



15th April 2014

Open letter on the future vine planting rules in Europe

Dear Ministers,

Dear Commissioner Ciolos,

We have welcomed the new scheme for vine plantings agreed on in the context of the CAP reform. It aims at allowing an orderly growth of the EU vineyard to match the dynamic market evolution, and explicitly calls upon MS to take into account the recommendations from the professionals. This new system will replace, in 2016, the current scheme of planting rights by individual non-transferable authorisations for new plantings allocated by the MS following criteria that must be objective and non discriminatory.

At the same time, we have warned that the annual growth limitation topped at 1% at EU and MS levels will not be enough to make up for the "natural" trend of vineyards reduction, taking into account the structure and demographics of the wine sector in Europe and in our MS that will only accelerate this trend. Even if the 1% growth rate per year of our vineyard was fully implemented without further restrictions, the decline of the EU vineyard surface would continue; the new vine plantings authorization system will just allow to soften the decline of the EU wine production potential in a context of international and open competition.

For this reason, we have stressed the absolute need to ensure a simple, flexible and market-oriented implementation of this new scheme. We have therefore strongly supported the initial DG AGRI proposals for a draft delegated act and a draft implementing act on the new vine planting authorization regime, as they ensure an as much as possible harmonized, transparent, simple and market-oriented implementation of the new regime according to objective criteria, fully respecting the new provisions on vine planting authorisations in the CAP reform.

Recently, a group of fourteen Member States expressed, through a common note concerning the future implementing rules for this new authorisation regime, their position in favour of an even more restrictive regime than the former planting rights scheme. This *shopping-list* of disparate requests aims at imposing further arbitrary and discriminatory restrictions to the right to plant, and therefore produce wines in Europe. Most of these restrictions obey to narrow domestic vested interests and are being proposed by some national governments often without a minimum of proper consultation with all the relevant national stakeholders, and



without proper consideration of the broader European or even international context and challenges.

We are extremely concerned that the combined effect of such requests would result in an even more restrictive regime, which contradicts the rules they agreed on only some months ago in the CAP reform. Should the Commission follow these requests, the new planting regime would be more restrictive than the previous one, in clear contradiction with the spirit and the letter of the reform, undermining the homogeneity and the European dimension of the new scheme, as well as the needed economic visibility and the level playing field for economic operators. As a result, it would fatally jeopardize the competitiveness of the EU wine sector in a context of increasing international competition.

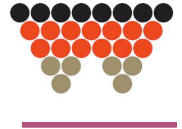
Therefore, we strongly oppose most of the requests within the MS' common note concerning the future implementation rules for the new vine planting authorisations regime – *see detailed comments attached in Annex*. It would be just irresponsible to impose, through the back door of these implementing rules, further arbitrary or discriminatory criteria and restrictions that would leave even more the markets to our competitors!

We are shocked by the lack of ambition for our sector shown by our national governments. The EU and our countries cannot simply be content with managing the decadence of the EU and our wine producing countries leadership in the global wine market, and jeopardizing the development of our national wine sector in order to match the interest of our competitors either in Europe or in third countries!

Instead, we strongly believe that the European and our national wine sectors have a great potential. While the consumption decrease in some traditionally producing EU countries seems now stabilised, both European and third emerging and non-emerging markets offer really great opportunities for the development of our sales and exports, capitalizing on our countries and European values and *savoir-faire*.

If, as often claimed, our governments want a truly dynamic and vibrant wine sector, we ask them to reconsider their requests without delay, as they actually work in the opposite direction. Actually, their requests are not justified on the grounds of protecting the sector against possible oversupply, or risk of significant devaluation of a PDO/PGI; their requests are driven by fear, selfishness and corporatist protectionisms...:

- Protectionism of established winegrowers against the competition from new entrants;
- Protectionism of PDO/PGI against non-GI wines, while complementarity is not only possible but needed to boost the presence and leadership of the EU and countries' wines in all relevant segments and markets;



- Protectionism against the closest neighbours in other parcels, regions, and MS -but not in third countries...!, which develop their vineyards without similar legal restrictions for plantings;
- Protectionism of a bunch of privileges driven by domestic narrow interests, against the blatant need for more solidarity and harmonisation which favours a minimum of economic visibility for investments, a level playing field for the wine economic operators in Europe, and the competitiveness of the EU wines worldwide.

Fear, selfishness and protectionism will not be of any help for the future of our wine sector in our country and in Europe; they will just hinder the development of one of the most valuable and cultural sector of the European agriculture, and the top exporter of the EU and national agriculture.

We therefore call our governments, as well as our fellow stakeholders in the wine sector, to scale up the ambitions for the development of our vineyards if we want together to secure a future for our sector and our regions. This change of ambition is now dramatically urgent at a time when our countries and the EU are struggling to leave the economic crisis behind.

In conclusion, the new authorisation system should remain simple and flexible in order to achieve the CMO "*key objective of increasing the competitiveness of the Union wine sector [...] in order not to lose market share in the world market*" ⁽¹⁾.

In particular, it should not be designed to re-create restrictions, discriminations and disharmony that were the main characteristics of the previous regime.

We thank you in advance for the kind attention you will pay to this open letter.

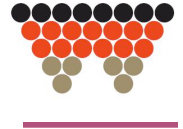
Sincerely,

Jean-Marie BARILLERE
President
Comité Européen des
Entreprises Vins – CEEV

Pau ROCA
Secretary General
Federación Española del Vino – FEV

George SANDEMAN
President
Associação dos Comerciantes e
Industriais de Bebidas Espirituosas e
Vinhos – ACIBEV

¹ Regulation 1308/2013.- Whereas 55.



Domenico ZONIN
President
Unione Italiana Vini – UIV

Lamberto V. GANCIA
President
Federazione Italiana Industriali
Produttori, Esportatori ed
Importatori di Vini, Acquaviti,
Liquori, Sciroppi, Aceti ed affini –
FEDERVINI

Angelos ROUVALIS
President
Greek Wine Federation – SEO

Aymeric DE BEAUVILLÉ
President
Fédération Française des
Vins d'Apéritif – FFVA

Michel CHAPOUTIER
President
Union des Maisons & Marques de
Vin – UMVIN

Peter ROTTHAUS
Geschäftsführer Bundesverband der
Deutschen Weinkellereien und des
Weinfachhandels – BDWW

Antonio SARAIVA
President
Associação das Empresas
de Vinho do Porto – AEVP

Guy TAPERNOUX
President
Fédération Belge des Vins et
Spiriteux – FBVS