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Brussels, 23.06.2020

Dear Mr Chairman,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 June 2020.

With a view to address the economic consequences of the lockdown following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commission adopted on 30 April 2020 a delegated act introducing a support package for the EU's wine and fruits & vegetables sectors.

The package represents a major overhaul of the wine support policy. Overnight, the Commission was able to shift support from long-term projects towards market measures to address the crisis through a range of measures:

- Introduction of crisis distillation and crisis storage, leaving the flexibility to the Member States to set support rates, quantities and modalities and also allowing for these measures to be topped up with national payments;
- Aid rates for all measures increased by 10 %;
- Introduction of several adaptations of the measures as well as flexibilities for beneficiaries;

Furthermore, the delegated act includes a major set of flexibilities for fruit and vegetables' operational programmes, allowing them to divert a bigger share of their funds towards crisis management.

It has been widely recognised by the Commission, Member States, MEPs and stakeholders in the wine and fruit and vegetables sector that these measures are necessary and urgent. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/592 entered into force immediately and is applicable since the 4th of May. The same goes for the improvements introduced for the fruit and vegetables sector.

I would like to plead with you to see how essential it therefore is that the measures are fully welcome and taken on board by the Parliament. In the heart of the current crisis for the European wine sector, I am afraid it would be difficult to explain any objection to our wine growers and fruits & vegetables producers.

MEP Mr. Norbert Lins
Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development European Parliament
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I am sure we are in agreement that uncertainty over this Regulation's fate unfortunately continues to delay the implementation of crisis distillation and storage and starts to call into question the objective of removing wine quantities from the market in time for the upcoming 2020 harvest. It is also delaying the much needed flexibilities for crisis management in the fruit and vegetables sector.

Keeping the above in mind, I was nonetheless happy to personally participate in the COMAGRI political coordinators group meeting of 9 June 2020 where I indicated my full willingness to explore additional measures that could effectively help the wine sector under the current difficult circumstances.

In this context, I envisage to put forward to the Commission a new standalone complementary package to further alleviate the difficult situation of the wine sector. This could address a range of measures in the following areas:

- planting authorisations,
- aid rates for restructuring, investments, green harvesting and promotion in 3rd countries;
- distillation and storage operations;
- Derogations to some competition rules under Article 222 of the Common Market Organisation Regulation for the wine sector.
- Additional flexibility for fruit and vegetables.

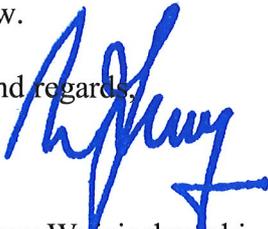
I take this opportunity to confirm that it is possible to use State resources to finance measures under Article 222 of the Treaty, subject to respect of the rules on State aid.

I stand fully ready to take stock of the market situation of fruit and vegetables and of wine in the autumn, once these measures will have been put into place and implemented.

We have both already acknowledged that this very comprehensive package is urgent and necessary and therefore it is essential that COMAGRI can support it now.

None of us need any convincing that the wine and fruit and vegetables sectors need to benefit immediately from all the flexibilities and improvements put forward. All of us have taken the measure of the gravity of the current situation and of the need for urgent action. We have a shared responsibility together with the Member States to help the agricultural economy through this very serious crisis. I sincerely hope that I can count on you and on the European Parliament to allow this support package to benefit EU farmers now.

Kind regards,



Janusz Wojciechowski