

Common organisation of the market in wine

2007/0138(CNS) - 26/09/2007

The Council held a policy debate on a proposal for a Regulation submitted in July 2007 on reform of the wine sector.

The debate focussed on two questions from the Presidency, one on planting rights, the other on abolishing the use of sugar (chaptalisation).

- On the first question, some delegations confirmed their support for abolishing planting rights and liberalising the market as from 2014, to make the sector more competitive.

Certain other delegations wanted liberalisation to come sooner and in any event in 2010, as provided for under the current legislation. Those delegations accordingly wanted consideration to be given to the introduction of transitional measures enabling them to liberalise planting rights from 2010. Other delegations, however, thought that the present time was too early to take a decision to liberalise rights in 2014; they preferred the idea of "fixing a date" in 2013 to assess the impact of the other market reform measures before deciding on the possibility of liberalising planting rights.

- As regards chaptalisation, a large number of delegations said they favoured this oenological practice which was associated with climatic conditions. Others, however, supported the Commission proposal to do away with the possibility of enriching wine by adding sugar, while abolishing aid for musts, regarding this as a non-negotiable element of balance in the reform.

The Council instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to continue its discussions with a view to reaching an agreement during the Portuguese Presidency.

The European Parliament's opinion is due in early December.