

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4366/06

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Subject: Commission proposal for a reform of the EU wine regime

The European Commission has announced a reform of the EU wine regime. Guidelines for the reform propose grubbing-up 400 000 hectares of vineyards within five years as well as phasing out obligatory distillation and further liberalisation of wine imports. There is serious concern in many traditional wine-producing regions, mainly in disadvantaged and mountainous areas, that the reform proposals will lead to further intensification of wine production in advantaged regions using irrigation and industrial wine producing methods at the expense of quality wines and small producers.

1. Is the Commission aware that illegal new plantations of irrigated intensive vineyards are taking place, especially in certain regions of Spain, while plans for a wine reform are still under way?
2. What kind of measures is the Commission specifically considering to reduce the consumption of water for irrigation in wine production?
3. What kind of measures does the wine reform envisage to specifically support more sustainable wine producing practices like organic wine production and reduction of the use of chemical substances?
4. What has the Commission specifically undertaken to support, promote and control the legal framework of geographical indications and oenological practices for quality wines and to defend this concept in the multilateral negotiations on trade agreements?
5. What kind of measures is the Commission considering to preserve and use the great biological diversity of grape varieties?
6. Does the Commission intend to phase out the supply management measures (quota) in the wine regime, and if so has the Commission done any impact assessment on the social and ecological consequences of such a decision?