

ORAL QUESTION H-0219/07

for Question Time at the part-session in April 2007

pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure

by Martin Dimitrov

to the Commission

Subject: Amendment of Directive 92/84/EEC with a view to increasing the minimum rates of excise duty on alcoholic beverages

The European Commission proposes (COM(2006)0486 – C6-0319/2006 – 2006/0165(CNS)) to amend Directive 92/84/EEC¹ with a view to increasing the minimum rates of excise duty on alcoholic beverages. This proposal was backed by the argument that since 1992 the minimum rates of excise duty had not been adjusted to take inflation into account, which is 31%.

It is important to note that throughout the last 15 years the existence of minimum excise duties has not led to convergence of the rates of excise duty within the EU. The high excise duty on alcoholic beverages is the main reason and incentive for the increase of smuggling, in Eastern Europe in particular. For instance, taxation of home production of rakia was introduced in Bulgaria, and this caused considerable public discontent.

Does the Commission consider that, in view of the considerable differences in income within the EU, especially after the last two enlargements, there should still be minimum rates of excise duty on alcoholic products?

Tabled: 14.03.2007

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¹ OJ L 316, 31.10.1992, p. 29.