

**Question for written answer E-013554/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Usefulness of traditional varieties of vine in adapting to climate change

The European Commission's report entitled '*Adapting to climate change: the challenge for agriculture and rural areas*' summarises the main impacts of climate change on EU agriculture and explores possible orientations for future action. One of the measures it recommends is '*choosing crops and varieties better adapted to the expected length of the growing season and water availability, and more resistant to new conditions of temperature and humidity.*'

The vine is particularly sensitive to climate change: water stress, sudden changes in temperature, untimely rainfall and frost are just a few of the variables that have a profound impact on the balance of sugars and acidity, on the maturity of tannins and on the palette of wine aromas, even on the very survival of the grapes. The traditional wine-producing regions are already experiencing these changes, which is why members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predict a disproportionate intensification of the situation in the coming years. Measures for adapting to climate change therefore need to be put in place urgently to protect the wine sector.

Some varieties of vine are more resistant to climate change than others. This is particularly true of the traditional varieties of vine, which are extraordinarily hardy due to their genetic identity but also due to their ability to withstand acidic soils. These robust varieties were introduced to France in the 19th century, following an outbreak of blight that wiped out many of the vines.

However, Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 prohibits the planting, replanting or grafting of some of these varieties of vine (Clinton, Noah, Jacquez, Herbemont, Othello and Isabelle) for wine production purposes. This ban is no longer based on any health considerations, as demonstrated by scientific studies dating back nearly 15 years. This is also the reason why France, under Decree No 2003-851, abolished the law of 1934 which listed the same prohibited varieties. This regulation therefore seems to run counter to European targets for adapting to climate change.

Does the Commission intend to lift the ban on traditional varieties of vine to enable the wine sector to adapt better to climate change?