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E.U. expands Atlantique geographic indication to cover partially de-alcoholized wines

The rule mandates specific label wording and systematic checks for red, rosé and white wines with 6% to 9% alcohol.

Thursday, September 24, 2026



The European Union has published a notice confirming an approved amendment to the product specification for the French protected geographical indication, or PGI, “Atlantique,” allowing the category to include partially de-alcoholized wines and making

specific labeling and control rules mandatory for those products.

The notice, published in the Official Journal of the European Union, says the producer group for the Atlantique PGI requested the change so the specification could reflect shifting consumer behavior and demand for products with less alcohol. According to the document, the group cited stronger health awareness, greater concern about the effects of alcohol, and a broader move toward healthier lifestyles in France as reasons behind a drop in consumption and the push to add partially de-alcoholized wines to the PGI.

Under the amendment, the Atlantique PGI may now cover partially de-alcoholized red, rosé and white still wines. The updated specification sets a minimum actual alcoholic strength by volume of between 6% and 9% for those wines. The existing still wines under the Atlantique PGI continue to have a minimum actual alcoholic strength by volume of 9%.

The amendment also adds presentation and labeling rules. For wines sold under the Atlantique PGI that have undergone partial dealcoholization, the words “Partially de-alcoholised wine” must appear on the label. The text also adds a new declaration requirement for wines intended for dealcoholization and says those wines, along with the finished partially de-alcoholized wines, must be subject to systematic checks.

That combination of new label language, declarations and controls could matter quickly for wineries, bottlers and compliance teams in the beverage sector, especially in the reduced-alcohol wine segment, because it changes what must appear on the bottle and what must be documented and verified before the wine reaches the market.

The EU notice says the grapes for these wines must be harvested within the Atlantique PGI geographical area and that the partially de-alcoholized wines must be produced, developed and dealcoholized within that area or the area in immediate proximity to it. The wines must be made from grape varieties already listed in the Atlantique specification, and they remain subject to the same maximum yield as other wines under the PGI, set at 120 hl/ha.

The document states that only dealcoholization processes authorized by legislation may be used. It also says the organoleptic description of the wines has been updated to reflect the addition of the partially de-alcoholized products, and that the link between the wines and the geographical area has been revised to include both the characteristics of these wines and the rationale connecting them to the area through reputation and origin.

French authorities said the amendment qualifies as a standard amendment under EU rules, rather than a Union amendment. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, through its Directorate-General for the Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises, told the EU that the application meets the requirements of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) 2024/1143.

According to the notice, the French authorities said the change did not involve any of the situations that would require treatment as a Union amendment. In particular, they said it does not change the name or the use of the name of the geographical indication, does not alter the category of products designated by the indication in a way that would trigger that higher-level process, and does not impose further restrictions on the marketing of the product.

The publication also includes other changes to the Atlantique specification. Two new grape varieties have been added: UD-31.125, known as Merlot Khorus, and UD-55.100, known as Sauvignon Rytos. The notice says those additions were made in response to climate change and consumer expectations.

In addition, the contact details for France’s National Institute of Origin and Quality, known as INAO, have been updated. The municipalities included in the geographical area and in the area in immediate proximity have also been updated to reflect the 2025 Official Geographic Code. The notice says that administrative update does not change the boundaries of the PGI area or the nearby area covered by the specification.

The Atlantique PGI falls under Combined Nomenclature code 2204, which covers wine of fresh grapes, including fortified wines, and grape must other than that of heading 2009. The notice describes wines bearing the Atlantique protected geographical indication as red, rosé and white still wines. It says the white and rosé wines express

freshness and the aromas of the grape varieties used to make them, and that they show finesse.

For producers operating in the European wine market, the change is another sign of how geographical indications are being adapted to lower-alcohol categories without removing origin-based protections. It also suggests that reduced-alcohol wines sold under recognized regional specifications may face more detailed product definitions and tighter verification requirements as regulators and producer groups try to match changing drinking habits with traceability and labeling rules.