

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2025

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A word from EFOW's President

Riccardo Ricci Curbastro



Dear Readers,

As we embark on a new chapter in this pivotal year, I wish to address some of the pressing challenges and opportunities shaping the wine appellations sector today.

The recent recommendations of the High-Level Group on wine policy provide valuable proposals for the sector, but they also underscore the urgent need for action. The wine sector, a cornerstone of European agriculture and culture, is facing an unprecedented crisis. This is why EFOW has called on the European Commission to act swiftly and decisively to implement these meaningful and much needed measures. For this reason, I would like to express my gratitude to Commissioner Hansen for announcing a legislative package on wine, which will be published in the coming weeks—as explained in the interview he kindly granted us (see below)—and which will equip the sector with the necessary tools to face these new challenges.

EFOW welcomes the renewal of the Wine, Spirits, and Quality Foodstuff Intergroup and expresses its gratitude to all the Members of the European Parliament who have supported this initiative. The intergroup is vital for advocating for the interests of our producers and protecting our unique heritage. I wish a fruitful mandate to the co-presidents Mrs. Herranz Garcia and Mr. Sargiacomo and vice-presidents of the Intergroup Mrs. Györi, Mr. Fidanza and Mr. Streit; there is much work ahead, and I trust their leadership will steer us through the challenges and opportunities to come.

As you all know, wine is not merely a beverage; it is a celebration of culture, tradition, and identity.

This is why EFOW is proud to support the VITÆVINO Declaration. We invite you all to show your support to our sector by signing it too. Together, we can reaffirm the importance of preserving and promoting our wine heritage for future generations.

I would like to congratulate Commissioner Hansen for committing to publish a comprehensive GI Action Plan. Geographical Indications (GIs) play a crucial role in safeguarding the uniqueness of our wines and the vitality of our rural areas. GIs are not just about protecting a name; they are about preserving the rich diversity and authenticity that make European wines a global treasure. This EU GI Action plan will be an essential step toward strengthening this cornerstone of our agricultural policy.

To showcase the importance of GIs, I am delighted to announce that, in partnership with AREPO and oriGIn EU, we will host a European GI conference on June 25th and 26th. This event, organised within the framework of the GI SMART project, will be an opportunity for GI producers to come together, share experiences, and shape the future of our sector. During this conference, a dedicated Community Platform will be launched by GI SMART to provide a space for collaboration and innovation among GI stakeholders to improve our sustainability practices.

Let us remain united in our efforts to uphold the excellence and resilience of wine appellations.

I wish you an excellent reading.

Riccardo Ricci Curbastro

"Because origin matters"

Introducing the GI SMART project: advancing sustainability through Geographical Indications

We are pleased to introduce **GI SMART**, a Horizon Europe four-year project launched on June 1, 2024. The project aims to assess how Geographical Indications (GIs) contribute to smart territorial development and to strengthen their role in supporting sustainable food systems.

The project brings together **17 partners from eight EU countries, the UK, and Switzerland**, including universities, research institutes, and advocacy organisations, such as **EFOW**.

GI SMART's key goals are to:

- Develop state-of-the-art research on GIs' sustainability impacts.
- Create a comprehensive method to assess GIs' environmental, social, economic, and governance dimensions.
- Identify best practices and highlight the sustainability benefits of GI schemes.
- Explore and benchmark policies to foster the sustainability of GIs and smart territorial development across Member States.
- Better understand consumer perceptions of GIs.
- Deliver policy recommendations and tools for stakeholders to improve GIs' contribution to sustainability.

The project will produce **three strategic guides**: one for GI producers, one for policymakers, and one focused on marketing strategies to promote sustainable GIs.

A key feature of **GI SMART** is the **Community Platform**, which will be launched on **25 June 2025** and will bring together stakeholders to exchange knowledge, collect feedback and input on project activities, and share project outcomes.





VITÆVINO: in defence of wine culture and conviviality

The responsible and moderate consumption of wine – which is the way the overwhelming majority of wine consumers enjoy it – is being stigmatised by the removal of the distinction between alcohol abuse and the moderate wine consumption within a healthy and balanced lifestyle. In the face of this mounting challenge, a campaign in support of the culture and moderate consumption of wine has been launched to give a voice to citizens, consumers, and the vast wine community.

On **15 January**, the European Parliament hosted the event in celebration of the **100 days of the VITÆVINO Campaign**, highlighting the role of wine in Europe's cultural, social and agricultural heritage. Organised under the patronage of Spanish **MEP Carmen Crespo (EPP)** and French **MEP Eric Sargiacomo (S&D)**, the event aimed to highlight the cultural significance of wine as a unifying element in our society, a cornerstone of rural areas socio-economy, a symbol of conviviality in a context of moderation, and an integral part of a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

The event also featured the celebrated **Italian chef and FAO Food Hero Max Mariola**, known for his advocacy for genuine, healthy and local cuisine. The event featured an impressive lineup of participants, which showed the widespread sector's support for VITÆVINO's mission of **defending wine culture and conviviality as a symbol of the European identity and economy**.



To show your support to wine culture we invite you to **sign this Declaration**, every drop counts

For further information please consult:
Vitævino, Defend wine culture & conviviality



Wine, Quality Food and Spirits Intergroup First Meeting in Strasbourg

On 23 January, the newly established Wine, Quality Food and Spirits Intergroup held its inaugural meeting in Strasbourg, with EFOW actively participating in the discussions. The meeting focused on the recommendations put forward by the High-Level Group on Wine, with Director Pierre Bascou from DG AGRI in attendance.

EFOW, alongside other key wine organisations, strongly advocated for the swift and comprehensive implementation of these recommendations as a package, emphasising the need to avoid selective adoption or “cherry-picking.” This call for action was echoed by the Intergroup Presidency, reinforcing the sector’s united stance on ensuring the future sustainability and competitiveness of European wine.

EFOW remains committed to working closely with EU institutions to ensure that these recommendations are translated into concrete policies that benefit the sector as a whole.



Interview

Commissioner Christophe Hansen, Commissioner for Agriculture and Food

Considering the conclusions of the High-Level Group, could you specify the planned timeline for the implementation of these recommendations? How do you intend to strengthen the vine planting authorisation scheme as well as the crisis management toolbox?

The European Commission invited representatives of EU member states to a High-Level Group on Wine Policy (HLG) to discuss the future of the EU wine sector. During the first meeting of this group, EFOW and other stakeholder organisations had the opportunity to present their proposals for a more competitive and resilient wine sector, for which I am grateful. I believe that only by working together we can ensure the future of the EU wine sector. When it comes to the recommendations, we are currently analysing and assessing them to see how they can be translated into the EU policy tools and regulations. The first steps have already been taken. A new Implementing Regulation giving winegrowers more flexibility when replanting vineyards has been presented to Member States and was unanimously approved by them. As I have announced in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament on 10th of February,

in view of the urgency to help the sector to address the current challenges, some of the recommendations will be addressed in a package of specific measures for the wine sector, which I will present soon.

Could you share your vision for Geographical Indications during your mandate and explain how you plan to integrate them into your Vision for Agriculture and Food?

As EFOW states it, when it comes to wine, “origin matters”. Our Geographical Indications (GIs) are of utmost importance, especially when it comes to wine. Today, nearly half of all GIs in the EU are for wines, with over 400 Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and around 1,200 Protected Designations of Origin (PDO), ensuring special protection and recognition for Europe’s unique and distinctive products. More than two-thirds of the wines produced are GI wines, with 47% being PDOs and 22% PGIs.

It is disheartening to see products in supermarkets labelled similarly to our authentic European products but sold at a fraction of the price. These imitations undermine the quality and reputation of our unique products and therefore we must strengthen their protection. One way to do so is through our trade

Commissioner Christophe Hansen
Commissioner for Agriculture and Food



partnerships. For example, our latest agreement with Chile will, for the first time, safeguard 216 EU agri-food GIs, ensuring that recognised quality products are protected and promoted in the Chilean market. This way our producers gain new export opportunities and safeguards from imitations in third countries.

What is your position on the “no safe level” approach? Can we still rely on the European Commission to uphold the concept of moderate consumption while tackling high-risk behaviours?

Indeed, excessive consumption and binge drinking should be actively targeted and addressed, given their big impact on health. The HLG also highlights that promotion measures must take public health considerations into account and put an emphasis on moderation and on promotion of responsible consumption and consumption combined with food. The importance of the wine sector for the EU’s economy and society and especially its key role for the livelihood of many rural communities and close connection with their unique landscapes, history, and rich cultural heritage, that makes wine an emblematic symbol of the EU’s traditions and heritage around the world must not be forgotten in this discussion.

In the agricultural sector, producers’ income is a major priority. What levers do you plan to use to support this sector, particularly wine appellations?

This question was at the core of the discussion in the HLG and the recommendations are the answer.

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In my eyes, a farmer is an entrepreneur, and we need to make this entrepreneurship and the position of the farmer in the value chain more attractive again. To help farmers to stay in this profession and to encourage young and new ones to enter, a fair and sufficient farm income is a crucial condition. Farmers must get a better revenue from the market, allowing them also to make the necessary investments to future proof and render their farms more resilient.

That’s why, as one of my first initiatives as Commissioner for Agriculture and Food, I focused on strengthening producer organisations and improving farmers’ position in the value chain. We have proposed targeted amendments to enhance





their role in contract negotiations, foster cooperation, and improve price transmission. The upcoming Vision for Agriculture and Food, that I am presenting on 19 February, will further outline how to make our agricultural sector more attractive, competitive and future-proof.

Given current and future geopolitical challenges, what actions could the European Commission take to safeguard an export-oriented sector such as wine appellations?

Wine production is and will continue to be widely supported in the EU through specific regulations and through the EU budget. Our wine sector is indeed a flagship sector when it comes to our agri-food trade. In 2023, wine was amongst the top 3 exported product categories by the EU. But the sector also needs to meet the societal expectations more closely, which are more and more concerned about the environment and public health policies. The implementation of the HLG recommendations will improve the general resilience of the sector and help it to face the various challenges.

As the world's largest trading bloc, the EU is deeply integrated within the global economy and its vast value chains. The EU firmly believes that across-the-board tariffs raise business costs, harm workers and consumers, create unnecessary economic disruption and drive inflation. We believe that open markets and respect for international trade rules are essential for strong and sustainable economic growth. In our view, low tariffs drive growth and economic stability within a strong, rules-based trading system. As stated, the EU would respond firmly to any trading partner that unfairly or arbitrarily imposes tariffs on EU goods. Furthermore, while there are no silver bullets, possible market disruptions caused by the imposition of tariffs can be addressed by exceptional measures that the Commission can adopt quickly, as done already in the past in several contexts.



“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), Italy (FEDERDOC) and Spain (CECRV), as well as the Port and Douro Wines Institute (IVDP) from Portugal.

www.efow.eu

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ORIGIN WINES
18 Square Ambiorix | B-1000 Bruxelles | T +32 2 733 50 60

European Federation
of Origin Wines

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