

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0724/04
by María Herranz García (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Rules on labelling wines

After years of negotiating with the USA and other third countries on protecting Community wine appellations and radical EU opposition to any usurping of these appellations by third countries, the Commission has finally decided that, despite all the efforts made in the past, it is giving in to external pressure. It has legitimised this usurpatory behaviour by adopting an amendment to the rules on wine labelling in the Management Committee, despite the fact that the main producer countries voted against.

From now on, any third country that can prove that for at least ten years it has been usurping traditional terms such as gran reserva and crianza cannot only continue to do so, but can now market its products, using these terms, in the EU.

Why has the Commission made this 180° turn, which could well weaken our position in the WTO negotiations to safeguard our geographical appellations? What pay-off does the Commission expect from this decision?

While it is true that some countries have lodged complaints with the WTO against the Community rules on wine labelling adopted in 2002, why did the Commission not at the very least wait to find out what the WTO has to say on the issue?