

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(93) 360 final

Brussels, 16 September 1993

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks (BEVABS)

Statement

The Commission wishes to inform the Council and Parliament that it has set up a special unit, the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks (BEVABS) within the Institute for the Environment at the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra. It will carry out such scientific and technical duties as will allow the Commission to observe whether Community provisions in the wine sector are being properly implemented.

Justification

It is the responsibility of the individual Member States to take the necessary steps to ensure that Community provisions in the wine-growing sector are being properly adhered to.

Experience in intra-Community trade has revealed a need for cooperation and concerted action on the part of the bodies to which the Member States have delegated this task. One area of concern which has major economic implications and also presents a number of problems at scientific level relates to the interpretation of analytical results obtained for the same product by official laboratories in different Member States. This is particularly relevant with regard to certain modern analysis methods such as nuclear magnetic resonance and mass spectrometry which are used to detect illegal chaptalization, adulteration of wine and false declarations of origin.

The European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks at the Institute for the Environment of the JRC in Ispra, as a Community body with a high level of scientific expertise and specialized high-performance equipment, can provide Member States with the assurance that scientific cooperation between official laboratories is organized efficiently and that disputes between Member States over the interpretation of analytical results are handled objectively in true Community spirit.

The European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks works in close cooperation with the specialized departments responsible for the wine sector within the Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture (DG VI) in Brussels. The scientific and technical work carried out by this Office complements the activities of the Commission's special agents who are responsible for cooperating with the fraud prevention and control authorities in the Member States.

Implementation

On the basis of previous cooperation between the JRC and DG VI to address the problems of controlling the chaptalization of wine, initiated in 1988 and definitively established by an official bilateral agreement for the period 1992-94, and of the considerations referred to above, the Commission decided to set up the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks within the Institute for the Environment of the JRC in Ispra.

Funding for the establishment of the Office has come from the budgetary heading reserved for support for other Commission departments and will continue on the same basis up to and including the 1994 budget year. It is intended to continue funding after 1994 by incorporating the Office into the fourth Framework Programme, measure 1, under the heading Life Sciences and Technologies.

The Office will have the administrative status of a department within the Unit for the Analysis of Foodstuffs and Medicinal Products of the Institute for the Environment at the JRC. It will have its own departmental head, i.e. it will form part of the JRC in legal and financial terms. It will be developed over a number of years before reaching its full potential in 1996. According to current estimates of the workload involved, the Office should attain full capacity with a dozen staff.

Details of the type of work to be carried out by the Office are given below. However, it is probable that additional duties connected with the implementation of other aspects of wine sector legislation will be assumed by the Office at a later date.

Brief description of work to be carried out by the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks

Council Regulation (EEC) No 2048/89 laying down general rules on controls in the wine sector¹ laid down in Article 16(2) that the Commission would set up an analytical database for wine-sector products at the Joint Research Centre with the aim of coordinated and uniform application of the methods of analysis, in particular those based on nuclear magnetic resonance.

The rules for setting up and operating the database were laid down in Regulation (EEC) No 2348/91². They can be summarized as follows:

- The database will contain only data obtained from the analysis of wine products by nuclear magnetic resonance of the deuterium contained in the ethyl alcohol of the wine product being analyzed.

¹ OJ No L 202, 14.7.1989, p. 32.

² OJ No L 214, 2.8.1991, p. 39.

- Collection at the JRC in Ispra of results of analyses obtained by nuclear magnetic resonance in Member States and by the JRC itself, by analyzing samples taken by the Member States in order to examine the link between the quantity of deuterium in the product and the geographical area in which the grapes were harvested.
- Control analysis of at least 10% of the results of analyses obtained by nuclear magnetic resonance in the Member States.

The collection of fresh grape samples and their treatment and processing into wine destined for analysis by nuclear magnetic resonance of the deuterium is governed by Regulation (EEC) No 2347/91³.

Furthermore, the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks is responsible for the analysis of wine or alcohol samples taken at the instigation of Commission control agents.

The Commission is in the process of establishing mass spectrometry as the official method for the quantitative analysis of the distribution of oxygen and carbon isotopes in wine or wine products. This method can be used to detect adulteration of the products and, if necessary, it can verify the results of analyses of deuterium obtained by nuclear magnetic resonance. It would be appropriate, therefore, to expand the analytical database at the JRC in the near future and also to increase the number of control analyses carried out by the laboratory of the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks, i.e. the quantitative analyses of oxygen and carbon isotopes in wine products.

³ OJ No L 214, 2.8.1991, p. 32.

In conjunction with the Directorate-General for Agriculture, the European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks is to play an active role in handling disputes between Member States. If the disagreement centres on the interpretation of analyses of the same product, the Office will try to reconcile the positions of the parties concerned by instituting a process of arbitration which has still to be established.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks

Budget Estimate (Million ECU)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	TOTAL
Wages and General expenses	0.6	0.8	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	7.8
Specific expenses	0.45	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.3	5.65
Total	1.05	1.4	2.2	2.8	3.0	3.0	13.45

The budget for 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 will be defined under the fourth Framework Programme*.

1. Title of Project: European Office for Wine, Alcohol and Spirit Drinks

* From 1995: The total appropriation will depend on the Council's decision on the special programmes for the JRC within the fourth Framework Programme, in particular Measure 1, Life Sciences and Technologies.

The order of magnitude of the expenditure envisaged during the period 1995-98 will be ECU 11 million at current prices with the following provisional timetable:

	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Wages and general expenses	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	6.4
Specific expenses	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.3	4.6
Total	2.2	2.8	3.0	3.0	11.0

2. Budget headings concerned:

Chapter B6-11	Joint Research Centre, staff
Chapter B6-12	Resources
Article B6-421	Joint Research Centre: Support for the Commission's Departments

3. Legal basis

- Article 8 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM)
- Council Resolution of 29 April 1992 concerning the activities to be undertaken by the Joint Research Centre (OJ No C 118, 9 May 1992, page 8)
- Council Regulation (EEC) No 2048/89 of 19 July 1989, Article 16(2), and (EEC) Nos 2347/91 and 2348/91 of 29 July 1991 on the collection of samples of wine products for the purposes of cooperation between Member States and for analysis by nuclear magnetic resonance, including analysis for the purposes of the Community database.

4. Description of project

4.1. Specific objective of the project

Application of Community legislation in the area of control by nuclear magnetic resonance of the adjustment of the potential and actual alcoholic strength of grape must or wines by the addition of sucrose.

- Article 16(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2048/89 of 19 July 1989 on the establishment of an analytical database for wine-sector products at the JRC.
- Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2676/90 of 17 September 1990, Annex 8: nuclear magnetic resonance method¹.
- Council Regulation (EEC) No 2347/91 of 29 July 1991 on the collection of samples of wine products for the purposes of cooperation between Member States and for analysis by nuclear magnetic resonance, including analysis for the purposes of the Community database at the JRC in Ispra.
- Council Regulation (EEC) No 2348/91 of 29 July 1991 on a database for the results of analyses by nuclear magnetic resonance of deuterium.

4.2. Duration

Renewable specific measure.

From 1995 on, it should be included as a specific project in the fourth Framework Programme under Measure 1, Life Sciences and Technologies.

4.3. Parties concerned

The Commission (DG VI) and the competent national authorities.

5. Classification of expenditure

Non-compulsory expenditure, differentiated appropriations.

¹ OJ No L 272/90, p. 1.

6. Type of expenditure

The appropriations are intended to cover the various expenses of this project:

- personnel costs
- scientific and technical support costs
- general expenses
- specific expenses comprising:
 - . equipment
 - . operational costs
 - . maintenance of premises and equipment
 - . external research contracts
 - . working meetings and all expenses linked directly with the implementation of the project.

7. Budgetary implications

7.1. Method of calculating the total cost

The same calculation method is used as for other activities of the JRC: commitment of the resources necessary for the implementation of the proposed projects.

7.2. Financial planning

Not applicable in this case (renewable specific measure) owing to the nature of the financing proposed for 1993 and 1994 in the context of the annual budget decisions.

Nonetheless the project is an ongoing activity which should be proposed for inclusion in the fourth Framework Programme, Measure 1, under the heading Life Sciences and Technologies.

8. Proposed fraud prevention and control measures

A system of internal control at the JRC and financial control.

9. Cost benefit analysis

9.1. Assessment and analysis of objectives

This is a measure to support the Commission's departments and the Member States: Activities can be briefly summarised as follows:

- Establishment of an analytical database for wine sector products intended for the coordinated and uniform application of analysis methods, in particular those based on nuclear magnetic resonance.
- Analysis of wine or alcohol samples taken at the instigation of Commission control agents.
- Preparations for the acceptance of mass spectrometry as the official method for the quantitative analysis of the distribution of oxygen and carbon isotopes in wine and other wine products.
- The handling of possible disputes concerning Member States' interpretation of analyses of the same product.

9.2. Justification of operations

Member States should take the measures necessary to ensure compliance with Community rules in the wine sector. Experience in intra-Community trade has demonstrated the need for collaboration and consultation between the bodies responsible for this task in the Member States to be organised at Community level. This is particularly important for the application of certain modern analysis methods including nuclear magnetic resonance and mass spectrometry.

The independent status and skills of the JRC equip it to be an arbitrator in the event of disputes between two Member States.

9.3. Assessment

- This project will be analyzed and assessed in the same way as all other projects undertaken by the JRC. The results thus obtained will be subject to annual assessment in the context of the Commission Support Programme.
- Details of all JRC projects are contained in the project sheets which are submitted to the JRC Board of Governors for approval. These project sheets contain details of the different stages of the various research and development projects underway.

- Furthermore, the objectives, necessary resources and results obtained will be subject to regular assessment. The Office will be more or less independent as far as its scientific work is concerned but it will receive advice at regular meetings of an ad hoc committee made up of representatives of the Member States, DG VI and the JRC.

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DOCUMENTS

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Catalogue number : CB-CO-93-388-EN-C

ISBN 92-77-58141-7

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

L-2985 Luxembourg