

Ursula VON DER LEYEN  
President of the European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200 / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Bruxelles / Brussel, Belgium

In Velké Bílovice (Czech Republic) on 29 January 2024

Dear Madam President of the European Commission,

On behalf of Czech Grape and Wine Producers Association, I am writing to you to open a dialogue on the future of European winemaking.

The European winemaking and viticulture is facing unprecedented challenges that will significantly influence the shape of the industry in the coming years. Their impact will not just affect European winemakers themselves, but also tens of thousands of people employed in the wine and related industries and ultimately all consumers across EU markets.


The content of the dialogue should be a moderated effort to find a pan-European solution that will help prepare our industry for the uncertain future. As many other agricultural industries, the winemaking is facing the effects of climate changes, whether we are talking about the water scarcity in the landscape, rising temperatures affecting the varietal composition of vineyards or the extreme weather events we are witnessing more and more frequently.

The discussion on aligning the legislative approach to excise duty as a tool for consumer protection and public health impacts should also be an integral part of the dialogue. Although the vast majority of winemaking countries apply the same rules on the wine taxation, the current legislation allows national excise duty rates to fluctuate freely, which may create unequal conditions on the European market. The excise duty then becomes a purely populist instrument that has completely lost its original mission, i.e. to protect consumers and reduce the impact on public health. This behaviour could have disastrous consequences, especially for small wine-producing countries, in the form of closure of the industry that can hardly face and compete on price with massive foreign competition.

The dialogue should also include a discussion on setting rules for marketing which is becoming increasingly important, especially with the rapid emergence of new communication channels in the form of social media. The absence of the common rules and boundaries may negatively affect consumers, but it also represents a significant obstacle for companies to access other EU markets.

I firmly believe that the constructive European dialogue will lead to an improvement of the current situation and, as a result, it will eliminate negative trends that we face as wine-makers. The mere opening of this dialogue will send a clear signal to national governments that, in a sector as sensitive and specific as the wine industry, it is always necessary to think in a pan-European context.

Yours sincerely



PhDr. Martin Chlad  
President of Czech Grape and Wine Producers Association