



# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF WINES



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**OIV**

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF VINE AND WINE**

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



OIV - 12, Parvis de l'UNESCO - 21000 DIJON - Tél. : +331.44.94.80.80 – email :  
ecodroit@oiv.int

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## **FOREWORD**

*The present standard is a recommendation from the OIV 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 prepackaged foods.<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>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 18, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine in 2005, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2020, 2021 and 2022.*

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<sup>1</sup> General Standard for the labelling of prepacked foods (Codex Alimentarius 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).

“Pre packed wine” means wine packaged in advance in a container, ready for offer to the consumer, or for catering purposes

### **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 *International Code of Oenological Practices* of the OIV, 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, for 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. Appellation of origin or geographical indication**

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

###### **Geographical Indication**

**Geographical indication** is any denomination protected by the competent authorities of the country of origin, which identifies a wine or spirit beverage as originating in a specific geographical area, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the wine or spirit beverage is essentially attributable to its geographical origin<sup>2</sup>.

As far as wine is concerned, the protection of the geographical indication:

- is subject to at least 85% grapes being harvested in the specific geographical area.

As far as spirit beverages of a vitivinicultural origin are concerned, the protection of the geographical indication:

- is subordinate to the fact that the decisive phase of production being carried out in the country, region, place or defined area.

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

**Appellation of Origin** is any denomination recognised and protected by the competent authorities in the Country of origin, consisting of or containing the name of a geographical area, or another denomination known as referring to such area, which serves to designate a wine or spirit beverage as originating in that geographical area, where the quality or characteristics of the wine or spirit beverage are due exclusively or essentially to the geographical environment,

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<sup>2</sup> Articles 22.1 and 23.1 of the TRIPS Agreement

including natural and human factors, and which has given the wine or spirit beverage its reputation<sup>3</sup>

The protection of the appellation of origin is subordinate to the harvest as well as its transformation into wine in the region or defined area.

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

In this case the appellation of origin or the geographical 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 substances<sup>4</sup> known to cause hypersensitivity, including allergies, *inter alia***

The presence of substances known to cause hypersensitivity, including allergies, *inter alia* shall be indicated on the label of the wine.

The substances concerned are:

- Residues of fining agent proteins in wine (milk, milk based products, egg, and egg based products, wheat proteins), if their presence can be detected in the final product using the analysis method responding to the criteria fixed by the method OIV-MA-AS315-23.
- Sulphites in a concentration of 10mg/L or more.

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<sup>3</sup> Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications (2015, article 2.1.i]

<sup>4</sup> Substance is any food, ingredient or processing aid

**2.4. Net Contents**

The net contents shall be declared in the metric system (International System of units (SI)).

The declaration of net contents represents the quantity at the time of packaging and is subject to enforcement by reference to an average system of quantity control.

It is recommended that the enforced average system of quantity control is compatible with the requirements set by the International Recommendation OIML R 87 "Quantity of product in pre-packages" and its further updates of the International Organisation for Legal Metrology.

**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 an appellation of origin or a geographical 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 appellation of origin and geographical indications, as defined by the OIV. Furthermore, it must not create confusion in the minds of the people for whom it is intended, neither on the appellation of origin or the geographical 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 geographical indication or 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 an appellation of origin or a geographical indication.



b) When the names of two varieties are mentioned:

- the wine must come entirely from these two varieties;
- 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 varieties 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 variety, along with the acreage planted with these varieties.

### **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>5</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.

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<sup>5</sup> Sugar content is determined by the "glucose + fructose" method of analysis as described in the International Compendium of Methods of Analysis

### **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 an appellation of origin or geographical 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 OIV, and on a homogenous and defined quantity of wine.
- documentary proof exists, referring to the batch (article 2.7) concerned
- Medals and distinctions received by an individual wine bear the name of the competition, the year of award and as a general rule shall only be applied to wines bearing the name under which the sample was entered. However, in recognition that a wine could be entered in a competition before a wine has been finally allocated to a Brand, portability of an award so that it can stay with the wine which won it shall be permitted providing the wine competition regulations so allow.

### **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 net contents 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, substances known to cause hypersensitivity, including allergies, *inter alia* 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 term "volume" or the symbols "vol.", or "vol" and may be accompanied by the term "alcohol" or the symbols "alc" or "alc."

The indication of the actual alcoholic strength in percentage by volume of the product shall be expressed with a maximum of one decimal.

#### **4.5 *Presentation of information on substances known to cause hypersensitivity, including allergies, inter alia***

The name of the substance known to cause hypersensitivity, including allergies, inter alia, should be indicated in the list of ingredients if mentioned on the label or, in the absence of a list of ingredients, it should be preceded by the word 'contains'.

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].