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## EU-25

## Wine

## EU Wine Labeling Requirements

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**Approved by:**

Norval E. Francis, Jr.  
U.S. Mission to the EU

**Prepared by:**

Hilde Brans

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**Report Highlights:**

This report gives an overview of the mandatory information required on wine labels in the EU and of the wine labeling protocol agreed under the US-EU Wine Agreement.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Brussels USEU [BE2]  
[E3]

## EU Wine Labeling Requirements

### Legal Basis

Wine labeling rules are laid down in Annex VII to [Council Regulation 1493/1999](#), the EU's basic wine regulation. [Commission Regulation 753/2002](#) lays down rules for applying the provisions contained in regulation 1493/1999, which relate to the description, designation, presentation and protection of certain wine sector products.

Compulsory information must appear on the front label of the bottle in easily readable, indelible characters, grouped in the same visual field, clearly distinguishable from all other written or graphic content of the labeling. Exceptions to this rule apply to the importer's details, lot mark and allergenic ingredients, which may appear on the back label. Minimum font sizes are defined for the indication of the actual alcoholic strength and the nominal volume.

This report gives an overview of the mandatory information required on wine labels. Regulation 753/2002 and the US-EU Wine Agreement (see US-EU Wine Agreement section of this report) lay down conditions for supplementing the mandatory information with optional information.

### Mandatory Wine Labeling Requirements

(Grape wines other than sparkling wine or aerated sparkling wine)

**For third country wines, with no geographical indication, the following information must appear on the label:**

- The word "wine" supplemented by the name of the country of origin
- Actual alcoholic strength expressed in whole or half unit formats
- Nominal volume
- Lot number (in accordance with Council Directive 89/396/EEC)
- Importer or bottler: "Importer" or "Imported by" (for bottled wines) or "Bottler" or "Bottled by" (when bottling took place in the EU) followed by the name, local administrative area and member state where the importer or bottler is established.
- "Contains sulphites" or "Contains sulphur dioxide" (allergenic ingredients)

Not allowed on this type of wine are the indication of the vine variety and the vintage year.

**For third country wine, with a geographical indication, the mandatory labeling requirements are:**

- The word "wine" supplemented by the name of the country of origin
- The geographical area
- Actual alcoholic strength expressed in whole or half unit formats
- Nominal volume
- Lot number (in accordance with Council Directive 89/396/EEC)
- Importer or bottler: "Importer" or "Imported by" (for bottled wines) or "Bottler" or "Bottled by" (when bottling took place in the EU) followed by the name, local administrative area and member state where the importer or bottler is established.
- "Contains sulphites" or "Contains sulphur dioxide" (allergenic ingredients)

### Prohibited Information on Third Country Wine Labels

- "Table Wine": this term can only be used on wines produced in the EU

- Traditional expressions that are reserved to EU wines (e.g. "Premier cru")
- Geographical indications that the EU considers proprietary (e.g. "Champagne")
- Any reference in descriptive text to EU quality wines

The term "organic wine" is not allowed in the EU, only the expression "Wine made from organic grapes" may be put on wine labels.

### Country of Origin

"United States of America" or "USA" is acceptable.

### Actual Alcoholic Strength

The actual alcoholic strength must be declared in percentage units or half-units, i.e. either as "X% vol." or "X.5% vol.". For example, a wine with an actual alcohol content of 13.2% may be labeled as either 13% or 13.5%. The percentage may be preceded by "actual alcoholic strength", "actual alcohol" or "alc.". The most commonly used format in the EU is "Alc. X% Vol.". The minimum height of the characters used for indicating the actual alcoholic strength should be as follows:

- 5 mm - if the nominal volume is over 100 cl
- 3 mm - if the nominal volume is equal to or less than 100 cl but more than 20 cl
- 2 mm - if the nominal volume is 20 cl or less

### Nominal Volume

The nominal quantity must be expressed in liters, centiliters or milliliters and marked in characters of minimum:

- 6 mm - if the nominal quantity exceeds 100 cl
- 4 mm - if the nominal quantity is equal or less than 100 cl but more than 20 cl
- 3 mm - if the nominal quantity is equal or less than 20 cl but more than 5 cl
- 2 mm - if the nominal quantity is less than 5 cl

### Lot Marking

Wines that are put on the EU market must bear a "lot mark" to identify the lot or batch to which the wine belongs. "Lot" in the wine sector means a quantity of wine that has been produced and/or bottled under nearly identical conditions. The lot mark can be composed of alpha and/or numeric characters and must be preceded by the letter "L" except in cases where it is clearly distinguishable from the other indications on the label. The lot mark can appear anywhere on the bottle, except the cork.

### Allergenic Ingredients

Alcoholic beverages containing sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10 mg/liter must be labeled "contains sulphites" or "contains sulphur dioxide". Replacing the word "sulphites" by "SO<sub>2</sub>" or the E-number (E220) is not allowed. The list of authorized languages for allergen labeling can be consulted in [GAIN report E36066 "Allergen Labeling on Wine – Authorized Languages"](#).

## Wine Agreement Between the U.S. and the EU

On March 10, 2006, the U.S. and the EU signed the "[Agreement between the United States and the European Community on Trade in Wine](#)". This Agreement is the first phase and while it addresses a number of issues between the EU and the U.S., other important issues such as geographical indications will be addressed in the second phase (expected Mid June 2006). The Agreement covers wines with an actual alcohol content of not less than 7% and not more than 22%. Labeling issues are addressed in the "Protocol on Wine Labeling" of the Agreement. Major labeling provisions for U.S. wines include:

- The use of certain regulated terms referred to as "traditional expressions" on U.S. wines exported to the EU (Appendix I of the Agreement)
- EU recognition of U.S. names of viticultural significance as names of origin (Annex V to the Agreement)
- Defining parameters for including optional information on U.S. wine labels

### Traditional Expressions

The "traditional expressions" that the U.S. will be allowed to use under specified conditions are: Chateau, classic, clos, cream, crusted/crusting, fine, late bottled vintage, noble, ruby, superior, sur lie, tawny, vintage and vintage character. These terms may only be used if they have been approved for use on wine labels in the U.S. on a Certificate of Label Approval (COLA).

### Names of Origin

Names of "viticultural significance" listed in Annex V to the Agreement may only be used as U.S. names of origin on wines of the origin indicated by such name. U.S. wine may be labeled with a state or county name of origin listed in Parts B and C of Annex V, provided that at least 75 % of the wine concerned is made from grapes harvested in the named place.

### Optional Labeling Information

All optional information on wine labels must be used in conformity with Part 4 of Title 27 of the US Code of Federal Regulations, as amended, and may not include terms that are the same as names of origin protected in the EU as listed in Annex IV of the Agreement.

Optional particulars that may only be used on U.S. wines that bear a name of origin listed in Annex V are:

- A vintage year
- One or more vine variety names
- A bottling location
- An award, medal or other reference to a competition
- A name of a vineyard
- A term listed in point 1 of Appendix I
- An indication concerning the production method, subject to Appendix II

The term "Estate Bottled" may only be used on wines that bear a name of origin listed in Annex V, Part A of the Agreement.

Wines with or without a name of origin may use the following optional particulars:

- The type of product specified in Appendix III of the Agreement (e.g. dry, medium dry)

- A name, title and address of a legal or natural person that took part in the marketing of the wine
- A specific color. Specific color does not refer to "rosé/pink", "red" or "white" in English or in translations and applies to all other colors.

Vine variety names that may be used as optional particulars are listed in Appendix IV to the Agreement. A single variety may be indicated provided that 75 % of the wine is derived from grapes of that variety and that it determines the character of the wine in accordance with U.S. rules and practices. The names of two or more vine varieties may be indicated on the label, provided that 100 % of the grapes used are of the varieties indicated, although four or more vine variety names may only be mentioned on the back label.

#### Referenced legislation:

- US-EU Wine Agreement:  
[http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document\\_Library/Fact\\_Sheets/2005/asset\\_upload\\_file917\\_8030.pdf](http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2005/asset_upload_file917_8030.pdf)  
or  
[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/L\\_087/L\\_08720060324en00020074.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/L_087/L_08720060324en00020074.pdf)
- Council Regulation 1493/1999 – Common Organization of the Market in Wine  
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/1999/R/01999R1493-20040501-en.pdf>
- Commission Regulation 753/2002 – laying down rules for the applying Council Regulation 1493/1999 as regards the description, designation, presentation and protection of certain wine sector products  
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/2002/R/02002R0753-20050901-en.pdf>
- Commission Regulation – allergen labeling  
[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/L\\_344/L\\_34420041120en00090010.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/L_344/L_34420041120en00090010.pdf)
- Council Directive 89/396/EEC – on indications or marks identifying the lot to which a foodstuff belongs  
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/1989/L/01989L0396-19920311-en.pdf>
- Council Directive 75/106/EEC – on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to the making-up by volume of certain prepackaged liquids  
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/1975/L/01975L0106-20040501-en.pdf>

#### Source(s):

- European Commission
- Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
- U.S. Trade Representative
- U.K. Wine Standards Board

**Visit our website:** our website <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/> provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules and food laws and allows easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information. Information on EU labeling requirements can be found at <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/label.html>; information on the US-EU Wine Agreement can be found at <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/wine.html>. E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@usda.gov

## Related reports from USEU Brussels:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
<a href="#">E36066</a>	Allergen Labeling on Wine – Authorized Languages	4/19/2006
<a href="#">E34093</a>	Allergen Labeling on Wine	11/29/2004
<a href="#">E35162</a>	Food & Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards	8/18/2005
<a href="#">UK6005</a>	Wine - U.K. - Marketing Annual Report	2/5/2006
<a href="#">FR6011</a>	Wine - France – Annual Report	2/15/2006
<a href="#">SP6006</a>	Wine – Spain – Annual Report	2/8/2006
<a href="#">IT6005</a>	Wine – Italy – Annual Report	1/24/2006
<a href="#">SW6001</a>	Wine – Sweden – Annual Report	1/23/2006
These reports can be accessed through our website <a href="http://useu.usmission.gov/agri">http://useu.usmission.gov/agri</a> or through the FAS website <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp">http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp</a> .		