

PUBLISHED REPLACEMENT EU ACT ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

DSC REF: DSC/06/2026

Date: 27 February 2026

Department: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Published Amending EU Act

[Regulation \(EU\) 2026/471 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 February 2026 amending Regulations \(EU\) No 1308/2013, \(EU\) No 251/2014 and \(EU\) 2021/2115 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products and Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1143 as regards certain labelling rules for spirit drinks.](#)

PE/65/2025/REV/1

OJ L, 2026/471, 26.2.2026

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](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations \(EU\) No 1308/2013, \(EU\) 2019/787 and \(EU\) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation \(EU\) No 1151/2012](#)

Three 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 Act 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 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 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 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.

Updates to the Act since the initial Impact Assessment

In December 2025, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament reached provisional agreement on the legislative text, which introduces several amendments to the original proposal. On 10 February 2026, the text was adopted by Parliament and on 24 February 2026, the Act was adopted. The Act was published in the Official Journal of the EU on the 26 February 2026.

Most of the amendments to Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) No 251/2014 relate to rules on wine production such as authorisation for vine plantings. These changes will not affect Northern Ireland as there is no wine production here.

A small number of updates, primarily concerning labelling proposals, will be applicable in Northern Ireland. These include introducing the term “low-alcohol”, instead of the previously proposed “alcohol-light”, to describe wine and aromatised wine between 0.5% alcohol by volume (ABV) and at least 30% below

the minimum actual alcohol strength of the category before dealcoholisation. A further update clarifies that mandatory particulars are only required to appear once on the label.

An amendment has been included that gives the Commission powers to adopt a delegated act concerning rules on optional terms on trademarks and commercial names referring to a holding in the wine sector. This is a new addition; it does not bring forward any change at this stage but provides the Commission with the powers to bring forward change in the future should it choose to do so.

Paragraph (20) in the recital states “coupage” (blending) as a method to produce partially de-alcoholised wine should be permitted. This creates no immediate change but suggests the intent of the Commission to endeavour to make the amendment in the future.

An update to (EU) 251/2014 states that certain sales denominations, such as “Sangria” or “Pelin” shall not be translated.

The updated Act also introduces an amendment to (EU) 2024/1143. Spirit drinks with a geographical indication are often reliant on complex supply chains involving several operators performing different production stages. Arrangements that rely on flexible sourcing are very common. The specific labelling obligation for spirit drinks laid down in Article 37(5) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143, requiring the indication of the producer’s name in the same field of vision as the geographical indication, has been shown not to fit the structure of most of the spirit drinks’ supply chain well. To avoid disruption of established practices and imposing disproportionate burdens on operators in this sector, especially on small and medium-sized producers, it is appropriate to remove that obligation.

Upcoming Delegated and Implementing Acts

On 18 February, “Have Your Say” notices were issued for six proposed delegated and implementing regulations relating to the wine sector. These include measures setting down rules on the electronic labelling of wine and aromatised wine, which were enabled by the new Act. Additional regulations are proposed covering wine making treatments, the revisions of rules and procedures for traditional terms, and new rules for vineyard plantings. These regulations are planned for Quarter 4, 2026. No further details are available at this stage.

Department(s) Responsible

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Assessment of Impact

It remains the view of officials that 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 also remains the view of officials that it is not likely that not applying the amending 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 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 Act 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. An updated version of the Explanatory Memorandum is being drafted by Defra and is expected to be shared with the Committee prior to the Committee's review of this Impact Assessment.

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 wine package was assessed in a Staff Working Document which was published on 28 July 2025.

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.

In July 2025, The Commission Staff Working Document laid out the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of the proposed Regulation to the wine sector, while also noting that a precise quantification of the impacts of these measures was not feasible.

The *Wine Package* is expected to modernise the EU wine sector by improving market stability, supporting innovation, and reducing administrative burdens. Across the supply chain, measures are designed to reduce volatility, encourage long-term investment, and improve responsiveness to changing consumer demand, particularly for low- and non-alcoholic products. Public administrations are expected to benefit from simpler and more flexible regulatory tools, especially in crisis situations.

Consumers would benefit from a wider range of wine products, including low and non-alcoholic wines, which will be more clearly labelled and regulated. This is a response to increased demand for products with reduced alcohol content, or with no alcohol at all. The change will make it easier for consumers to identify the products that match their preferences and to moderate their alcohol intake if they wish, without foregoing the experience of wine consumption.

The standardisation of electronic labels (QR codes) would reduce the need for multiple labels for different markets. This will benefit wine producers and also retailers, who will face fewer compliance-related queries.

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.

Departmental Engagement

Regarding this specific Regulation, officials have engaged on an ad hoc basis with Defra;

- when first notified of the EU proposals;
- during the preparation of the initial UK Government EM; and
- during the preparation of the initial DAERA Impact Assessment

Officials also engage in a monthly policy group meeting with policy leads in Defra, Scottish Government and Welsh Government discussing spirit drinks, wine and cider.

Officials have re-engaged with Defra following the publication of the Act.

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.