

Italy's new wine organisation

5 Aug 2009 by Walter Speller

With the new CMO (Common Market Organisation) for European wines now in place, Italy's wine producers and growers' associations have officially lost much of their power. Instead, a new organisation called Valoritalia will be Italy's new independent certifying body for wine. (See [this article](#) and the links therein for background on the CMO reform and related issues.)

Until 1 Aug, monitoring and controlling of all DOC and DOCG wines produced in Italy was the responsibility of each individual consorzio, but the new CMO rules state that this must now be executed by an independent public body and/ or an 'authorised third party'. This description has literally annulled the most relevant task of any consortium, leaving promotion and marketing as its sole focus now. However, according to Emilio Fasoletti, director of the Valpolicella consortium, it is highly unlikely that producers in general will be willing to financially support a stronger marketing role for the consortium. (Small and medium- sized producers have traditionally felt their interests under-represented by these bodies, in which votes have always been based on vineyard size.) Fasoletti also expects that, with the controlling function taken away from the consortium, it will no longer be able to keep statistics on the wine region it is supposed to represent.

In line with the new CMO requirements, Valoritalia, the new, independent body for certification of all Italian quality wines, has been officially recognised as a controlling third party by the Italian government. Federdoc, the umbrella association of more than 70% of all Italian consortiums, has been the driving force as well as the founder of this new controlling body, taking a 51% stake in the organisation, with 49% delegated to CSQA, the Italian body of agricultural and food certification recognised internationally as well as by the EU.

The head of Valoritalia will be Ezio Pelissetti, until now director of the consorzio of Asti wines and vice- president of Federdoc. Valoritalia's main task, as formulated by the CMO is to check and certify the production of quality wines, but the new body has already been the focus of critics, who believe that Federdoc's majority stake means a conflict of interest. These critics doubt that Valoritalia will have the independence needed to monitor Italy's vinous output. For the moment, Valoritalia is still waiting for the go- ahead from Brussels before it can officially execute its tasks.