

New organic label for European wines

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM: Organic wines produced in Europe will be able to be sold under a certified label this year, as the EU tightens rules on winemaking to rival organic bottles from the New World.

Wines made in Europe can already carry a label certifying that the wine is "made from organic grapes" but this "does not cover all winemaking practices, that means the whole refining process from the grape to the wine", said the European Commission in a statement.

The aim is to ensure that the techniques used to produce organic wine respect common rules. Labelling will also reinforce Europe's position in relation to the New World wine-producing countries of South Africa, Australia, Chile and the United States, which already have strict standards in place for organic products.

Under the new rules, Europe's organic wines cannot contain sorbic acid, desulphurisation is banned and the level of sulphites "must not exceed 100mg per litre for red wine (150mg for non-organic wine) and 150mg per litre for white or rose wine (200mg for non-organic wine)", said the European Union executive.

Strict rules also govern the use of pesticides on grapes. Wines produced from this year's grape harvest will be able to carry the label.

Around 75,000 hectares (185,329 acres) of vineyards in the EU are dedicated to organic wine production, with the largest area in Italy followed by France and Spain.

Source: AFP