RESOLUTION OIV-VITI 703-2024

OIV DEFINITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON OLD GRAPEVINES AND OLD VINEYARDS IN THE VITIVINICULTURAL SECTOR

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

CONSIDERING the work of Commission I “Viticulture” and the group of experts “Genetic Resources and Vine Selection”,

IN VIEW of article 2, paragraph 2 iv of the Agreement of 3 April 2001, establishing the International Organisation of Vine and Wine, and under the axe 1 of the OIV Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which aims to “Promote an environmentally-friendly vitiviniculture” and preservation of natural resources,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV-VITI 01/2002 on preservation of the diversity,

CONSIDERING the Resolution CST 1/2004 on Development of sustainable vitiviniculture,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV-VITI 424-2010 and the urgent need to protect the precious world heritage that vine varieties represent,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV/VITI 333/2010 establishing the concept of terroir,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV-CST 518-2016 on general principles of sustainable vitiviniculture, and especially the principle 2: sustainable vitiviniculture respects the environment and the parts concerning to preserve the biodiversity,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV-VITI 641-2020 on guide for the implementation of principles of sustainable vitiviniculture,

CONSIDERING the Resolution OIV-VITI 564B-2019 OIV on process for the recovery and conservation of the intravarietal diversity and the polyclonal selection of the grapevine in grape varieties with wide genetic variability, which specifies that the grapevine variety is generally quite heterogeneous in terms of quantitative characteristics, such as yield, acidity of the must, etc., and also in the case of certain physiological characteristics and biotic and abiotic resistance, or in interactions with the environment,

CONSIDERING the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations committed the international community to a set of ambitious goals on ‘living in harmony with nature’ and ‘leaving no one behind, which requires immediate and ambitious action to protect life both below water and on land, by reducing pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems,

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CONSIDERING the environmental, social and economic benefits of old grapevines and vineyards – especially concerning heritage, cultural, image and oenotourism aspects in meeting the sustainability objectives of the vitivinicultural sector,

CONSIDERING that the heritage value of old grapevines and vineyards is important for the vitivinicultural sector, and that they deserve recognition and protection for their study in terms of their genetic diversity, agronomic capacities, quality, sustainability and traceability objectives,

CONSIDERING that a definition of old grapevines and old vineyards may be useful for the vitivinicultural sector in recognizing the value of products they deliver and enhancing communication about vineyards longevity,

CONSIDERING the relationship between old grapevines and the potential qualitative values of products resulting from them,

CONSIDERING that the definitions of old grapevine and old vineyard are useful not only as a supplementary tool to protect viticultural heritage territorial or to highlight current condition of vineyards, but also to promote the plantation of new vineyard for the long term (i.e., planting vineyards to grow old),

CONSIDERING that, the concept of old grapevine could become closely associated with a balanced interaction between root development, plant vigour and impacts on wine quality, being necessary to clearly identify and quantify the characteristics, in addition to chronological age, that are associated to a grapevine considered old,

CONSIDERING that, for the sake of clarity, transparency and consumer information any new definition of old grapevine and old vineyard should not create confusion with existing definitions and related vocabulary, instead by seeking to include them,

RECOGNISES THAT:

- The evolution of the phenotypic expression of a plant over the years is a consequence of:
    i. i) The techniques used to produce and plant (own roots, field grafted or bench-grafted plantations);
    ii. ii) Varieties and genotypes used for scion and rootstock, and respective genotypic traits;
    iii. iii) The accumulated effects of edaphic (soil, topography) climatic and human (cultural practices, ecosystem management, in particular training systems and pruning techniques) factors;
    iv. iv) The productive approach of vineyard management, as influenced

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by the incidence of pests, diseases, water availability, nutritional status and abiotic stress;

v. v) Natural mutations accumulated in cells through the cyclical growth of the permanent structure over the years.

- Healthy old grapevines and particularly healthy old vineyards, which can be found in a wide variety of climatic and terroir situations are evidence of sustainable viticulture practices. They are a successful example of resilience and adaptability to changes in their environment, and they also contribute to the preservation of traditional and historic wine-growing landscapes.
- Since few vineyards grow old, studies focusing on the factors determining longevity and production potential (yield and quality) are limited, there being scope for further research, especially investigating factors that promote longevity and a stable relationship between yield and quality (production and value potential).
- A common definition of old grapevines and old vineyards is essential, to promote the adequate study, protection and valorisation of these vineyards.

DECIDES to adopt the following definitions of OLD GRAPEVINE and OLD VINEYARD

- An OLD GRAPEVINE is a single plant officially documented to be 35 years or older regardless of any other factors. It is the result of a physiological/environmental process that occurred over the time, either naturally or purposefully managed (human factors) enabling it to survive in a given place. In the case of grafted plants, the graft connection between rootstock and scion should have been undisturbed for, at least 35 years. For purposes other than the production of vitivinicultural products, a higher limit may be set.
- An OLD VINEYARD is a block of vineyard terrain, continuous and legally delimited, where at least 85% of the grapevines respond to the previous definition, and which produces vitivinicultural products (wine, grapes for fresh consumption, dried grapes, distillates and unfermented products from grapevine) eligible for legal certification by a competent authority. Its genetic, economic, sociocultural, and historical factors lend recognizable characteristics to its grapes and respective wines.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON EVALUATION CRITERIA

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The OIV recommends a harmonisation of the assessment criteria for old grapevines and old vineyards based on the following guidelines:
For grapevines:

- Georeferencing of site;
- Age determination based on documented data. In the case of lacking official data, provide for self-certification criteria with professional affidavits;
- Identification of variety, and rootstock if grafted;
- Type of original plant: own-rooted or grafted;
- Assessment of form of cultivation: pruning, training system;
- Type of grape product achieved or attainable;
- Potential for product certification.

For vineyards:

- Cadastral identification of the vineyard or cultivated block,
- Map and numbering of all grapevines in the block, detailing:
    - Identification of varieties and rootstocks, if grafted;
    - Age evaluation based on documented data; in the case of a lack of official data, provide for self-certification criteria by professional affidavits;
    - Type of original plant: grafted or own-rooted;
- Verification of the variety and the age of the plants within the limit of 85% of grapevines grown in the plot;
- Ascertainment of the form of cultivation adopted: pruning and training systems;
- Type of grape product achieved or attainable;
- Existing of potential product certification.

RECOMMENDS TO THE MEMBER STATES

- To promote and encourage the cataloguing of old vineyards and old grapevines.

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- To make openly available official data from the vineyard register to draw up vineyard maps and ascertain the age of vineyards.
- To promote conservation of old grapevines and old vineyards installed before selection and bench graft activities to preserve traditional wine-growing landscapes and for purposes of serving as genetic diversity sources, which may enhance selection (mass, clonal, polyclonal).
- To study and characterise the effect of age on grapevine and vineyard performance as well as their impact on the vegetative-productive properties and characteristics of wines or other vitivinicultural products.
- To study how different viticultural practices having physiological impact on the vine, in particular pruning and training systems, and soil management, contribute to their functional longevity and to resilience against changes in their environment.
    - To promote the elaboration of studies leading to variety-specific models for evaluation of differences in longevity between own rooted vines and grafted vines, and evaluating also quality enhancement in re-grafted vines over old roots.
- To study and better understand how old grapevines and old vineyards have an impact on the physiological, chemical and structural functions of the soil, and how they contribute to the preservation of this resource:
    i. To analyse types and density of the root system at different levels, develop models allowing to predict the degree of soil colonization for a vineyard to be considered mature;
    ii. To study how old grapevines, through their root systems, have an impact on the evapotranspiration of the water supply to the plant;
    iii. To study how old grapevines have an impact on the microbial biodiversity of the soil, and on aspects such as the functional biodiversity of the vineyard;
    iv. To study the impact of cover crops on the soil hydraulic conductivity when hosting old grapevines.
- To study the health status of old grapevines (Resolution OIV-VITI 565-2022, e.g., presence of viruses and the role of their vectors) individually and in the vineyard,

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in order to study the effect of type and number of viruses and other pathogens on grapevine behaviour, and its productive performance

- To analyse the level of sensitivity of old grapevines to diseases, especially grapevine trunk diseases, as related to productive management, environmental and plant management techniques.
- To promote the study and implementation of experimental protocols allowing for identification of direct and indirect indicators of old age in grapevines and vineyards, adapted to geographical and viticultural constraints.
- To catalogue the cultivation practices existing in old vineyards across the world, namely, density of plantation, number of varieties, clones and rootstocks, training systems, water and nutrient balances, etc, particularly if they have local and little-known varieties.
- To study the organoleptic characteristics of grapes, wine and other vitivinicultural products as compared with reference varieties grown in ampelographic collections.
- To investigate the social, cultural, environmental and economic drivers and benefits of old grapevine and vineyard conservation, giving particular attention to old vineyards inside a geographical indication.
- To promote the study of consumer perceptions of using designations “old grapevine” / “old vineyards” and assimilated derivations in the commercial labelling of grapes, wines and other vitivinicultural products.

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