

**Question for written answer E-000923/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Ignazio Corrao (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Italian legislation preventing the expansion and development of stone mills in southern Italy and holding back the ancient grain sector

Stone milling is a traditional method of semolina production that preserves the most important organoleptic qualities of the seed and is the most suitable for processing 'ancient grains', for which southern Italy is the main 'bastion', with several thousand active stone mills.

However, Presidential Decree 187/2001 (Article 2) and Law 580 of 4 July 1967 prevent the stone-processed product from being defined as semolina, as it does not have the 'sharp edge' requirement, i.e. it does not have a particular geometric shape formed only by durum wheat semolina produced using cylinders, a method which provides higher production levels, but causes the loss of beneficial qualities.

This standard does not ensure that the product is wholesome but, since it is subject to controls by the food authorities required to enforce the law, it effectively and for no reason prevents durum wheat from being processed and the 'semolina' product from being sold. In doing so, it pushes the stone mill sector out of the market and damages the ancient grain sector, both of which are booming in southern Italy.

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1. Is the Commission aware that the stone mill sector is being excluded in that way?
2. Does it consider this state of affairs at odds with EU rules on freedom of enterprise and competition?
3. Will it safeguard and promote the development of stone mills and ancient grains?

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