

From 2016, new rules for viticulture enter into force in the EU

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In order to support the growth of the EU's competitiveness in the viticulture sector, a new vine planting authorization scheme will be introduced from next year. The new scheme for issuing vine planting authorizations is in accordance with Chapter 3 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organization of the markets in agricultural products. Based on the actually planted areas in each EU member state, a 1% increase will be granted in the period from 2016 to 2030, a move expected to prevent the excessively rapid growth of vine plantings on the old continent while simultaneously increasing viticultural potential. This 1% increase from the actual production potential (the actual area planted with wine grapevines) means that if Bulgaria currently has 600 thousand hectares of vineyards, as indicated by data from the Executive Agency for Vine and Wine (EAVW), then automatically from January 1, 2016, our country will gain the opportunity to plant

new 600 thousand decares. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that by the end of this year, all landowners engaged in grape and/or wine production purchase planting rights.

Planting Rights

Each EU member state has specific quotas, which in Bulgaria's case amount to 800 thousand decares. The actual area currently planted with vineyards is 600 thousand decares. It is precisely the difference between the legally allocated area and the current state that determines the so-called "rights from the national reserve," which can only be used until the end of the year. If the quota cannot be fulfilled, the number of decares included in it will be lost. After this period, these rights cannot be transferred, reassigned, or traded.

The cost for the right to plant one decare of vineyards is a symbolic 1.50 BGN. Possession of a form of land ownership – own, leased, or rented – is mandatory. Until the end of this year, the purchase of these rights is carried out at the Executive Agency for Vine and Wine. This provides the opportunity to apply for European funds. The rights are valid for two years. This right is later converted into a planting authorization. Once it expires, the rights are lost. The European Commission will subsidize all farmers who decide to take this step, but again the deadline is until the end of December 2015. After that, rights can be purchased, but at one's own expense. Therefore, Krasimir Koev, Director of the Executive Agency for Vine and Wine, urges owners of vineyard plots or holders of agricultural land with an interest in the wine business to hurry and take advantage of the opportunity presented to them.