

# Manifesto

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## The European Independent Winegrowers' proposals



→ *This year holds significant importance for CEVI, as the European elections are scheduled for early June. Given that **Brussels dictates over 50% of the regulations within the wine sector**, these elections present a prime opportunity to convey the positions of European independent winegrowers to the candidates on the eve of this new parliamentary term.*

### ***Winegrowing: A Cornerstone of the European Economy***

The wine sector is a vital contributor to the European Union's economy, generating 130 billion euros in GDP, 52 billion euros in tax revenue, 2.9 million direct and indirect jobs, and attracting over 36 million wine tourists. It serves as **a pivotal economic force across European nations, fostering prosperity, vitality and attractiveness in regions where vineyards thrive, and ensuring the future of the next generations.** Among this sector, Europe's 200,000 independent winegrowers occupy a crucial position, at the head of their small and medium-sized family enterprises (SMEs). Serving as farmers, craftsmen, and merchants simultaneously, independent winegrowers embody **a unique approach to winemaking, from the vineyard to the table, which it is essential to preserve.** Here's how to support them.



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### ***Wine, an Agricultural Product***

Wine isn't merely an industrial alcoholic beverage; **it's fundamentally an agricultural and artisanal product.** That's why it falls under the regulatory purview of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), especially within the framework of the Common Market Organisation (CMO). CEVI advocates for the preservation of this regulatory framework and its budget, **ensuring inclusivity for small-scale producers within the CAP.** This framework provides essential support to winegrowing, including the planting authorisation scheme and aid measures such as investment, vineyard restructuring or promotion in third countries, which allow the wine sector to remain leader on the global stage. Hence, **it's imperative for the future that wine retains its classification as an agricultural product.**

## Supporting economic sustainability

### Guaranteeing access to the single market and Reducing burdens for small businesses

Particularly alarmed by the hindrance posed by excise duties on the marketing of wines within the single market, CEVI has been advocating for years for **the establishment of a 'one-stop shop' for excise duties**. Such a measure would significantly enhance distance selling within the EU, benefiting both producers and consumers. By mitigating the risk of fraud, more winegrowers would be able to offer their products within the EU, thereby enhancing fluidity within the single market.

Ensuring the economic sustainability of family-owned SMEs operated by independent winegrowers also entails **alleviating the administrative burdens that impede their competitiveness**. These small companies don't have the human resources to implement rules that are made for big and multinational businesses. It is therefore necessary to make sure **that regulations do**

**not deprive these enterprises from the support of the EU and its Member States and don't obstruct their development.**

Besides, independent winegrowers' SMEs need **the regulatory framework of the wine sector to be very flexible** so that they can adapt and overcome economic difficulties. This objective entails **extending the expiring planting authorisations.**



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### Ensuring Access to Third Countries Markets

In 2022, wine exports from EU Member States totalled 17.9 billion euros, generating a trade surplus of 15.9 billion euros, which represents 22% of the EU's food trade surplus. But it's paramount to bolster the reputation of EU wines and streamline their marketing efforts to expand their market share. This entails **implementing increasingly competitive strategies on the global stage, including free-trade agreements (FTA), promotional initiatives, and facilitation measures (support to export)**, all geared towards more efficiently winning new markets in third countries. Regarding FTA, CEVI proposes **to include wines and spirits in limited commercial agreements benefiting only to strategic economic sectors**. This would allow the wine sector to expand its market share on global markets without being opposed to the other agricultural sectors that protest against FTAs.

Furthermore, Europe's independent winegrowers bear a heavy burden from trade disputes like the one witnessed in 2021 involving **Airbus and Boeing**. The tariffs imposed during this dispute are currently only on hold. To put an end to this untenable situation, **CEVI urges every possible effort to secure the permanent abolition of these tariff penalties.**

### Support to the wine sector against economic difficulties

The wine sector's position on global markets is both precarious and vulnerable, as recent events have demonstrated: the Brexit consequences, the Airbus-Boeing trade dispute, the global geopolitical situation, the health crisis, and escalating energy costs, among others. Therefore, it's imperative to **establish a safety net such as an emergency fund to shield independent winegrowers** from the challenges and loss in market share that may arise from such situations.

In addition, Member States must be allowed to support economic operators like independent winegrowers when the situation requires a state intervention. To that end, the Commission must supply the Member States with a **European 'toolbox' in which they can choose the best fitted measures to their national situation, including measures related to the management of the winegrowing potential.**

Finally, regarding harvest insurance, the increasing number of weather-related events shows that the historical yield reference based on the Olympic average and used to calculate insurance compensation is irrelevant and makes insurance progressively ineffective. In consequence, CEVI demands the EU to change its regulation so that **harvest insurance can refer to an "average without weather-related events"**.



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## Encouraging Environmental Sustainability

European independent winegrowers have developed a range of environmentally friendly practices, with the majority of them obtaining environmental certification for their wines. Through their involvement 'from the vineyard to the table', these winegrowers stand as formidable allies in the battle against global warming and environmental degradation. Their contributions span from carbon sequestration in the soil to the reduction of carbon emissions through bottle recycling, from advancements in agro-ecology to the pivotal role of vines in combating wildfires. The environmental role of winegrowing is undeniable.

**Yet recent years have shown that southern Europe is burning, while other vineyards are regularly hit by frost or hail, and nothing is being done to stop these damages. Therefore European policies should support independent winegrowers' businesses and give them the tools to efficiently combat climate change (in particular through support to applied research), all without exacerbating their administrative burdens.**



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## Maintaining Social Sustainability

In rural areas, independent winegrowing, with its structure of SMEs rooted in the regions, offers numerous employment opportunities. These jobs, immune to relocation, are a vehicle for social integration for those employed and help counteract rural depopulation by sustaining a stable and growing job market. Hence, there's a pressing need to **facilitate the hiring processes for seasonal workers and support the training processes of skilled employees** to bolster this employment sector and further enhance the contribution of independent European winegrowers to social sustainability.

Moreover, wine production occupies a prominent position in European history and culture. Over time, winegrowing has fostered a distinct 'art de vivre,' attracting a considerable number of tourists to winegrowing regions. Wine tourism emerges as an **important economic driver that needs to be stimulated and developed**, particularly by **improving access to wine tourism areas.**

That is why, as part of its efforts to achieve social sustainability, the EU must **support wine tourism by encouraging dialogue between Member States and independent winegrowers in order to develop schemes enabling visitors to discover winegrowing regions. National Federations of independent winegrowers** being key players in the development of their members' wine tourism communication initiatives, they **should be allowed to benefit from the CAP promotion aid measure targeted at wine tourism.**

## Wine, a product of society

In Europe, as of 8 December 2023, wine became the first product to provide mandatory nutritional information in a digital format, showcasing the avant-garde approach of a sector keen to fulfil its transparency obligations to consumers in a pragmatic way. However, raising awareness about the consequences of harmful alcohol consumption primarily hinges on education. Independent winegrowers, who directly sell a significant portion of their production to consumers, are thus ideally placed to pass on messages and advice to consumers about their wine. While CEVI strongly supports the objective of combating harmful consumption, it emphasises that **moderate wine consumption shouldn't be subject to restrictive measures.**



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In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge **the special nature of European independent winegrowers.** Directly involved in every aspect of the production and marketing of their wines, they epitomise what winegrowing brings to the European Union. **Beyond the economic benefits,** independent winegrowers serve as a **social, environmental, and cultural force at the heart of Europe.** With their daily interactions with both the unpredictability of the climate or the consumers, they embody a European project grounded in our regions, which respects men and women, and strive to preserve the environment. To continue their mission, Europe's independent **winegrowers need the support of future MEPs from across the European Union, specifically through the establishment of an Intergroup,** underscoring the value they place on aiding these essential contributors to Europe's agricultural landscape.

## ***Wine, an Agricultural Product***

Wine must retain its classification as an agricultural product  
The CAP must be inclusive for small-scale producers

## ***Economic sustainability***

Establishment of a 'one-stop shop' for excise duties  
Red tape reduction  
Regulations adapted to SMEs  
Extension of the planting authorisations  
Implementation of tools for more competitiveness  
Integration of wines in limited commercial agreements  
benefiting only to strategic economic sectors  
Resolution of the Airbus-Boeing commercial dispute  
A safety net to shield independent winegrowers  
from challenges on the global stage  
A European 'toolbox' with measures to face crisis situations  
Modification of the Olympic average rule used for harvest insurances

## ***Environmental Sustainability***

Support to the agroecological transition without  
exacerbating administrative burdens  
Support to applied research in order to accelerate  
the agroecological transition

## ***Social Sustainability***

Facilitating the hiring processes for seasonal workers  
Support to the training processes of skilled employees  
Improved access to wine tourism areas  
Opening of the CAP promotion measure targeted at wine tourism  
to federations of independent winegrowers

## ***Wine, a product of society***

No new restrictive measure on moderate wine consumption

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