

Let's remove the obstacles to the development of wine tourism!

The Independent Winegrowers of Europe approach the European Parliament to obtain a unique ad hoc law for the lawful development of wine tourism in Europe

On the initiative of the Member of the European Parliament, Ms **Isabella De Monte** (Italy – S&D, member of the TRAN Committee of the EP), CEVI was invited to attend a Breakfast Meeting to discuss wine tourism. The other MEPs present were:

MEP István Ujhelyi (Hungary – S&D), President of the Tourism Task force at the EP and Vice-President of the Intergroup “Development of European tourism, cultural heritage, ways of Saint James and other European cultural routes”.

MEP Claudia Țapardel (Romania – S&D) and **MEP Silvia Costa** (Italy – S&D), Co-Chair and Vice-President respectively of the same Intergroup.

The socio-economic context has changed the typology and duration of visits. Consumers are looking for quality products whose origins they know. Short stays several times a year are the new pattern. CEVI had the opportunity to present the customised tourism package that an Independent Winegrower can offer. This model is perfectly consistent with the needs of European consumers and rural development. It enhances the value of the land, preserves the landscape, strengthens the bonds in rural territories and creates jobs and related services.

In Europe, however, wine tourism is obstructed by bureaucratic, administrative, fiscal and legislative barriers that only an *ad hoc* law could remove.

Some examples:

- In Italy: winegrowers are not permitted to open the doors of their estates to the visiting public. They are required to form a limited liability company or train for one year in order to obtain membership of Agritourism.

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- In France: there is clearly a barrier to the development of business, as a wine-producing enterprise may not exceed the ceiling of EUR 50,000 for its wine tourism turnover without having to change tax systems.
- In Bulgaria: without a restaurateur's licence, providing customers with as much as a piece of bread to accompany the tasting is not permitted.

The European Parliament proved to be most attentive to our requests and will submit an **oral question** to the Council in the very near future. To reinforce the message, an event will also be planned at the European Parliament during 2018.

At the end of the meeting, the President of CEVI stated: *"We embody the diversity of Europe in our wines and in our land. I am delighted to see that the EP has decided to support us in order to see this diversity shared through wine tourism. In view of the major impact of wine tourism on rural development, we certainly fall within the jurisdiction of the European institutions."*

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