

**Question for written answer E-002280/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Alexis Georgoulis (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Reduced rate of excise duty on 'tsipouro' and 'tsikoudia'

In a judgment published on 11 July 2019, the Court ruled that Greek legislation¹ providing for the application of a reduced rate of excise duty on 'tsipouro' and 'tsikoudia' produced by distillers and a reduced rate of excise duty on tsipouro and tsikoudia produced by small distillers is contrary to Union law², namely Directives 92/83/EEC³ and 92/84/EEC⁴.

Given that 'tsipouro' and 'tsikoudia' production is a unique skill practised in regions of the Greek mainland and the Greek islands, will the Commission say:

- Could the derogation provided for in Article 23 (2) of Directive 92/83/EEC be extended to cover 'tsipouro' and 'tsikoudia' as a whole, since ouzo, which is covered by the derogation, is produced in a similar way?
- If this is not feasible, what measures does it intend to take to support small distilleries practising a profession or skill unique in Europe which supports the local economy of large areas of the country?
- What initiatives will the Commission take to protect professions and techniques (which differ from the modern industrial processes) that are being lost, as part of Europe's intangible cultural heritage?

¹ Laws 3845/2010 and 2969/2001.

² Judgment in Case C-91/18 Commission v Greece, 11 July 2019.

³ Council Directive 92/83/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the harmonisation of the structures of excise duties on alcohol and alcoholic beverages (OJ L 316, 31.10.1992, p. 21).

⁴ Council Directive 92/84/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of the rates of excise duty on alcohol and alcoholic beverages (OJ L 316, 31.10.1992, p. 29).