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Two new interventions in the Strategic Plan will give a boost to the development of the winegrowing and winemaking sector in the country

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The main framework set by the state for the development of the viticulture and winemaking sector in our country is the National Strategy for the Development of Viticulture and Winemaking (2005–2025) in the Republic of Bulgaria. The objective of the strategy is to expand the market for Bulgarian wines in the country and abroad and to achieve a sustainable presence in market niches for quality wines in markets with established gastronomic habits and lifestyle. Therefore, a key pillar for the development of the viticulture and winemaking sector is the establishment of a modern structure of the sector and the strengthening of its competitive advantages.

The current National Support Programme for the Wine Sector of Bulgaria for the period 2019–2023 includes several specific measures, which provide opportunities, for example, for activities such as restructuring and conversion of existing vineyards, as well as modernization with drip irrigation, supporting structures and replacement of the varietal composition.

A significant part of the programme focuses on increasing the recognition and prestige of Bulgarian wines with PDO/PGI, of varietal wines without PDO/PGI, including wines produced by organic production methods, which should lead to increased interest in them on the part of consumers in the EU and in third countries. The support is 90% financed with European funds. The programme operates through several measures:

Measure “Restructuring and conversion of vineyards”, which provides opportunities for restructuring and conversion of existing vineyards, as well as modernization with drip irrigation, supporting structures and replacement of the varietal composition.

Measure “Promotion in third countries” is applied for the promotion of wines, including certified organic wines, with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and for varietal wines without PDO/PGI.

Support under Measure “Investments in enterprises” covers activities aimed at implementing investments for the improvement of tangible and intangible assets – processing facilities and/or infrastructure of enterprises in the viticulture and winemaking sector.

Under Measure “Harvest insurance”, support is provided for the insurance of harvests from vineyards with wine grape varieties against adverse climatic conditions equated to natural disasters, such as frost, storm, hail, ice, heavy or torrential rain, severe drought that has destroyed more than 30 percent of the average yield, damage caused by plant diseases or pest infestations and losses caused by animals.

In September 2022, Measure “Information provision in Member States” was also launched, which is applied to inform consumers about the responsible consumption of wine and the risks associated with harmful alcohol consumption and/or the European Union scheme for PDO and PGI with regard to the specific quality, reputation or other characteristics of wine attributable to its specific geographical environment or origin.

The new interventions – wine tourism and investments in environmental facilities

At present, the Strategic Plan of Bulgaria is still being revised, and it is expected that by the end of the year it will be submitted with the amendments introduced by the European Commission.

The viticulture and winemaking sector is represented by the measures existing under the current programme, with two new interventions added, which are expected to provide significant added value to the sector, to support wine and grape producers and to draw the attention of investors to this sector.

The new interventions are the promotion of wine tourism, which signals that the state will invest in promoting domestic production with the aim of increasing the demand for wine from Bulgaria. The second intervention is investments in environmental facilities, aligned with the EU environmental policies. This intervention will provide enterprises with the opportunity to adapt to the requirements for modern production and, on the other hand, will reduce their costs by investing in renewable energy sources and their own wastewater treatment systems.