

ORAL QUESTION H-0121/04

for Question Time at the part-session in March I 2004

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Carlos Lage

to the Commission

Subject: Use of specific traditional wine appellations by third countries

On 23 February 2004, the Commission adopted a package of amendments to Regulation (EC) 753/2002¹ which is allowing the use of specific traditional appellations by third countries. These include tawny, ruby, vintage and late bottled which are exclusive to port wine, and others traditionally used to Madeira wine and various regional varieties produced in Portugal. The amendments adopted by the Commission will most definitely have a negative impact on the production and marketing of all the wines in question, but the effects will be particularly bad in the case of port wine, both because of what it means to the economy of a huge part of the country - the Douro region, where there are 33 000 wine-growers - and, because of its significance in terms of revenue: it accounts for over two-thirds of wine exports, and some one-fifth of agro-food production. Furthermore, the trivialisation of appellations referring only to port wine, its standing and quality, could actually damage the wine's very image at international level.

Given that the Commission has perpetrated this error, does it not think it should now make good the harm it has done, and rescind its decision? What guarantees can the Commission offer that the world image of port wine will not be affected, specifically in terms of its genuineness, reputation and the ease with which it can be identified by the consumer?

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¹ OJ L 118, 4.5.2002, P. 1.