

**Question for written answer E-002084/2020  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Aurelia Beigneux (ID)**

Subject: The toxicity of copper, a natural pesticide used in viticulture

In Europe, and more particularly in France, the wine sector is increasingly switching to organic viticulture. In France, 12% of winegrowers have converted to organic farming. Their main problem is downy mildew, a fungus that attacks vines and other crops. To tackle this problem, producers use copper. This natural pesticide is used in various forms, the best known being Bordeaux mixture, made from lime. The mixture is diluted in vats of water and spread over the vines (three to fifteen times a year).

Copper has several advantages: it is a natural pesticide, downy mildew does not develop any resistance to it and it is an essential trace element for the soil. However, it also has several drawbacks: in high doses it becomes toxic.

In January 2018, the Institute of Organic Agriculture and Food (ITAB) and the National Institute of Agronomic Research (INRA, now INRAE) presented collective scientific opinion on this topic <sup>1</sup>. It is possible to halve the doses used today, but it is currently difficult to do without copper in organic farming.

1. Will the Commission propose the drafting of further reports on this topic?
2. Will it set a timetable for decision-making regarding the use of copper in the organic wine sector?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://reporterre.net/IMG/pdf/expertise-cuivre-en-ab-resume-francais-2.pdf>