

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT EU ACT INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Date: 26 June 2025

DSC REF: DSC/11a/2025

Proposed Replacement EU Act

[Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Regulations \(EU\) No 1308/2013, \(EU\) 2021/2115 and \(EU\) No 251/2014 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products](#)
[Summary of the Act](#) (COM/2025/137, published 28.03.25)

This Regulation proposes to amend parts of:

[Regulation \(EU\) 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations \(EEC\) No 922/72, \(EEC\) No 234/79, \(EC\) No 1037/2001 and \(EC\) No 1234/2007.](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 251/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the definition, description, presentation and labelling of aromatised wine products and repealing Council Regulation \(EEC\) No 1601/91](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy \(CAP Strategic Plans\) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund \(EAGF\) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development \(EAFRD\) and repealing Regulations \(EU\) No 1305/2013 and \(EU\) No 1307/2013](#)

Two of the proposed amendments are listed in Annex 2 of the Windsor Framework.

Amendments to **Regulation (EU) 2021/2115** are not relevant to the Windsor Framework.

Summary of the Act

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 will be amended by this proposal in line with the recommendations of the High-Level Group (HLG) on the management of the

production potential, making it easier for Member States to address or prevent risk of surplus production capacity in certain areas and market segments. This proposed regulation also amends the current rules on labelling to facilitate the production of wine products with a lower alcohol content and to harmonise the use of terms used to describe low alcohol wine and alcohol-free wine.

Further changes will permit the Commission to bring forward proposals to harmonise rules on the electronic labelling of ingredients and nutrition information on wine.

Regulation (EU) No 251/2014 is also amended to take the amendments to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 concerning wines with a lower alcohol content into account, in order to allow the production of aromatised wine products based on such wines with a lower alcohol content.

To ensure that consumers are correctly informed of the nature of aromatised wine products with a lower alcoholic content, the labelling rules are also amended in line with the ones for grapevine products.

Additional proposed amendments to **Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013** and **(EU) No 251/2014** are updates to rules for vine plantings and wine production which will not impact Northern Ireland as there is no wine production here.

Department(s) Responsible

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Initial Assessment of Impact

It is not likely that the proposed amendments would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

It is not likely that not applying the replacement EU act would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

There will be no impact to Northern Ireland as a result of proposed EU updates to support vineyards and wine makers as there are no wine producers in Northern Ireland.

The proposed changes to marketing standards rules aimed at harmonising the labelling of alcohol-free wine and the e-labelling of wine sector products, and measures relating to the marketing of aromatised wine will result in divergence from the rules applicable elsewhere in the UK.

However, we believe the impact on NI will be minimal, as both e-labelling arrangements and rules for producing and marketing partially de-alcoholised and de-alcoholised wine already exist in NI. These changes would not significantly add to the existing divergence.

The Regulations being amended by this proposal are disapplied by Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2023/1231. This means that goods can move from Great Britain to Northern Ireland via the Northern Ireland Retail Movement Scheme without having to meet these new standards. Movements under the scheme will therefore be entirely unaffected by this Regulation.

Moreover, these measures will not have any impact on the movement of qualifying Northern Ireland goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain. Such goods will also continue to benefit from the market access principles set out in the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 and enjoy unfettered access.

UK Government Explanatory Memorandum

An [Explanatory Memorandum](#) was published on this issue by Defra on the 27 May 2025.

Analysis by the European Commission on its Impact Assessment

The European Commission did not conduct an impact assessment in view of the urgency to act to respond to the pressing challenges that the wine sector is currently facing. The costs and benefits of the initiative will be assessed in a Staff Working Document to be published within 3 months of the adoption of the Regulation.

While the Union remains the global leader in wine production, consumption, and exported value, societal and demographic changes are impacting the amount, quality, and types of wine consumed. Wine consumption in the Union has been steadily declining and is at its lowest level of the past three decades, while traditional export markets for Union wines are impacted by a combination of de-consumption and geopolitical factors, leading to more uncertain export patterns.

In addition, production is becoming unpredictable, given the wine sector's vulnerability to climate change. With the resulting oversupply putting pressure on prices, winegrowers have less income to invest in their business and low financial reserves they can fall back on if one of the more frequent and often localised severe weather events hits their region.

The EU High Level Group on Wine Policy (HLG) was established to discuss these challenges and identify possible opportunities for the Union wine sector.

The HLG was made up of Directors-General of the agricultural ministries of Union Member States and, during the first meeting, representatives of the major stakeholder organisations were also invited to present their analysis of the situation. The discussions centred around how to better support the sector in view of the current structural challenges by managing the production potential, enhancing competitiveness and exploring new market opportunities.

After four meetings, the Group endorsed a document with policy recommendations in December 2024. The recommendations were broadly welcomed by stakeholders and by MEPs in the meeting of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI) of 13 January 2025.

In view of the crisis the Union wine sector is currently facing, the European Commission has suggested that the measures should enter into force as soon as possible, except for the new labelling rules, which need to apply later to give producers time to adapt and allow for the sale of products labelled according to the previously applicable rules until the stock is exhausted. The wine market observatory is continuously monitoring the supply and demand of different types of wine on the Union market, and it will provide an insight on the developments of the market segment of low-alcohol wines, the development of which this proposed regulation aims to support.

If the Commission does not act quickly, the situation will deteriorate further, with irreversible consequences for many rural areas in terms of abandoned vineyards and the loss of growth and employment opportunities.

The Commission ran an [8-week consultation from 07 April until 02 June 2025 via the 'Have Your Say' portal](#). UK stakeholders were able to respond to that consultation.

- A total of 23 responses were received by the Commission's closing date;
- No response(s) were received from Irish stakeholders; and
- No responses were received from UK stakeholders.

A summary of key points raised in stakeholder responses is included at Appendix 1.

Stakeholders broadly welcomed the Commission's proposals with very few concerns about the technical changes which will apply in Northern Ireland via Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 or Regulation (EU) No 251/2014.

The Commission is expected to publish its own summary of the consultation in due course.

Departmental Engagement

There has been limited engagement with Defra regarding the preparation of the DAERA Impact Assessment and the Defra Explanatory Memorandum for the proposed Regulation. Policy officials will continue to engage as the Commission's plans develop and further information is released.

Appendix 1 – Have Your Say consultation summary

The Commission ran an [8-week consultation from 07 April until 02 June 2025 via the 'Have Your Say' portal](#).

UK stakeholders were able to respond to that consultation.

- No responses were received from stakeholders in the UK or Ireland.
- 23 responses were received in total, with 10 responses from business associations, 5 from public authorities, 3 from EU citizens, 2 from non-governmental organisations, 1 from a trade union, 1 from a company/business, and 1 other.
- 5 responses came from Belgium, 4 each from Spain, Germany and France, 3 from Italy and 1 response each from Argentina, Finland and Estonia.

A brief summary of responses regarding the changes around labelling, which will apply in Northern Ireland:

- Respondents welcomed the proposal to update and clarify terminology used to describe low alcohol and alcohol-free wine which will ensure consistency and avoid confusion. There was some concern that the proposed terms could be ambiguous or confusing.
- Several respondents pointed out that the term "alcohol light" could also be taken to refer to nutrition or sugar content. These concerns are not expected to pose a problem in Northern Ireland.
- Several respondents asked for clarity around the proposed definition of "alcohol-light" as defined as wine with an actual strength above 0.5% and at least 30% below the minimum actual strength of the category. There was concern about how to label wine which would be dealcoholised to below the minimum strength for the category but not by 30%.
- Respondents were supportive of the proposal to enable the Commission to update electronic labelling (e.g. QR codes) and supported the proposed introduction of a "language free" system of symbols and pictograms. A harmonised system will provide clarity to producers and improve information accessibility. One health organisation responded by urging that electronic labelling would not replace physical labelling for health information.
- Several respondents expressed support for the updates to aromatised wine production, there were a few expressions of support specifically for the updates that would improve arrangements for low alcohol and alcohol-free sparkling wine.
- Other labelling concerns raised included calls for an exemption for labelling requirements for EU wines exported to third countries, clarification that mandatory particulars need only appear once, and a request for a clear transition to the new regulations. Additionally, there were concerns about the proposed translations of the low alcohol terms into other European languages.