The rules concerning the production of wines and grape must are laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1493/1999 of 17 May 1999 on the common organisation of the market in wine (1), and in particular Chapter I of Title V on ‘Oenological practices and processes’. The processes authorised are listed in Annexes IV and V to the Regulation, including in particular the additives and technological aids permitted in the production of wine. All other substances not mentioned in these Annexes are not permitted in the manufacture of wine products.

In spirit drinks which have to comply with the definitions laid down in Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89 laying down general rules on the definition, description and presentation of spirit drinks (2) only the substances specified in the definition of products can be used, as well as the additives permitted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Council Directive 89/107/EEC of 21 December 1988 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States concerning food additives authorised for use in foodstuffs intended for human consumption (3).


Finally, for flavouring these products, only the natural flavouring substances and preparations or flavouring substances and preparations identical to natural ones, as defined in Council Directive 88/388/EEC of 22 June 1988 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to flavourings for use in foodstuffs and to source materials for their production (5), may be used.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-2053/00
by Pedro Marset Campos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission
(27 June 2000)

Subject: Pollution levels in Cartagena (Murcia, Spain)

Cartagena has been one of the seven most polluted towns in Spain since air pollution monitoring began in 1960. The situation has steadily deteriorated since 1996 and unprecedented pollution levels were recorded in 1999.

Various studies that have been carried out by experts into the effects of pollution in Cartagena point to an increase in the mortality rate, in the use of health care services, in respiratory disorders and other illnesses and in the use of medicines. The findings of those studies have however been kept from the public for fear of causing alarm.

The latest outbreaks of pollution have caused anger in political and cultural circles and among civil society. The criticism has been aimed mainly at Potasas y Derivados, a company based in El Hondón, which, over the past weeks, has exceeded the permitted air pollution levels on an almost daily basis, leading the local environmental authorities to order the company to reduce the plant's output for a period of over twelve hours.

The conclusion of an agreement for the company's relocation has raised much controversy owing to the fact that it sets no deadline for either the shut-down of the current plant or the necessary investment in the new plant, simply stating that the El Hondón plant will remain in production until the new plant is brought into operation.
1. Is the Commission aware of this alarming situation?

2. Would it not agree that the following directives have been breached:

   (a) Council Directive 84/360/EEC (1) on the combating of air pollution from industrial plants:

   (b) Council Directive 92/62/EC (2) on ambient air quality assessment and management;

   (c) Council Directive 1999/30/EC (3) relating to limit values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and
oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air;

   (d) Council Directive 90/313/EEC (4) on the freedom of access to information on the environment?

3. Can the Commission say how this situation is being followed up?


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**Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission**

(7 September 2000)

The Honourable Member specifies just one plant, 'Potasas y Derivados', which, according to the limited
information in the hands of the Commission, produces fertilizers and has not been subject to any
investigation by the Commission in the past.

1984 on the combating of air pollution from industrial plants (1) (no production threshold is specified in
Annex I, p. 4 of the Directive). The Commission has no information about either current emission levels or
emission limit values established in the operating permit of this plant. This information is essential for
assessing compliance with the Directive. Under Article 13 of the Directive 'Member States shall implement
policies and strategies, including appropriate measures, for the gradual adaptation of existing plants
belonging to the categories given in Annex I to the best available technology, taking into account in
particular the plant's technical characteristics, its rate of utilization and length of its remaining life, the
nature and volume of polluting emissions from it, the desirability of not entailing excessive costs for the
plant concerned, having regard in particular to the economic situation of undertakings belonging to the
category in question.'

It appears that the Spanish authorities have taken measures to solve the problem. According to the
Spanish newspaper La verdad http://www.laverdad.com/servicios/especiales/municipios99/muamu55.htm it
was recently agreed to relocate the plant within three years.

Member States are responsible for ensuring the observance of air quality limit values for sulphur dioxide
values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates (2), for lead (Council Directive 82/
884/EEC of 3 December 1982 on a limit value for lead in the air) (3) and for nitrogen dioxide (Council
has not been informed that these limit values have been exceeded.

dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and lead in ambient air (6) taken together require
Member States to assess concentrations of sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter (PM10) and lead in accordance with new requirements from 19 July 2001. New limit values for sulphur dioxide, PM10 and lead are to be met by 1 January 2005 and for nitrogen dioxide by 1 January 2010. Member States will have to develop attainment programmes for the worst areas, showing how the limit values will be met on time.

Article 3(1) of Council Directive 90/313/EEC of 7 June 1990 on the freedom of access to information on the environment (7) states that Member States shall ensure that public authorities are required to make available information relating to the environment to any natural or legal person on request and without having to prove an interest. Paragraph 4 of the said Article points out that a public authority shall respond to a person requesting information as soon as possible and at the latest within two months. The reasons for a refusal to provide the information requested must be given. However, Article 4 of the same Directive indicates that a person who considers that a request for information has been unreasonably refused or ignored, or has been inadequately answered by a public authority, may seek a judicial or administrative review of the decision in accordance with the relevant national legal system. In these circumstances and in the light of the information available to it, the Commission does not see that Directive 90/313/EC has been breached in the case concerned.

The summary information supplied by the Honourable Member does not enable the Commission to presume that the abovementioned Community Directives have been breached. However, the Commission does not rule out the possibility of investigating the question raised by the Honourable Member in more detail if he is able to provide information with evidence of a breach of the Community law applicable.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-2055/00
by Pervenche Berès (PSE) to the Commission
(27 June 2000)

Subject: LPG vehicles

Given that differences in national regulations governing motor vehicles fitted with LPG systems and the lack of mutual recognition arrangements continue to hamper freedom of movement within the Union, does the Commission intend to submit a proposal for a directive seeking to facilitate the free movement of such vehicles and their type-approval by each Member State, while ensuring that high safety standards are maintained?

Answer by Mr Liikanen on behalf of the Commission
(7 September 2000)


The Council's adoption of this decision, following Parliament's opinion, will make it possible to incorporate Regulation No 67 in the vehicle type-approval system and thus to supplement applicable legislation in the Community. The Regulation will be published in the Official Journal before its entry into force.

Regulation No 67, as amended, aims in particular to eliminate technical barriers to trade in motor vehicles while ensuring high standards of safety and environmental protection.