

Question for written answer E-001816/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
Angelo Ciocca (ID)

Subject: Counterfeiting of wine from the Terre d'Oltrepò wine cooperative

The Terre d'Oltrepò wine cooperative, established in 2008 following the merger of the Casteggio and Broni wineries, is one of the most famous in Italy. With nearly 700 members and production of some four million bottles, it is the largest wine cooperative in Lombardy, in a region with around 1 700 farms and 13 500 hectares of land planted with vines. The Public Prosecutor's Office in Pavia has recently opened an investigation into the cooperative, holding it liable for the counterfeiting of numerous bottles of sparkling wine.

According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, the cooperative changed some of its labels with the aim of marketing approximately 20 000 litres of Brut sparkling wine which was supposed to have been withdrawn because it contained cyclic diglycerol, a chemical additive prohibited by law. The charge has yet to be proven but, if confirmed, it would be a huge scandal regarding a wine cooperative that has long been receiving EU funds.

Given the seriousness of the charges and the difficulties encountered by the wine sector, and in view of the damage that confirmation of this news could cause to the wine sector, can the Commission say whether – should the charges be confirmed – it will bring a civil action, calling upon those responsible on the board of directors to repay the EU funds which the wine cooperative received during its last term of office?