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President of the "Wine, Spirits and Quality Foodstuffs"  
Intergroup of the European Parliament



— The European Commission has begun work to align EU vitivinicultural regulations with the Lisbon Treaty. Professionals are complaining about the method and fear specific rules that apply to the sector will be called into question. What is the European Parliament's position on the subject?

— I am convinced that this "Lisbonisation" process has to take place. However, this alignment of regulations with the treaty should not be an excuse to review all current legislation. Neither should it complicate the task of operators.

I am very mindful of preserving balances and retaining provisions that enable the sector to function well. With regard to designation-of-origin wines, I am aware that the management of this system is a fairly new area of development for the European Commission; nevertheless, it should take into account the specific characteristics of the sector. I am thinking, in particular, of the simplification of regulations for modifying specifications in a timely manner. The Intergroup is closely monitoring the discussions and work under way. The Parliament will indeed have a right of veto on the relevant delegated acts that are to be adopted by the European Commission.

— Discussions have begun on the upcoming CAP reform. Are you in favour of a reform of the wine sector?

— When we look at the development of the sector and the performance of our wines over recent years, I think we can be pleased with the 2008 and 2013 reforms. In the context of an agricultural crisis, the wine sector is doing well. As such, I do not see the justification for further reform of this sector. If it's not broken, let's not try to fix it.

— What do you see as the main challenges for the future of the European wine sector?

— The main challenge is to further the promotion of our wines outside the borders of the EU and to break into new markets. To achieve this, the European Union should encourage efforts to produce quality wines that appeal to consumers the world over, and support promotional campaigns.

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**"Because origin matters"**

— EFOW is a Brussels-based organisation representing wines with an Appellation of Origin or Geographical Indication from the European Union. As the voice of the European origin wines towards European and international institutions, it is actively lobbying for a better protection and promotion of these wines within the EU and throughout the world.

Its current members are the national associations in charge of origin wines from France (CNAOC), Hungary (HNT), Italy (FEDERDOC) and Spain (CECRV), as well as the Port and Douro Wines Institute (IVDP) from Portugal.



European Federation of Origin Wines

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## Champagne

— This prestigious designation of origin, protected since 1936, takes its name from the Champagne wine region in north-east France.

Champagne wines are produced, harvested and made entirely within the delimited area of Champagne in France. This area covers 320 municipalities in five departments: Marne, Aube, Aisne, Haute-Marne and Seine-et-Marne. There are 17 villages that benefit from the "grand cru" designation and 47 from the "premier cru" designation.

The Champagne terroir sets itself apart from other terroirs due to its northern geographical location and double climatic influence, both oceanic and continental. The three key components of these vineyards – climate, subsoil and relief – create combinations that are specific to each vine plot. Historically, the main vine varieties in this terroir are Pinot Noir, Meunier and Chardonnay. The noteworthy and highly distinctive characteristics of the landscapes and the viticultural heritage earned the Champagne Hillsides, Maison and Cellars their place on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2015.

Champagne is the leading player in French wine and spirits exports.

Champagne vineyards represent 0.4% of the global vineyard surface area and 4% of French vineyards (with 33,762 hectares of vineyards). Wine from Champagne is exported to over 190 countries and accounts for 13% of world consumption of sparkling wines in terms of volume.

The wines are made using natural fermentation in the bottle in accordance with specific regulations governing all stages of production, which constitute the specifications for the Champagne designation. These strict regulations justify France's battle for recognition of this designation in the United States as part of the TTIP agreement.



**One in 8 bottles**

**The UK accounts for 13% of all global wine imports**

## The global economic viticultural situation in 2015: the EU ranks top!

— EFOW is pleased to say that the European Union continues to dominate the world wine market.

In 2015, Spain, France and Italy accounted for 57.4% of global wine exports in terms of value and 55.6% in terms of volume. Last year, Spain was the leading wine-exporting country in the world in terms of volume with a 23% global export share. France was the top country in terms of value with 29%.

The EU's wine production increased by 3.6% in 2015 compared with the year 2014. EU wine consumption is stable. The American market is still the leading consumer market with 31 million hl of wines consumed in 2015.

## No TTIP without protection of our designation-of-origin wines

— With the 14<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations about to be held in Brussels on 11-15 July, EFOW wants to reiterate that the TTIP agreement offers a unique opportunity to obtain the full and consistent protection of European designations of origin for wine in the United States. The European Union should refuse to give in to the position of the United States, which wants to exclude an agreement on wine and GIs from the TTIP.

### TRUE / FALSE

#### The United States and viticultural designations of origin

##### American designation of origin does not exist

TRUE  FALSE

ANSWER: **FALSE!** In the USA, there is a specific system applicable to wines. The highest level of protection, the "American Viticultural Area" (AVA), stipulates that at least 85% of the grapes must be grown in the specified viticultural area and that this area has to have particular characteristics that influence the wine. Some AVAs are well known, such as "Napa Valley" in California.

##### The USA protects EU viticultural designations of origin

TRUE  FALSE

ANSWER: **TRUE**, but... in the United States, 17 names of European designations are not protected due to being considered "semi-generic". Some American producers therefore use these designations to refer to their wine. These "semi-generic" designations are: Bourgogne, Chablis, Champagne, Chianti, Claret, Haut Sauternes, Hock, Madeira, Malaga, Marsala, Moselle, Port, Retsina, Rhine, Sauterne, Sherry and Tokay. The use of these terms on wines that do not originate from the geographical area in question is considered illegal by the European Union.



Dear readers,

I am very pleased to present this new edition of our biannual newsletter, which is the voice of European origin wines.

The Directorate-General for Agriculture of the European Commission has begun a process to align EU viticultural regulations with the Lisbon Treaty. In December 2015, a number of draft texts and working papers were placed on the table by the European Commission.

EFOW and other organisations in the sector have criticised the working method used by the European Commission. While the sector does not contest the interest in simplifying legislation, it does want to maintain the balances achieved at the time of the reforms to the sector in 2008 and 2013.

However, the Commission has not placed all of the texts on the table and seems to want to make wine regulations more complex by splitting texts (four implementing regulations whose content would be divided into at least eight texts, delegated acts and implementing acts).

Following the strong mobilisation of the sector, Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan has sought to reassure the wine industry. Before the Wine Intergroup of the European Parliament on 8 March 2016, he announced the withdrawal of the proposed texts. However, work is ongoing within the DG Agriculture.

EFOW is following these developments with concern. It is advocating for the simplification exercise to have the essential aim of making life easier for operators in the wine sector and for it to take into account the specific nature of wines with a geographic indication. We welcome the support recently given to our position by 13 Member States (Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Slovakia) and hope that the European Commission will rapidly revisit its working method.

I wish you a very good read,

*Bernard Farges*

PRESIDENT OF EFOW

