

**Question for written answer E-003930/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Astrid Lulling (PPE)**

Subject: Distance selling of wine: internal market inefficiencies

Small and medium-sized wine producers, the majority of which are family businesses, generate most of their income through direct sales. What is more, European rural development policy encourages wine tourism and the use of direct marketing methods which bypass wholesalers and retailers.

Although Council Directive 2008/118/EC authorises private individuals to purchase up to 90 litres of still wine and up to 60 litres of sparkling wine for their personal use in one Member State and transport the wines themselves to another Member State, the internal market is much less efficient when it comes to distance selling.

If the buyer does not travel to the Member State in which the goods are purchased, excise duty must be paid in the Member State of destination. Wine growers who wish to export limited quantities of wine to private individuals are forced to appoint a tax representative, who then pays the excise duty in the country of destination. This inevitably increases the price of the wine substantially, to the extent that potential customers are put off. The administrative procedures involved also vary considerably from one Member State to another.

Whilst large concerns with EU-wide distribution networks can shrug them off, these unnecessary administrative complications serve to exclude small and medium-sized wine producers from the internal market.

1. Does the Commission intend to simplify the administrative arrangements in question so that small and medium-sized firms can participate fully in the internal market?
2. Does it not agree that funding for rural development, and in particular for the promotion of wine tourism, would be more effective if wine growers were able to continue selling their products directly to tourists even after the latter have returned home?
3. Does it agree that this matter falls within the remit of several Commissioners, including Mr Ciolos, Mr Semeta, Mr De Gucht, Mr Tajani, Mr Hahn and Mr Barnier?