

**Question for written answer P-002127/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Gaston Franco (PPE)

Subject: Treating vines to prevent the spread of flavescence dorée by the leafhopper

On 24 February 2014, a winemaker from the Côte-d'Or department who is a staunch advocate of biodynamic growing methods was called before the regional criminal court for refusing to treat his vines with an insecticide to prevent the spread of flavescence dorée by the leafhopper. He was thus in breach of the prefectural decree of 7 June 2013 'on combating flavescence dorée, the vector and black wood disease in the Côte-d'Or department' issued pursuant to the ministerial decree of 9 July 2003, which states that all Côte-d'Or vineyards must be treated once with an insecticide which has been approved for market use.

In its petition in defence of the biodynamic winemaker, the Institute for the Protection of Natural Life Forms states that 'the least toxic leafhopper insecticide also kills bees and other forms of wildlife' and that there are a number of natural alternatives that can be used to protect vines against the leafhopper just as effectively without harming the environment (e.g. protecting vines with ferns and calcined clay, setting traps for leafhoppers, placing oat straw and aluminium paper between vine stalks, protecting leafhopper predators, etc.).

1. Have the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assessed the impact on bees of treating vines with insecticides in an effort to prevent the spread of flavescence dorée by the leafhopper?
2. Has the Commission assessed how effective the above-mentioned alternative biodynamic methods are in controlling the leafhopper?
3. The flavescence dorée mycoplasma was already listed in Directive 2000/29/EC of 8 May 2000 as a significant harmful organism with a Community-wide presence. Will the new EU plant-health system that is currently being discussed introduce new measures to prevent the spread of flavescence dorée by the leafhopper?