

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0698/05
by Antonio De Poli (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Regulation (EC) No 1576/89: definition of spirit drinks and exclusive use of the designation 'grappa'

Regulation (EC) No 1576/89¹ states in its Article 1(2)(f): 'The name "grape marc" or "grape marc spirit" may be replaced by the designation grappa solely for the spirit drink produced in Italy'.

The Commission is currently considering a proposal for the amendment of this regulation. The amendments would lead to the term 'grappa' no longer being used exclusively by Italian producers. Should it be confirmed, the amendment in question would have severe economic repercussions for the producer firms in Italy, who have, for the last fifteen years, been operating on the assumption of an exclusive designation, as also recognised in a number of bilateral trade agreements with third countries, including South Africa and Canada. In addition, the designation 'grappa', by reason of its very exclusiveness, has become an identifying mark for the Italian productive tradition.

Does the Commission confirm that it intends to propose the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1576/89 in general and Article 1(2)(f) in particular?

What initiatives will the Commission take to ensure the proper protection of the traditional Italian production of 'grappa', also in the context of the competition regime and the internal market?

What reasons would justify any such amendment and the abolition of exclusive rights to the designation, given the existence of the bilateral agreements with third countries?

¹ OJ L 160, 12.6.1989, p. 1