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# Government to bolster medronho industry





The medronho industry is set to benefit from more investment and promotion from the Portuguese government following a draft resolution published in the state's official newspaper *Diário da República* on Monday, July 18.

The medronho fruit is commonly grown in the Algarve (especially in the Monchique and Caldeirão hills) as well as the Alentejo and the centre of Portugal, and is used most notably to create the hugely alcoholic Medronho fruit brandy, or *aguardente* (firewater) – a staple of old taverns and bars in the Algarve.

The proposal was worked on by several political parties and approved unanimously in parliament last month. In a nutshell, it advises the government to provide producers with more "financial and technical means" to boost the plantation and exploration of medronho trees (*Arbutus unedo*, also called strawberry tree) in Portugal. It also requests more "community support" from the EU.

Another suggestion is to create a "national forum" that brings together medronho producers and associations as well as the "scientific community and public and private entities".

Finally, the MPs also want the licensing process to be "facilitated", as medronho producers usually produce "small or very small" amounts of the liqueur. They also want medronho

firewater to be subject to lower taxes.

In a nutshell, the goal is to “improve and organise” the medronho industry, “stimulate the certification process of medronho firewater” so that more brands may appear, and also help prevent the risk of wildfires near plantations.

In April, the Algarve's wine commission (CVA) had already announced that “over 20,000 litres of medronho firewater in the region could be certified on an annual basis”.

The announcement was made after CVA was named the authority that certifies medronho firewater as ‘made in Algarve’, though it may still be another year before it can hand out the certifications.

Carlos Garcias from CVA said that producers will not be “forced” to certify their products, but will likely have “more success” if they boast the quality seal.

At the time, 10 producers had already shown an interest in obtaining the certificate.

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