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EU Packaging Rules Force Italian Wineries to Trace Years-Old Bottles and Corks

Producers of long-aged wines say documentation for packaging bought years earlier could raise compliance risks before August 2026.

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Italian wineries that keep wine in aging for long periods are facing new questions under the European Union’s packaging and packaging waste regulation, as the new rules extend documentation and traceability duties to bottles, corks, labels and other components that may have been purchased years earlier.

Unione Italiana Vini said the issue is becoming more urgent because the PPWR, the EU regulation on packaging and packaging waste, is generally applicable from August 12, 2026. The group said the measure introduces obligations that affect the wine supply chain, including restrictions on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in food-contact packaging, limits for some heavy metals, and conformity documentation requirements.

For wineries, the practical problem is not only future purchases. It is also how to reconstruct the characteristics and origin of packaging materials already used for wines that remain in cellars for years before release. That can include bottles, closures, labels and outer packaging bought under older commercial arrangements, sometimes from suppliers that have since changed products, internal systems or ownership.

The issue was outlined in reporting published Wednesday by Il Corriere Vinicolo, the industry publication of Unione Italiana Vini. The publication said wineries may need to gather declarations and technical information from suppliers in order to complete the documentation now required under the European rules. It said the burden is especially sensitive for wines intended for long maturation, where the time gap between packaging procurement and market release can be significant.

That timing matters for the beverage industry beyond wine alone because long production cycles can make compliance more difficult once new packaging rules take effect. In wine, and potentially in other drinks sold after extended storage or aging, producers may have to manage older packaging records and supplier certifications long after the original purchase. That could create extra administrative work and raise compliance risks if documents are incomplete.

The new framework appears to be raising open questions for producers and suppliers alike. According to Unione Italiana Vini, wineries are trying to understand how to obtain reliable attestations for each packaging component when supplier relationships,

traceability tools or product specifications may have changed over time. The publication also pointed to unresolved issues involving bottle weight, environmental labeling and rules aimed at reducing empty space in packaging.

The concerns are not limited to glass or direct food-contact materials. On the same pages, Il Corriere Vinicolo also carried comments from Andrea Mecarozzi, president of the Italian association of box manufacturers, Associazione Italiana Scatolifici. He said corrugated cardboard already shows strong results in recovery and use of recycled fiber, but he also warned that the new procedures increase documentary work for suppliers.

That added paperwork could be felt across the supply chain because packaging manufacturers may be asked to provide more detailed information to winery customers, including small operators covered by the microenterprise provisions of the regulation. Mecarozzi identified batch traceability as one of the points that still needs clarification. He also raised the possibility of simplifying declarations for packaging families, a change that could reduce repetitive administrative work if regulators allow it.

The source did not indicate that final guidance has resolved those points. Instead, it described a regulatory transition in which producers and packaging suppliers are still trying to understand how broad the record-keeping burden will be and how far it will extend to stock already in use. For wineries with long-aging wines, that uncertainty is especially relevant because inventory can remain in the cellar well beyond the date when the regulation became generally applicable.

The Italian wine sector is now preparing for the first phase of implementation. Unione Italiana Vini said it and ANFORMAPE will examine the initial compliance duties in a webinar for UIV members scheduled for Monday, October 5, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event is expected to focus on the early steps companies must take under the new rules.

The debate reflects a broader tension in European packaging policy. Regulators are trying to tighten health, environmental and traceability standards, while producers are warning that compliance can become complex when supply chains are fragmented and

product cycles are long. In wine, where a bottle may be filled and then held for years before sale, packaging documentation is no longer only a purchasing matter. It can become part of long-term inventory management and legal compliance.

For Italian wineries, the immediate task is likely to be practical rather than theoretical: checking whether records exist for packaging already in use, asking suppliers for declarations that meet the new standard, and identifying gaps before wines aged in the cellar move to market. For suppliers of bottles, closures, labels and cartons, the regulation may require more detailed responses to customers and more structured systems for tracking batches and materials.

As the rules begin to be applied, the sector is watching to see whether authorities provide further clarification on documentation, lot traceability and simplified declarations. Until then, wineries with long-aging wines appear to face the most difficult question raised by the new regulation: how to prove compliance for packaging components acquired in the past, under systems that were not designed for today’s requirements.