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European Parliament Approves Mandatory Labeling for Reduced-Alcohol Wines

New regulations aim to boost transparency for consumers and expand export opportunities for independent wine producers across Europe.

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The European Parliament has approved a new set of wine regulations aimed at supporting both consumers and independent wine producers. The vote, held on February 10, introduced mandatory labeling for reduced-alcohol wines and measures to

help small growers access new export markets. Lawmakers from liberal and democratic parties welcomed the changes, describing them as a win for transparency and competitiveness in the European wine sector.

Under the new rules, any wine with an alcohol content of 0.5% or higher that is at least 30% below the standard strength for its category must be labeled as "reduced alcohol." This requirement is designed to give consumers clear and accurate information about what they are buying, especially as more people seek lower-alcohol options for health reasons. The move addresses concerns about misleading marketing practices and aligns with growing demand for healthier lifestyle choices.

Charles Goerens, a member of the Renew Europe group and shadow rapporteur on the legislation, said the package meets two key priorities: providing honest labels for consumers and giving independent producers the tools they need to compete globally. He emphasized that the wine sector is vital to rural economies, cultural heritage, and international trade across Europe.

The legislation also includes measures to help independent wine growers expand into markets outside the European Union. Funding for promotional campaigns in third countries will increase, creating new opportunities for exports. The rules introduce more flexible payment schemes to help producers manage overproduction, market disruptions, and challenges related to climate change.

In addition to export support, the package allocates extra funding to combat plant diseases and pests that threaten vineyards. Independent growers will have greater representation in decision-making processes under the new framework.

The changes come at a time when European wine producers face uncertainty due to shifting global trade dynamics and environmental pressures. Lawmakers say these reforms are intended to protect both producers and consumers while ensuring that European wines remain competitive on the world stage.

The new regulations are expected to take effect later this year, following final approval by EU member states. Wine industry groups have expressed cautious optimism about the changes, noting that clear labeling and expanded export support could help stabilize the sector during a period of significant transition.