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EU Forces Producer Names Onto Protected Drink Labels

New rules require the responsible producer or operator to appear beside geographical indications on spirits and regional foods.

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A new European labeling rule took effect on Thursday that requires producers of protected food and spirit products to place the name of the producer or operator responsible for the supply chain in the same field of vision as the geographical indication on the package, a change officials say is meant to make origin claims easier to verify and reduce confusion for consumers.

The measure applies to spirit drinks and agricultural products sold under protected designations and protected geographical indications in the European Union. Under Regulation (EU) 2024/1143, the producer’s name can no longer be hidden on a back panel or in a secondary area of the label if the product carries a protected regional seal on the front. The information must be visible at a glance, without turning the bottle or package.

The European Commission has framed the rule as part of a broader effort to strengthen traceability in the bloc’s food and beverage sector. Officials say the change is intended to make it harder for companies to benefit from the reputation of a region while keeping their own identity out of sight. The rule also gives consumers more immediate information about who made or bottled a product, which regulators say can help support trust in premium foods and spirits.

The requirement affects a wide range of products, including spirits such as Cognac, Irish whiskey, grappa and other geographically protected drinks, as well as agricultural goods sold under protected names. For producers, especially larger brands with established packaging designs, the change means redesigning labels so that the producer’s name appears alongside the geographical indication in a single visual field.

The rule also reaches products imported from outside the European Union if they are marketed in the bloc under a protected geographical indication. That means foreign producers seeking access to Europe’s market for protected products must follow the same labeling standard.

To avoid forcing companies to destroy existing packaging, Brussels has allowed products labeled before Thursday to remain on sale until current stocks run out. But any product packaged from today onward must comply with the new rule. Bottles or packages that leave production lines with outdated labels risk administrative penalties and possible withdrawal from the market.

The change comes after two years of preparation under Regulation (EU) 2024/1143, which was adopted as part of a wider overhaul of Europe’s quality policy for food and drink. In Italy, where many protected food names are concentrated, officials and industry groups have described the rule as both an administrative challenge and an

opportunity to reinforce confidence in certified products.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry issued a circular on March 6 to implement the regulation domestically, setting out how producers should present the required information on labels. The ministry said that when several producers are involved in making a certified product, it is enough to identify one entity responsible for the production stage that gives the product its essential characteristics.

Producer groups that oversee protected names also face new obligations under the system. They must ensure that members comply not only with product specifications but also with the new labeling rules tied to visibility and placement. Groups that do not meet representativeness requirements set by the regulation could lose official status.

For consumers, the practical effect is simple: when they pick up a bottle or package carrying a protected European name, they should now be able to see both where it comes from and who stands behind it without searching through fine print.