REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL

on the experience acquired during the basic surveys of areas under vines
(in accordance with Article 7 (2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 357/79 of 5 February
1979 on statistical surveys of areas under vines)
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Article 1 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 357/79 of 5 February 1979 on statistical surveys of areas under vines (hereinafter referred to as the "basic Regulation")\(^1\) states that a basic survey of wine-growing holdings and areas under vines must be carried out every ten years. However, an intermediate survey to determine changes taking place in the areas under vines of wine grape varieties that were surveyed during the previous wine-growing year is scheduled on an annual basis\(^2\).

- The basic surveys (Articles 1-4 of the basic Regulation) of all wine-growing holdings and vineyards collect detailed information on areas under vines according to their specialised production of wine grapes, table grapes, grapes for drying or vegetative propagation material for vines, as well as on varieties and age of vines.

- The intermediate surveys (Articles 5-6 of the basic Regulation) relate to changes which have taken place in areas under vines of wine grape varieties during the preceding wine-growing year after they have been grubbed, newly planted or replanted. The production of these areas is also surveyed in order to compile accurate and up-to-date data on wine production potential and supply in the wine sector.

The purpose of this report, which is submitted in accordance with Article 7 (2) of Regulation No 357/79, is to present the results of the third basic survey of vineyards throughout the Community. That survey reviewed the situation on 1 September 1999 of the areas under vines (after grubbings, plantings and replantings during the 1998-1999 wine-growing year). It was conducted in nine Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom). Italy conducted the survey between October 2000 and April 2001, and France between October 2000 and February 2001. For these two Member States, the survey refers to areas under vines on 1 September 2000\(^3\).

2. **METHODOLOGY**

In accordance with Article 3 of Regulation No 357/79, the Member States provide the Commission with a detailed description of the methods used for the basic survey so that the statistical reliability and the comparability of the compiled data can be ensured.

Every Member State complied with the scope of the survey, with the following comments:

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\(^1\) OJ L 54 of 5.3.79, p.124


\(^3\) France and Italy were granted derogation by Council Regulation (EC) N°2329/98 (OJ L291 of 30.10.1998, p.2).
Germany surveyed agricultural holdings with vines of more than 10 ares. Holdings of less than 10 ares were also surveyed if production during the 1998-1999 wine-growing year was destined to be sold. The German survey was exhaustive and statistical information contained in the vineyard register was used. The areas surveyed were those cultivated for the production of quality wine psr and vegetative propagation material for vines (including young plantations not yet producing). The yield classes were calculated on the basis of the average of the last ten years.

Spain conducted a survey in accordance with the Regulation during the wine-growing year. The vineyard register was used, and the survey covered all holdings cultivating vines. The yield classes were calculated on the basis of wine-growers' declarations. It should be noted, however, that the methodology used in 1999 differed considerably from that used in 1989. The differences make it tricky to compare the two surveys.

France surveyed agricultural holdings (as defined for the general census of agriculture) with 5 ares producing champagne, 10 ares producing quality wine psr or 20 ares of any kind of vines, between 1 October 2000 and 28 February 2001. The survey was exhaustive, and adjusted data taken from the vineyard register were used. The yield classes were calculated on the basis of the average of the last five years and used data taken from annual agricultural statistics.

Greece surveyed all holdings with vines if normal production was destined to be sold. The survey was based on a one-stage sample, using random sampling, for all areas under vine stocks during the 1998-1999 wine-growing year. The yield classes were calculated on the basis of wine-growers' declarations.

Italy surveyed holdings of any size with areas under vines for wine or table grapes, even if not yet producing, or areas producing vegetative propagation material for vines, provided that production was normally to be sold. The survey was exhaustive and covered the period from October 2000 to April 2001. The yield classes were calculated on the basis of the average of the last ten years.

Luxembourg conducted the survey during the 1999-2000 wine-growing year, using the vineyard register which is constantly updated and ensures considerable reliability. The survey covered holdings growing varieties of grapes for quality wine psr. The yield classes were calculated on the basis of the ten-year average.

Portugal surveyed all holdings defined in the Regulation. The survey was exhaustive and covered the period from November 1998 to October 1999.

Austria conducted the survey during the 1998-1999 wine-growing year. It covered holdings growing varieties of grapes for quality wines psr and areas for the production of vegetative propagation material for vines. The vineyard register was used for the collection of the data.

The United Kingdom conducted the survey in December 1999 with the help of the vineyard register. The survey covered holdings producing wine grapes for the production of other wines. The vineyard census is not compulsory and excludes holdings with areas under vines of less than 10 ares.
3. **RESULTS**

3.1. **Transmission of results**

Article 4 of Regulation No 357/79 states that the Member States must notify the Commission of the results of the basic survey no later than 15 months after completion of the field work.

The final data were transmitted by the following bodies in charge of carrying out the basic surveys in the Member States:

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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Statistik Austria</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>National Statistical Office, Athens</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Institut Viti-vinicole, Remich</td>
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In view of the difficulties in the Member States with regard to the processing of the data, it can be said that the deadlines for transmission were generally met.

The data are presented in tables previously drawn up by the Commission (Eurostat) and sent in computer-readable format.

As indicated in Article 7 of the basic Regulation, these tables are studied in consultation with the Member States concerned.

The Commission validates the data tables after receiving them. The validation procedure involves a series of intra- and inter-table checks. At the completion of this procedure, a number of adjustments were made to the original data in order to eliminate inconsistencies and make them comparable and reliable.

The data were transmitted in accordance with the stated rules and for all the geographical units as indicated in the implementing decisions of the Commission⁴.

Overall, the results that have been submitted provide useful information on the wine-growing structure of the Member States in question.

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⁴. See References to Commission acts in Note 2 below.
3.2. **Publication of results**

The results of the basic survey will be published in analytical form in 2003 and will offer an overview of the changes in Community vineyards between 1989 and 1999. The full results are available in the Eurostat New Cronos data base under Theme 5 - VITIS.

3.3. **General comments on the results**

Between 1989 and 1999 areas under vines in the EU contracted by 15.7%. This reduction was limited thanks to the arrival of Austria, which joined the European Union in 1995, and the United Kingdom, which conducted the survey for the first time in 1999. If the survey had covered the same scope as in 1989, the reduction would have been 32%.

At 3.2 million hectares, the total area under vines in the European Union declined by 15.7% between 1989 and 1999. This figure is spread among 1.8 million holdings, i.e. a reduction of 30.5%. The average area under vines rose from 1.8 to 2.2 hectares per holding, an increase of 9%.

**General trend throughout the European Union**

In Greece, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal the number of holdings declined by more than 30%. A similar trend affected areas under vines in these countries. In Germany, the reduction in the number of holdings was limited to 11%, while areas under vines increased slightly (+1.9%).

There were significant regional differences within the Member States which took part in the survey, in particular:

- Germany was the Member State where the trends were most evenly distributed.
- In Greece, changes in each region had a significant effect on the geographical distribution of vineyards. There was a reduction in areas under vines of 55% in the Nisia region, which had been ranked first in 1989. As a result, in spite of losing 7.5% of its areas under vines, the region of Kentriki Ellada became the leading wine-producing region in the country.
- In France, the regions of the southeast (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon) recorded a clear reduction, whereas in the southwest and northeast the increases were sometimes quite considerable (+22.5% in Bourgogne).
- In Italy, where vineyards are spread throughout the country, the areas under vines declined in every region, apart from Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.
- In Portugal, there was a similar trend. Every region recorded smaller areas under vines, apart from Alentejo where the figure increased by 30%.

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5 These comments take account of the data as transmitted by the Member States and may be amended when the current work to improve data comparability is completed.
**Big increase in areas producing quality wine**

The vines which are grown in the European Union are mainly for the production of wine grapes. Of the 3.2 million hectares under vines, more than 3 million (95%) are for the production of wine grapes.

Table grapes are grown in five Member States (Greece, Spain, France, Italy and Portugal). Despite a reduction of 41% in the areas under cultivation, Italy alone accounts for 40% of this type of production. There were similar reductions in France, Portugal, Greece and Spain.

Areas under vines for grapes for drying occur virtually only in Greece, but the total area fell by 20% compared with 1989.

The majority of Europe's vineyards are involved in the production of grapes for wine. But wine production has been affected by significant changes.

Quality wines have replaced other wines. The trend is general throughout the Union. Although the number of holdings producing quality wine has fallen by 1.9%, the area under vines for the production of quality wine has risen by 8.1%. The biggest increases occurred in Italy and Portugal, where the figures rose by 21% and 18% respectively. The increases in the other Member States were below 10%.

Areas producing quality wines now outnumber other areas in the Union: 56% in 1999 compared with 45% in 1989. There are still some disparities among the Member States, however. Vineyards in Germany and Luxembourg produce only quality wine, whereas in Italy - in spite of an increase of 22% - quality wines account for only 36% of the country's production.

**Grape varieties suited to soil**

During the survey only areas producing wine grapes are broken down by variety and grouped according to the colour of the grapes (white or red). The choice of a variety depends on soil and weather conditions in the area of cultivation, but also on economic decisions by wine-growers. Consequently, the number of different varieties recorded in a Member State depends to a large extent on the distribution of vines in the country.

- In Germany, where vineyards are mainly in four Länder, white varieties (mainly Weisser Riesling and Müller-Thurgauer) are grown on more than 75% of the area under vines. The situation is similar in Luxembourg and Austria, where white varieties dominate.

- In Greece, red and white varieties are almost equally divided. There is a wider range of red varieties, with five varieties accounting for half of the area producing red grapes. In the case of white varieties, Savvatiano is grown on half of the areas producing white grapes. There has been a sharp decline in the production of white varieties: down from 63% of wine grapes in 1989 to 48% in 1999.

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6 Wine grapes are grapes intended for the production of wine or alcohol.
– In Spain, white varieties dominate and account for 63% of the area under vines. There has been little change since 1989.

– In France, there has been a drop of 7% in red varieties but they still account for 68% of production. The Carignan variety has fallen by 43%, but Merlot and Grenache have increased by 68% and 10% respectively. Among the white varieties, Chardonnay blanc and Sauvignon blanc have gone up by 83% and 74%.

– In Italy, red and white varieties are equally divided and offer a large range. As many as seven red and nine white varieties account for half of the area under vines. Among the red varieties, Barbera and Negro amaro have declined by 40% and 46% respectively.

– In Portugal, there is a slight preference for red varieties (58% of the area under vines). As in Italy, there is a big range. Among the white varieties, Fernão Pires and Vital have declined significantly: down by 39% and 63% respectively.

_Half of holdings smaller than 0.5 ha_

The number of holdings of less than 0.5 ha declined by 33% between 1989 and 1999. They nevertheless continue to account for half of all wine-growing holdings in the European Union, while accounting for 5% of the total area under vines. At the other extreme, vineyards over 9.5 ha account for 5% of the number of holdings but 50% of vines. The downward trend in the number of holdings has thus been accompanied by the merging of areas under vines into holdings of larger size. Holdings of more than 30 ha - which accounted for 15% of total area in 1989 - now account for 19%.

3.4. **Consistency of survey system**

The survey system defined by Council Regulation (EEC) No 357/79 is consistent in that it allows changes (after plantings, replantings and grubbings) occurring in areas under vines to be followed between two basic surveys.

Because different methodologies are used for the basic and annual surveys, it is not unexpected that slight differences occur when figures for the areas under vines are compiled from the different surveys. The extent of these differences must nevertheless remain statistically acceptable.

For five of the seven Member States involved in the surveys of 1989 and 1999 (Germany, Greece, France, Luxembourg and Portugal), the extent of difference is acceptable. Italy and Spain, on the other hand, show discrepancies which call for a marked improvement in the statistical tools used.