

## Abstract

### Weinakademiker Thesis

#### Ingredients and nutrition declaration on wines in the European Union: historical background and modern developments

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In 2017 European Commission obliged the producers to come up with a proposal for self-regulatory measures on this subject. This proposal was created and the final decision should be taken by the EC in summer 2021 and be introduced by the end of 2022. The topic started to be actively discussed in the beginning of 2021 when several professional webinars, including one by the Institute of Masters of Wine, were organised.

This work reviews a historical aspect of ingredients labelling, compare the legislations in different countries, define the terms used in ingredients labelling and compare the arguments of those who support and who stand against the new rules. The question is complex, so the points of view of scientists, producers, consumers, retailers, and sommeliers are weighed and discussed to understand it thoroughly. Mostly the EU situation is reviewed, though, the new European laws will affect other counties as well, directly – through the necessity of ingredients labelling for the wines destined for the EU market, or indirectly – through OIV resolutions and recommendations.

The self-regulatory proposal created by the industry and the detailed annex concerning wine are thoroughly explained and discussed in the work. Many experts note its compromising nature. The document tries to meet the needs of consumers while taking into account the interest of wine producers. The most contradictory part concerns the possibility of off-label ingredients disclosure. In practice it means using QR-codes for providing the mandatory information. Many find this approach unacceptable as it contradicts the principle of easy-to-reach declaration accessible to all customers. The final decision should be taken by the European Commission. There are no doubts that ingredients labelling becomes mandatory in the EU. The new rules will have a high impact on the industry in a short- and long-term perspective.

Consumers want transparency. Wine is a special product that has an enormous added value, that's why the expectations from producers are higher than in other food sectors. The wine industry needs to take into account all the recent trends: health concerns, environmental issues, wider access to information through the internet. There is still some resistance to transparency in the industry that should be overcome.

Extensive ingredients labelling is the future. It will require a lot of effort from the whole industry. One thing is to put ingredients on the label, another is to check and control them, otherwise, the risk of selective labelling and a certain greenwashing is high.

Consumers need to be educated on basic wine chemistry and explained not to be scared by a number of chemical substances on the label. Losing the image of wine as a healthy product is real but not because of ingredients labelling but because of non-disclosure. Will the wines with

a shorter list of ingredients be favoured more by the consumers? Not likely, considering the usual, unconventional profile of many low-intervention wines.

The demand for transparency will grow when Generation Z will grow its purchasing power. These are the people interested in the carbon and water footprint of the product they consume, sustainable production methods, and the overall environmental commitment of the company. The wine industry should be prepared for these questions. Maybe, certifications will play a more important role in the environmental and sustainability controls.

More research is expected on wine-derived allergies and intolerances. Many people claim that they are allergic to tannins or sulphur but the wine industry is not investing enough to study them.

The wine sector is under great pressure these days. As WHO considers alcohol, including wine, in general, an extremely dangerous substance and is working hard to reduce world consumption as much as possible, the industry should itself proactively promote moderate consumption. Producers should give clear and trustworthy information about the ingredients, alcohol level, and allergens, mentioning the dangers of alcohol abuse. This is the only way to retain consumers in a highly competitive beverage market.