

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0043/03
by Gian Gobbo (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Introduction of a minimum rate of excise duty on wine

The Commission has apparently drafted a proposal aimed at introducing a minimum rate of excise duty on wine of EUR 0.14 per litre (Lit 270) from 2003 and EUR 0.15 from 2007.

This would constitute a further fiscal and bureaucratic burden on one of the most advanced sectors of European agriculture and one of the most competitive at world level. In many EU countries, including Italy, there is no excise duty on wine and thus its introduction, far from constituting harmonisation of the tax system, would actually represent the levying of a new tax.

Does the Commission not consider that the introduction of excise duty on wine might put producers at a disadvantage? Does it not consider it worthwhile to safeguard and promote European wine production, which has its roots in our civilisation's most distant past and is an integral part of Europe's cultural and religious imagery?