

The qualities of wines will be regulated by a new European law

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A new law, prepared by the Council of Ministers to ensure the quality of wines and spirit drinks, has been released for public consultation until 29 September. Under the draft law, the territory of the country will have five geographical wine-growing regions and seven types of fruit rakia, produced and labelled in accordance with European requirements.

A key point in the proposal for the new law is the controlled and limited planting of new vineyards. According to European standards, this approach can preserve the quality of wine both in Bulgaria and in Europe. The new EU system for the common organisation of the markets in agricultural products provides for limiting the number of vineyards and regulating the requirements for wines with protected designation of origin. The Wine and Spirit Drinks Act aims to establish a clear regulatory framework and prevent fraudulent practices.

The control and issuance of permits for new plantings and replanting will be carried out by the Executive Agency on Vine and Wine, which may also order the grubbing-up of illegal areas. Under its jurisdiction, compliance with deadlines and the size of designated areas will be monitored. It is envisaged that permits for new plantings will be limited to only up to 1% of the existing areas in the preceding year. The period of application of the permit regime for vineyards in the Community has been in force since the beginning of this year and will apply until the end of 2030. With the help of a vineyard register, it will be monitored whether all requirements are being complied with.

The requirements for wines with protected designation of origin are regulated. The draft law provides a definition not only for traditional rakias, mint liqueur and mastika, but also for fruit wines and types of vinegar, including balsamic vinegar.

The new law divides Bulgaria into five geographical wine-growing regions – Northern “Danubian Plain”, Eastern “Black Sea”, Sub-Balkan “Rose Valley”, Southern “Thracian Lowland” and Southwestern “Struma Valley”.

In the definition of rakia it is stated that among the areas with protected designation are Novo Selo, Suhindol, Nikopol, Euxinograd, Sliven, Lyubimets and Parvenets. Fruit rakias may be only plum, apple, apricot, pear, peach, cherry and raspberry.