



International Federation of
Organic Agriculture Movements –
EU Regional Group

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Working for organic farming in Europe

Dacian Ciolos
European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development
European Commission
BE-1049 Brussels

RE: Sulphite levels in organic wine regulation and future exchange

Brussels, 15 June 2010

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you with regard to the forthcoming SCOF meeting and the decision to be taken on the level of sulphite (SO₂) reduction in organic wine making. As I understand, you plan to maintain your proposal to Members States for a 50mg/l reduction of SO₂ with the added possibility, for three years, of producers to use the current label category “wine made from organic grown grapes” if they cannot comply with this rule.

Whilst the IFOAM EU Group welcomes your effort to get the wine regulation into force in time for the wine harvest this year, we are opposing the “double labelling” solution that anyway would be in force only for three years. Already in October 2009, in our position paper, the organic movement rejected the concept of double labelling as a viable solution since it would create a “two-tier organic” EU standard that would be difficult to explain to the consumer, particularly in the context of the new EU organic logo.

The IFOAM EU Group believes that the best solution is to start with a 30mg/l reduction, with a view to increasing this to 50mg/l after four years (dependent on the outcome of the evaluation and monitoring). The IFOAM EU Group believes this to be the best solution for three reasons: Firstly there is a good chance to achieve a majority in SCOF and the principle of reduction would be introduced. Secondly, after four years of monitoring the Commission can evaluate the position based on sound evidence as to whether a further reduction in SO₂ (from 30mg/l less to 50mg/l less) would be both achievable and feasible, or whether such a move would create major obstacles for some wine producing regions. Thirdly, EU organic wine making rules would start with a feasible level for all existing stakeholders in the market and thus would be widely accepted by the sector.

You know from your own experience that organic farming is a bottom up approach, developed by the organic movement as a whole systems approach with a positive labelling scheme. Therefore I would like to stress the importance of developing the organic regulation and implementing rules in close collaboration with the organic movement. In this context I offer you the opportunity of an ongoing and honest



exchange with the organic sector, through the IFOAM EU Group, to strengthen your commitment to making the most of the opportunity that organic production offers Europe.

The 'wine decision' will have an impact on how organic will be regulated in the future and is thus of crucial importance to the organic sector as represented by the IFOAM EU Group. In view of this, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in the near future to discuss these important matters of principle.

I trust that you will understand our argument and take our views into account.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Stopes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "C".

Christopher Stopes
President