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Spain approves new rules for interregional groups managing protected food and drink names

Recognition will depend on majority support from registered operators, with councils gaining clearer authority to impose mandatory contributions

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Spain has approved a new legal framework for the bodies that manage protected food and drink names spanning more than one autonomous community, updating national rules to match European standards on producer groups for geographical indications.

Royal Decree 1019/2026, dated Wednesday, November 18, was published in the Official State Gazette on Friday, November 20. The measure, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a new system for recognizing producer groups linked to supra-autonomous protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications, known in Spain as DOP and IGP.

The change affects denominations whose production area or structure extends beyond a single regional government. In those cases, the decree reorganizes how regulatory councils and similar bodies are recognized, how they represent registered operators, what powers they can exercise and how they are financed.

According to the text published in the gazette, recognition of these producer groups will be tied to majority requirements among the operators registered under each denomination. The decree also provides for mandatory financial contributions from registered operators, a point that gives these bodies a clearer legal basis for funding their activity.

The new rules are aimed at aligning Spain’s internal system with the European framework that has strengthened the role of recognized producer groups in managing and defending geographical indications. Those groups can play a central role in protecting the name, monitoring its use, promoting the product and representing producers before public authorities. Until now, the legal treatment of supra-autonomous councils had been shaped by earlier national rules that no longer fully matched the current European model.

In practice, the decree resets the conditions under which these entities can act on behalf of a designation that crosses regional borders. That matters for sectors where certification, origin control and collective promotion are organized through councils or similar bodies rather than by individual companies. The new structure is expected to define more clearly which operators have a voice in governance and which obligations come with being registered under a protected name.

The measure is especially relevant for beverages because some wines, spirits and other protected drink products rely on interregional denominations or on organizations with functions similar to those now covered by the decree. For those operators, the new rules could affect how councils are formed, how they collect funds, how they represent bottlers and producers and how they carry out control and promotion work under a common protected label.

Protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications are among the main quality schemes used in the European Union to link a product’s reputation or characteristics to a specific place. In Spain, those labels are widely used across agriculture and food, including olive oil, cheese, ham, wine and spirits. When a denomination extends over more than one autonomous community, the governance model becomes more complex because it must fit both national law and the division of powers between the central state and regional administrations.

That is the gap the new decree is designed to address. By creating a specific recognition regime for supra-autonomous producer groups, the government is trying to provide a uniform legal framework for entities that operate across regional lines. The text also responds to a broader European push to give recognized groups a stronger role in safeguarding geographical indications in the market.

The financing provision is one of the most consequential parts of the reform. Regulatory councils and equivalent bodies often depend on fees or levies to pay for certification, promotion, administration and defense of the designation. By expressly allowing mandatory contributions from registered operators, the decree appears to give those bodies a firmer footing to sustain those functions, although the concrete impact will depend on how each denomination applies the new rules.

The majority requirement is also likely to shape internal balances within each designation. Because recognition depends on support from registered operators, the rule may influence how producers, processors and marketers organize themselves and how representative a council must be before it can exercise collective functions. That could become an important issue in denominations where different parts of the supply chain have competing interests.

The publication in the Official State Gazette marks the formal entry of the measure into Spain’s legal order. The decree adds a new layer of clarity for denominations that do not fit neatly within a single regional jurisdiction and gives the state a more updated tool to regulate their governance under European law.

For producers and companies working under supra-autonomous protected names, the practical effects will center on representation, obligations and funding. For the administration, the decree sets the rules for determining which bodies can be officially recognized as the legitimate producer group for a protected denomination that crosses regional borders. And for sectors such as beverages, where collective reputation and origin control are central to market value, the reform could reshape how those common institutions operate.