

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0163/02
by Werner Langen (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Sparkling wine production in Italy and Austria

'Prosecco' semi-sparkling wines sold by Italian firms exceed the maximum limit in respect of pressure of semi-sparkling wine clearly laid down in EU wine legislation (maximum 2.5 bar). This infringement was detected in Germany and an appropriate complaint made to Italy. The German methods of measurement used were apparently called into question by the Italian authorities and the matter shelved. Italian firms therefore continue to be permitted to sell proseccos with a pressure of more than 2.5 bar.

The addition of gold leaf to sparkling wines has been banned throughout the EU. However, Austrian sparkling wine producers have now been given special permission to conduct a large-scale trial. As a result, Austrian firms are now selling sparkling wine containing gold leaf without facing competition.

Is the Commission aware of these facts?

What measures does the Commission intend to take to stop the maximum limit in respect of pressure of semi-sparkling wine being exceeded in Italy?

Who gave special permission for a large-scale trial of sparkling wine containing gold leaf in Austria, and does the Commission consider that this trial contravenes competition rules in the European Union?