

11/5/17

Press Release

Copa and Cogeca warn of adverse impact of frost on EU vineyards

The European farm and agri cooperative organisations (Copa and Cogeca) warned today of the adverse impact of the cold spell and frost hitting the vineyards in many Member States.

At Copa and Cogecas' Wine Working Party, many of our members, notably from the big wine producing countries - France, Spain, Italy, Germany - complained of poor weather conditions in their countries, especially frost, which is expected to have a bad impact on this years' wine harvest.

Speaking in Brussels, Chairman of Copa and Cogecas' Wine Working Party Thierry Coste said "France was badly hit by frost in April and there is a risk of further damage in May. It's impossible at this stage to give precise figures concerning the estimated harvest losses but we have a good indication of the most affected areas. Alsace was the worst affected whilst in the Champagne region, 20-25% of the buds were destroyed. The Languedoc-Roussillon region and the Rhone Valley were also badly affected, with 20-50% of the vines affected in Aude and 60-70% of vines in the Ventoux region damaged. Also in the Loire Valley, around 40-50% of the vineyards were affected whilst in the Bordeaux regions, losses of about 50% are estimated".

The Italian agriculture sector also suffered from the bad weather in April, with late spring frost causing serious damage to the vineyards. In Tuscany, for example, damage to the vineyards is estimated at around 80 million euros following the destruction of more than 20% of production due to frost. Serious damage was seen in the areas of Chianti, Chianti Classico and Chianti Rufina, where some winegrowers have lost up to 90% of production.

In Spain, almost 18, 000 hectares of grape production have been hit by severe frost in late April, Spanish representatives warned. The regions of Castilla y León and Rioja are the most affected as well as Galicia and Navarra and some parts of Aragon and Catalonia. In Castilla y León, over 7000 hectares of wine grapes were damaged which is expected to cause some big losses to the sector, they added.

Vineyards in the Czech Republic have also been damaged by frost, with a 15-20 % yield reduction seen in Southern Moravia which has a vine area of 17,000 ha. Whilst in Austria, there were some problems with late frost affecting the vineyards, especially in Styria and in Burgenland. The damage at the moment is estimated at 20% in Styria and Burgenland and 10% in Lower Austria, and it could deteriorate further, Austrian representatives claimed.

In the Netherlands, severe frost was seen in late April across the whole country which damaged multiple vineyards, especially the earlier varieties, but the extent of the damage will depend on how the varieties survive and a clearer picture will be seen in the coming weeks. German vineyards also suffered from the drop in temperature and frosts in late April which caused considerable damage in the wine-growing regions. It is too early to estimate the precise extent of the damage but it is certain that the late frost caused considerable losses and the cold spell isn't yet over. More frost is expected to come, German representatives warned.

Vineyards in Slovenia and Croatia also suffered. The extent of the damage is still being assessed but initial estimates show that about 60 % of Slovenian production will be affected whilst in Croatia, 80-90% of the vineyards were affected in some areas. In the western wine regions of Hungary, damages are estimated at between 30-40% in these regions.

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