

**Question for written answer E-003957/2013  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**

Subject: Internet domain name extensions and the wine industry

Since 2012, specialised companies and organisations have been able to ask the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to assign them a new internet domain name extension (generic top-level domain (gTLD)). This innovation is aimed at improving the visibility and identification of a product, a sector or a town (e.g. '.auto', '.hotel', '.paris', etc.).

While geographical indications in the wine sector are not protected by ICANN rules and while none of the applications for assigning the domain name extension '.wine' or '.vin' makes commitments to protect them, professional organisations in the European wine sector have very real concerns.

The company which will be allowed to manage the generic top-level domain '.wine' or '.vin' will therefore be able to sell its use, enabling any future purchaser of these gTLDs to combine them with a second-level domain name in order to create a personalised web address, such as 'sancerre.vin' or 'champagne.wine'.

However, origin wines enjoy legal protection in the form of geographical indications, in particular in the context of the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and within the International Organisation of Vine and **Wine (OIV)**.

The use of the geographical indications 'sancerre' and 'champagne', for example, as second-level domain names would require strict respect for the related intellectual property rights and should strictly benefit the region and stakeholders concerned.

In view of the above, and given that the 46th ICANN meeting was held in Beijing from 7 to 11 April 2013, to what extent does the Commission intend to enforce the intellectual property rights relating to geographical indications in the context of assignment of new internet domain name extensions (gTLD)?