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The European Union strengthens protection for its wine heritage

Safeguarding tradition and quality in european wine

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In a move that marks a significant chapter in the world of European wine, the European Union has recently taken decisive steps to reinforce the regulations surrounding the Denominations of Origin of wine. This development, emerging from a legislative proposal by the European Commission in March 2022, culminated in a favorable vote by the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture on December 11, following the Special Committee on Agriculture's approval on November 27.

The European Federation of Origin Wines (EFOW) has warmly welcomed these advancements, acknowledging their profound impact on the wine sector at both European and national levels. This enthusiasm is mirrored in the sector, recognizing the opportunity presented by this revision to strengthen and clarify the existing regulatory framework. Bernard Farges, the President of EFOW, highlights the significance of this reform, emphasizing its benefits not just in legislative terms, but also in fostering trust between producers and European institutions.

David Palacios, leading CECRV, points out the crucial role of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in spearheading and coordinating the positions of major EU wine-producing countries, ensuring that the policy of geographical indications remains a cornerstone of European agricultural policy.

Key features of this reform include the preservation of the wine sector's unique aspects, maintaining the link between wine Denominations of Origin and the regulation for the common organization of agricultural markets, a crucial element of the Common Agricultural Policy. A notable first is the introduction of a definition of sustainability for products with geographical indication, marking a significant stride in terms of environmental and social responsibility.

Another critical aspect is the protection against the misuse of geographical indications on country domain websites such as .es, .fr, .it, .pt, and others. This measure aims to prevent market confusion and misunderstandings in the increasingly important digital distribution and marketing of wine. The reform also strengthens the recognition and competencies of producer groups, particularly the regulatory councils in Spain, for the effective management of geographical indications.

The approved text clearly defines the roles of both the Member States and European institutions in managing the system of geographical indications and their specifications. This clarity is a crucial step towards a consistent and effective application of the regulations across the European Union.

Additionally, a Political Declaration annexed to the reform mandates the European Commission to annually inform co-legislators about any external assistance received in its administrative tasks related to the management of geographical indications. This

transparency is crucial for maintaining a fair and equitable system benefiting both producers and consumers.

This set of reforms represents a significant advancement in the regulation of wine geographical indications in the European Union. It not only strengthens the existing legal framework but also opens new avenues for sustainable development in the sector, ensuring the protection of the traditions and quality that distinguish European wines with Denominations of Origin.