Mr Janusz Wojciechowski  
Commissioner for Agriculture  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium  

Brussels, 28th January 2021

Dear Commissioner,

Following the recent discussion on the trilogue of the sCMO regulation Copa-Cogeca would like to express its serious concerns regarding a recent proposal of the European Commission on the future of the vine planting authorisation system to increase the annual growth rate percentage for new plantings authorisations from 1% of the total national area planted, to 2%, by 2031. So far, the discussions around the vine planting authorisation focused on the extension of the current system beyond 2030. As such, in the final texts endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council ahead of the trilogues, the 1% rate was not touched.

The European wine growers are satisfied with the current vine planting authorisation system, which proved to be efficient and advantageous, and we believe that it should be prolonged as it is, as also proposed by the EP and the Council. This would also ensure a higher level of stability to the sector. We must also maintain the obligation to evaluate the system and make proposals to improve it, if necessary, in the future.

On the other hand, we strongly oppose any increase of the percentage rate for new plantings authorisations by 2031. The current system allows a growth in line with the market evolution, ensuring a dynamic, progressive, and regular development of the vineyard. The existing system of authorizations contributes to prevent sudden increases, structural overproduction, and subsequent decreases in quality. It also helps to maintain the diversity of vineyards in difficult areas.

Increasing the annual growth rate to 2% by 2031, would represent a severe challenge for the wine sector, which is already undergoing serious stress. The accumulation of difficult circumstances such as the imposition by the United States of tariffs on the imports of Union wines in October 2019 and the ongoing restrictive measures due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, along with other trade difficulties, has led to an unbearable market situation.

Extraordinary market measures such as private storage, crisis distillation and green harvesting had to be implemented last Spring to bring some relief to the European winegrowers. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 crisis is far from over and the market situation remains very uncertain.

In light of all the above, Copa-Cogeca cannot support this proposal. We hope that the co-legislators will focus their attention and efforts in understanding and supporting the concerns of the wine sector and maintain the length of the extension of the planting authorisation system.
In the hope that our arguments will be taken into consideration we remain at your disposal for any further clarification.

Yours faithfully,

CC: Mr Wolfgang Burtscher, Director-General of DG Agri