the actual contents of a pre-package.** To obtain the minimal acceptable volume, deduct from the nominal volume of the pre-package the maximum tolerable negative error for this volume as indicated in point 2.4.2.5. of this document.

Pre-packages in the batch whose actual volume is less than the minimal acceptable volume are considered defective.

The number of pre-packages to be checked must be equal to the size of the sample given in the following table:

Control check	Number in batch	Order of sample	Number in sample	Aggregate number	Number of defective units	
					Acceptance criterion	Rejection criterion
Destructive	< 100	1	20	20	1	2
Non Destructive	100 to 500	1	30	30	1	3
		2	30	60	4	5
	501 to 3200	1	50	50	2	5
		2	50	100	6	7
	3201 and over	1	80	80	3	7
		2	80	160	8	9

*Destructive control check:*

- If the number of defective units found in the sample is less than or equal to the acceptance criterion, the batch is accepted for control,
- if the number of defective units found in the sample is equal to or greater than the rejection criterion, the batch is not accepted for control.

*Non-destructive control check:*

- If the number of defective units found in the first sample is less than or equal to the first acceptance criterion, the batch is accepted for control,
- if the number of defective units found in the first sample is equal to or greater than the first rejection criterion, the batch shall be rejected,
- if the number of defective units found in the first sample lies between the first acceptance criterion and the first rejection criterion, a second sample shall be checked, the number of units of which is indicated in this plan.

*The defective units found in the first and second samples shall be added together:*

- If the aggregate number of defective units is less than or equal to the second acceptance criterion, the batch will be considered acceptable for control,
- If the aggregate number of defective units is greater than or equal to the second rejection criterion, the batch shall be rejected,
- Batches of less than 100 pre-packages are checked 100%. The batch is acceptable if it contains less than 2% defective units.

**2.4.4.2. Control check of the actual average volume of pre-packages**

A batch of pre-packages is acceptable for control if the average value  $\bar{x}$  of actual volumes  $x_i$  of  $n$  packages in sample is greater than or equal to the value:

$$\bar{X} = Vn - \frac{S}{\sqrt{n}} t(1 - \alpha)$$

In this formula the symbols mean:

- $Vn$  : the nominal volume of pre-packages,  
 $n$  : the number of pre-packages in the sampling given in the table below,  
 $s$  : the estimated standard deviation of the actual quantities of the batch,  
 $t(1 - \alpha)$ : the uncertainty variable of Student distribution with degree of freedom  $v=n-1$  and confidence level  $(1 - \alpha)=0.995$

Rejection and acceptance criteria in function of the actual number of samples and of the nature of control (destructive or non-destructive) are shown in the following table:

Control in check	Number in batch	Number in sample	Criteria	
			Acceptance	Rejection
Destructive	< 100	20	$\bar{X} \geq Vn - 0,640 s$	$\bar{X} < Vn - 0,640 s$
Non destructive	100 to 500	30	$\bar{X} \geq Vn - 0,503 s$	$\bar{X} < Vn - 0,503 s$
	>500	50	$\bar{X} \geq Vn - 0,379 s$	$\bar{X} < Vn - 0,379 s$

Batches of less than 100 pre-packages are 100% checked. The batch is accepted if the average of the actual volumes of all the pre-packages in the batch is greater than or equal to the value of the nominal volume.

- 2.4.4.3.** A batch of pre-packages is accepted if the results of the control checks provided for in points 2.4.4.1. and 2.4.4.2. satisfy the acceptance criterion.  
**2.4.4.4.** The method proposed above is a reference method. Other equally efficient methods are permitted.

**2.5. The country of origin**

- 2.5.1.** In international exchanges, the official or usual name of country of origin must be mentioned when the product comes from grapes harvested and vinified in this country.  
**2.5.2.** The use of a name of a State such as provided for above is dependent on the agreement of this State:

- when the wine is vinified in a country different to that in which the grapes were harvested,
- when the wine is a result of a blend of wines from different countries.

**2.6. The name and address of the person responsible for pre-packages**

- 2.6.1.** The name of the person responsible for the pre-packages is either:
- the patronymic name of the physical person
  - the registered name of the company
  - or the commercial name of the latter
- who take the responsibility for the product put in a pre-package by themselves or on their account.
- 2.6.2.** The address of the person responsible for the pre-package bears the name of the place where this was actually processed or carried out, this address being completed, if need be, by that of the pre-packagers' headquarters.
- 2.6.3.** The name and address of the importer can be used in place of those responsible for the pre-packages.
- 2.6.4.** Information about the name of the person responsible, his address, as well as the place the containers were pre-packaged, and those relating to the quality of the pre-packager should not be capable of creating confusion as to the wine's origin nor to the existence and quality of the evoked persons or businesses. To avoid confusion about the wine's origin, it is recommended that the name of the place or person responsible is replaced by a code, when these names constitute a recognised appellation of origin or a recognised geographic indication to which the pre-packaged wine has no right.

**2.7. *Batch identification***

The batch information number, that is, the information allowing the identification of a defined quantity of wine produced (and packaged) in similar conditions, is freely chosen by the operators and is of such a kind that the information can be clearly distinguished for what it is.

**3. *OPTIONAL INFORMATION***

**3.1. *List of optional information***

**3.1.1. *Trademarks***

- a trademark has to conform to the rules laid down by national law;
- a trademark must not be in contradiction with the protection of recognised appellation of origin and recognised geographic indications, as defined by the O.I.V. Furthermore, it must not create confusion in the minds of the people for whom it is intended, neither on the recognised appellation of origin or the recognised geographic indication, nor on the product's geographic origin;
- a trademark must not create confusion, notably on the producer, the merchant, the vine variety or the vintage.

### **3.1.2. Parties participating in the marketing process**

The name of one or several persons, firms or groups of people interested in the marketing of wine, having participated in the:

- production;
- wine selection;
- pre-packaging (description of those in charge of the pre-packaging);
- distribution (to restaurants etc).

### **3.1.3. Name of the viticultural holding**

The name of the viticultural holding (château, quinta, finca, tenuta, Weingut, manor, estate etc):

- the wine must come solely from the said holding: grapes harvested and vinified in the holding as such designated;
- the description of the viticultural holding must correspond to the customs of the country and must not create confusion in the mind of the consumer;
- the wine must be entitled to a recognised geographic indication or recognised appellation of origin, and be mentioned as such.

### **3.1.4. Varietal name**

a) Can only be indicated if:

- the wine is produced from at least 75% of the grapes of the said varietal;
- this varietal determines the specific character of a wine;
- the name of the varietal does not lend itself to confusion with a recognised appellation of origin or a recognised geographic indication.

b) When the names of two varietals are mentioned:

- the wine must come entirely from these two varietals;
- they must be indicated by decreasing order of importance;
- the States set the minimum percentage for the quantity of the least important grape, which must not be less than 15%.

c) Exceptionally in countries where more than two varietals are usually shown in the labelling of wine, the percentage of each must figure on the label.

NB - To ensure these provisions are respected, it is recommended that the States demand a harvest declaration showing the produced quantities of each varietal, along with the acreage planted with these varietals.

### **3.1.5. Vintage or harvest year**

To bear this mention the wines must be made with grapes coming 100% from the year shown.

Nevertheless, with special dispensation, the producer States can lower this percentage to 85%, in the case where this practice is traditional and customary.

### **3.1.6. Type of wine<sup>2</sup>**

Terms relating to the sugar content are as follows:

- Dry, when the wine contains a maximum of 4 g/l of glucose plus fructose or 9 g/l when the acidity strength totals (expressed in grams of tartaric acid per litre) is not less than 2 g/l to glucose plus fructose strength.
- Medium dry, when the sugar content of the wine is higher than the sugar content indicated under the first bullet point and does not exceed
  - 12 g/l
  - or 18 g/l, when the difference between the sugar content and the level of total acidity expressed in g/l of tartaric acid does not exceed 10g/l
- Mellow or semi-sweet, when the wine contains more than the figures aimed for in the second drawing off and achieves at the most 45 g/l.
- Sweet, when the wine contains a glucose plus fructose strength of at least 45 g/l.

### **3.1.7. The ageing of wine**

The term "aged wine", or an equivalent, can only be used if:

- a national rule defining ageing conditions exists;
- if the ageing period is at least three years for red wines and two years for white wines.

### **3.1.8. Traditional terms of quality**

The indication of terms relative to a superior quality of wine (Grand vin, cru, superior wine, classico, vino nobile, etc) must satisfy the following conditions:

- the wine must have entitlement to a recognised appellation of origin or recognised geographic indication;
- the terms must be attributed by an official organisation of the country of production and refer either to the classification of the viticultural land or to criteria relating to wine quality.
- the labels must show the vintage.

### **3.1.9. Medals and Distinctions**

The indication relating to medals or distinctions depends on whether:

- they were attributed in a non-restricted competition, according to the standards concordant with the criteria defined by the O.I.V., and on a homogenous and defined quantity of wine having the entitlement to a recognised appellation of origin or a recognised geographic indication,
- documentary proof exists,

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<sup>2</sup> Sugar content is determined by the "glucose + fructose" method of analysis as described in the International Compendium of Methods of Analysis

- the label shows the volume of the batch of wine, subject of the distinction, or an official control number.

### **3.1.10 Other terms**

Subject to the compliance of national regulations, optional indications can equally be shown: terms or texts which notably refer to the history of wine or commercial firm, consumer advice, natural conditions or vine growing techniques, harvesting and wine making, other ageing descriptions, sensory conditions, analytical information different from alcoholic content, wine colour, additional source information about origin and graphic signs. This information must not, by its nature, create confusion as such, concerning the preceding information as in the arrangements of Article 1.4.

## **4. PRESENTATION OF INDICATIONS**

### **4.1. *Field of vision***

The indication of the denomination of the product, the alcoholic strength, the nominal volume and the country of origin must figure in the single field of vision, without prejudice to specific, domestic market provisions, which are less restrictive.

The indication of the name and address of the person responsible for pre-packages as in point 2.6, additives as in point 2.3, batch identification as in point 2.7 and any other indications may appear anywhere on the label.

Nevertheless, any of the above mentioned indications can be repeated in any part of the label.

### **4.2. *Language***

**4.2.1** The language used must be easily understandable for the consumer.

**4.2.2** If the language used is not understandable for the consumer for whom the wine is intended, the label must be replaced or a supplementary label added containing the mandatory information at chapter 2 of this standard, in the required language.

**4.2.3** In the cases as provided in Article 4.2.2, the mandatory information provided shall fully and accurately reflect that in the original label.

**4.2.4** Where appropriate to effectively communicate with consumers, information may be presented in the form of words, symbols or combinations of words and symbols.

Where symbols or combinations of words and symbols are used, these must be clear, legible, and unambiguous. Symbols must comply with applicable rules of competent authorities.

The mandatory information described in this Standard must be indicated on the labeling in the form of words.

The mandatory information on the label may be accompanied by the use of symbols.

#### **4.3 *Legibility***

The information must be written in a size and colour which is clear, indelible, and readily legible by the consumer under normal conditions of purchase and use.

#### **4.4 *Presentation of information on alcoholic strength***

The actual alcoholic strength shall be labelled with the sign "%" and with the terms "volume", "vol.", or "vol" and may be accompanied by the terms "alcohol", "alc" or "alc."

#### **4.5 *Presentation of information on additives***

The mention of sulphites shall be labelled in the form "contains sulphites", "contains sulfites", "contains sulphur dioxide", "contains sulfur dioxide" or other equivalent indication.

#### **4.6 *Presentation of nominal volume***

The nominal volume is expressed in one of the following units: litre (l) or (L), centilitre (cl), and millilitre (ml). It is written in numbers and ended by the abbreviation or the complete spelling of the chosen unit.

The volume thus shown can be followed by references to another system of measure (e.g. the imperial system) provided that this does not result in any confusion on the quantity presented to the consumer.

#### **4.7 *Presentation of the country of origin***

The information is given in either a nominal or adjective form associated with the word wine or in another way as such as in expressions "produce of".

In the two cases referred to at article 2.5.2, use should be made of the indications:

- "blend of wines from ...", or another similar expression, where the wine is a result of a blend of wines from different countries; or
- "wine produced in ... from grapes harvested in ...", or another similar expression, where the wine is vinified in a country different to that in which the grapes were harvested.

In all cases, the countries must be displayed in decreasing order of the proportions of the assemblage.

This article is without prejudice to customs regulations.

**4.8**      ***Presentation of the name and address of the person responsible for pre-packages***

The name and address of the person responsible for the pre-packages, as provided for in article 2.6, shall be labelled with a formulation as "bottled by" or "bottling by" or "packaged by" [name of the person responsible] at [address of the person responsible].

When the person responsible for pre-packages has the product put in a pre-package on their account, the name of the person responsible shall be labelled with a formulation as "bottled for" or "bottled for...by..."

In the circumstances envisaged at article 2.6.3, the name and address of the importer shall be labelled with a formulation as "imported by" or "imported and bottled by" [name of the importer] at [address of the importer].