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European Wine Policy and Perceptions of Moravian  
Winemakers:  
Theoretical Background with an Empirical Study

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## **Abstract**

### **Petr Koráb: European Wine Policy and Perceptions of Moravian Winemakers: Theoretical Background with an Empirical Study**

European wine policy is a significant factor influencing winemakers in the European Union. This paper examines perception of this policy by winemakers and other persons working in Czech wine sector on the sample of respondents. Methodological triangulation consisting of non-structured interview and semantic differential was chosen. Field research was carried out, therefore the study uses primary data. Application of the methodology along with the method of evaluation of data creates an original approach which may be applied on several other research questions. General perception of European Wine Policy is complemented with its impact on competitiveness, practical running of vineyards and winery and on future development of winery. Data is statistically evaluated within categories of respondents. Special emphasis is placed on direct payments as a controversial factor of the policy. The policy is perceived as bureaucratic (“all respondents”  $\bar{x} = 4.56$ ), and among micro winemakers discriminating ( $\bar{x} = 4.5$ ), selfish ( $\bar{x} = 4.5$ ) and malfunctioning ( $\bar{x} = 3.5$ ). “Professional” winemakers perceive the impact on competitiveness in the Czech market as rather positive ( $\bar{x} = 2.67$ ). This study represents pilot research on perception of European Wine Policy by owners of wineries, viticulturists, micro winemakers, a sommelier and a representative of marketing-supporting institution, conducted in the Czech Republic. The author provides a brief overview of key features of European Wine Policy and also outlines further direction of research.

## **Key words**

Common Organization of the Market in Wine, Common Agricultural Policy, field research, semantic differential, non-structured interview, semi-qualitative research, methodological triangulation

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## Introduction

Winemaking in the European Union is regulated through European wine policy (EWP), or more exactly within the Common Organization of the Market in Wine. As part of Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), the EWP, it is often blamed for unfair practices, mostly with the regard to different distribution of subsidies (direct payments) between member states. However, to the author's knowledge, there has been no research on perceptions of the policy by winemakers in the Czech Republic. EWP is a seldom investigated topic. Unwim (1994) provides an overview of the European wine sector policy and the United Kingdom wine industry, a number of other papers deal with the European wine sector from the perspective of trade (Perju, 2009), consumer behaviour (Allamani, Voller, Kubicka, Bloomfield, 2000) or deal with specific areas of wine economics (Costanigro, McCluskey, Mittelhammer, 2007; Golan, Shalit, 1993; Brady et al., 2009).

As far as Czech and Moravian wine sector is concerned the situation is similar with papers dealing mainly with economic (Chládková, Tomšík, Gurská, 2009; Tomšík, Žufan, 2004; Tomšík, Žufan, Sedlo, 2006; Chládková, Pošváb, Žufan, 2004; Hejmalová, Šperková, 2011; Šperková, Hejmalová, 2011; Tomšík, Prokeš, 2011), and agricultural issues (Jančářová et al. 2005; Šulc, Lachman, Hejtmánková, Orsák, 2005).

This paper therefore presents a pilot study based on personal interviews with Moravian winemakers and persons working in Czech wine sector. On the basis of the sample of respondents, the purpose of this paper is to identify the perception of respondents of European wine policy (i.e. attitude to it and reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction) in selected areas of their performance. Investigation of possible differences in perception of the European Wine Policy among categories of respondents is the second objective. With evaluated data from two methods of research (semantic differential and non-structured interview) conclusions are made with suggestions of further research.

## 1 European wine policy: theoretical background

European Wine Policy is based on three basic pillars (EC, 2006): Regulation of the supply of wine, quality support and mechanisms of regulation of the market. As the EU faces overproduction of wine, new planting is regulated with only limited rights for renewal of vineyards. Quality of wines is a preferred aspect within the EWP. It includes implementation of oenological standards, preservation of appellation systems in member states and restrictions with the aim of supporting high quality production. Because of the overproduction, the EU uses measures such as crisis distillation or distillation premium to cope with the situation.

Adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 2008, Regulation (EC) 479/2008 thoroughly reorganises the way the EU wine market is managed, in order to ensure the EU wine production matches demand, eliminate wasteful public intervention in EU wine markets and redirect spending to make European wine more competitive.

Most of these new rules apply from 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2008 (as due to Regulation (EC) 555/2008). The rest of these rules (mainly wine-making practices and labeling) applies from 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2009. The implementing rules for these parts were published in 2009 (Commission Regulations (EC) 436/2009, 606/2009 and 607/2009. Main points of the revised wine common market organization, as stated in the above-mentioned laws, are:

**National financial envelopes** allow that redirected distillation subsidies provide a funding budget for each country so they can adapt measures, such as promotion outside the EU, innovation, restructuring and modernization of the production chain, support for green harvesting, crisis

management, etc., to their particular situation, and also choose how to allocate funding to individual vineyards.

**Rural development and environmental protection in wine-producing areas** ensure more help for young wine producers, improved marketing, professional training, compensation for lost revenue due to maintaining landscape or early retirement.

**Planting rights** mean the end to the restrictive planting regime at EU level from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 (although some national restrictions may remain until 2018).

**Phasing-out of distillation schemes** means gradual withdrawal of distillation subsidies. As far as emergency distillation is concerned, funding is to be falling from maximally 20% to maximally 5% of the national funding budget over four years to 2012. In case of distillation into alcohol for the use in spirits, the funding is phased out over four years. Payments in the transition period will be replaced by a single flat-rate payment per producer.

**Introduction of single farm payment.** Decoupled Single Farm Payment is to be distributed to wine grape growers at the Member States' discretion and to all growers who grub up their vines.

**Grubbing-up**<sup>1</sup> rapidly reduced wine production, mainly through a voluntary withdrawal scheme taking 175 000 ha out of production via decreasing subsidies over three years, to reduce production of uncompetitive wines, cut surpluses and compensate producers by offering them an alternative. The EU or individual countries may limit the amount of withdrawals in certain cases, to maintain a minimum regional or national wine-producing area, protect the environment or maintain cultivation in mountainous or hilly areas.

**Wine-making practices** set responsibility for approving new winemaking practices (or changing existing ones) transferred to the Commission. Practices approved by the International Vine and Wine Office (IWO) are to be assessed and added to the EU list of approved practices.

**Simpler labeling rules** are in the interests of producers and consumers. Quality will be based on protected geographical indications or designations of origin. Well-established traditional national quality-labeling schemes will be kept, and simplified labeling rules will allow EU wines to be labeled for grape variety and vintage.

In the case of **Chaptalisation**<sup>2</sup>, the laws set lower limits for added sugar and must, with exceptions for particularly unfavourable climatic conditions. **Aid for the use of must** after 4 years will be converted into flat-rate subsidies to wine growers.

The CAP, and EWP as its part, are controversial policies of the EU. The main criticism relates to distribution of direct payments, i.e. subsidies, for every farmer or winemaker, between “new” member states and the “old” ones<sup>3</sup>. The volumes of payments have been converging in a predetermined pattern, which means that the differences are shrinking (see Table 4). The system should reflect different conditions such as price level and geographical specifics, but it is often criticised as unfair and discriminating, especially from farmers in states joining the EU after 2003.

It is not only because of different distribution of direct payments, but also because of minimum size of eligible area per holding for which payments may be requested. “New” states may request subsidies for winemakers with minimum area of vineyard of 1 ha, while the limit for “old” states is 0.3 ha, ((EC) No 73/2009). This is a crucial point for the research which was conducted among winemakers and other people working in the Czech wine sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Grubbing-up means to pull the vines up by the roots and replace them with other agricultural crops.

<sup>2</sup> Chaptalisation is a way of enriching the must with sugar, with the aim of obtaining a higher degree of alcohol in the wine.

<sup>3</sup> “Old states” is a term for EU 15, “New states” are countries which entered the European Union after 2003, including Czech Republic as well as Romania and Bulgaria joining in 2007.

Table 4: Convergence in direct payments of "old" and "new" member states

	"New" member states (without Bulgaria and Romania)	Bulgaria, Romania
2009	60 % of "old" member states	35 %
2010	70 %	40 %
2011	80 %	50 %
2012	90 %	60 %
2013	100 %	70 %
2014		80 %
2015		90 %
2016		100 %

Source: ((EC) No 73/2009)<sup>4</sup>

## 2 Methodology

As the methodological approach triangulation of methods was used, i.e. combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Benefits of such combination are (Koráb, 2011) maximisation of methodological power of qualitative and quantitative research while elimination of their disadvantages. Triangulation also allows to reduce the necessary number of respondents in the sample. The selected methods were semantic differential (semi-quantitative/semi -qualitative) and non-structured interview (qualitative research). Semantic differential is a method for measuring attitudes towards specific problems, people, or issues. It provides, to some extent, standardised data, and at the same time it measures the respondents' attitude towards a particular problem (subjectivity), (Pavlica, 2000). For measuring the attitude and perception of respondents of a particular problem, semantic differential uses scales which generally have a seven-point structure (Al-Hindawe, 1996). Firstly developed by Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957), semantic differential scales may be used for measuring attitude in marketing (Garland, 1990), finance (MacGregor, Slovic, Dreman, Berry, 2000) or education (Whitney, Soukup, 1988). As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) state, "the respondent is asked to rate a single object or idea on a series of bipolar rating scales. Each bipolar scale is described by a pair of opposite adjectives designed to capture respondents' attitudes towards service".

The method of semantic differential is rarely used for measuring perception of respondents in agricultural sector. However, Degner, Stevens and Morgan (2002), Mahon (2005), and Veeman and Unterschultz (2000) conducted their research with methodology including semantic differential scales. The research methodology also includes non-structured interview which does not require exact list of questions or their exact formulation (Disman, 2000). The sample consists of 11 respondents (see Table 1).

Each respondent was given a semantic differential scale (see Table 2) and was interviewed. Interview included questions relating to occupation of the respondent, size of the vineyard, satisfaction with current business (legal) environment in the Czech Republic, main reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction, entrepreneurial activities in foreign markets, exporting to European and non-European countries, factors influencing exports, impact on winery after 2008 when the overhaul of European wine policy was carried out and ambitions for the future. However, it was difficult to

<sup>4</sup> 100 % represents the basis for comparison of direct payments for "old" and "new" EU states, where "new" states receive only a fraction of the amount of the subsidies compared to "old" states.

collect data from all respondents through both research methods, as some of them could not provide a relevant answer or, in the case of micro-winemakers, their business activity<sup>5</sup> could not be measured.

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample of respondents

No.	Categories	Characteristic	Region/Sub-region(Location)
1	Professional winemaker, <sup>6</sup> All winemakers, All respondents	Owner	Morava / Mikulovská podoblast
2	Professional winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents	Director	Morava / Mikulovská podoblast
3	Professional winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents	Owner	Morava / Velkopavlovická podoblast
4	Professional winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents	Owner	Morava / Mikulovská podoblast
5	Professional winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents	Viticulturist	Morava / Mikulovská podoblast
6	Professional winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents	Viticulturist	Morava / Mikulovská podoblast
7	Micro- winemaker <sup>7</sup> , All winemakers, All respondents		Morava / Slovácká podoblast
8	Micro- winemaker, All winemakers, All respondents		Morava/ Slovácká podoblast
9	All- respondents	Sommelier	Currently working in Prague
10	All- respondents	Producer of equipment for winemaking	Morava / Slovácká podoblast
11	All- respondents <sup>8</sup>	Director of The Wine Fund of the Czech Republic	Brno

Through semantic differential scales, respondents evaluated terms (European wine policy, Impact of EWP on competitiveness in domestic market, impact of EWP on practical running of vineyards and winemaking and Impact of EWP on future development of winery) on a seven-point scale, deciding between opposite adjectives. The more the adjective reflects the respondents' attitude, the closer the respondent marked towards it. The scales were handed to respondents, who marked their responses on sheets of paper.

For measuring attitude to terms *Impact of EWP on competitiveness in the Czech market*, *impact of EWP on practical running of vineyards and winery* and *Impact of EWP on future development of winery*, only adjectives positive/negative, useful/useless, satisfying/irritating, financially

<sup>5</sup> It is clear from the definition of a micro winemaker who produces wine only for his own consumption and does not sell wine in large scale.

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this paper, a professional winemaker produces wine in large scale under corporate name, while a micro winemaker regards wine production as hobby, produces wine for own consumption and has a different occupation. The dividing line is 1 ha of area of vineyards.

<sup>7</sup> Only results of qualitative research were used.

<sup>8</sup> Only results of qualitative research were used.

advantageous/ financially disadvantageous, important/unimportant and supporting/discriminating, were used.

Table 2: Semantic differential scale – European Wine Policy

	European wine policy							
	Totally	very	Rather	neither	rather	very	totally	
Positive								Negative
Useful								Useless
Satisfying								Irritating
Financially advantageous								Financially disadvantageous
Important								Unimportant
Supporting								Discriminating
Liberal								Directive
Modern								Out of date
Safe								Dangerous
Easy-to-understand								Confusing
Practical								Theoretical
Generous								Selfish
Transparent								Corrupt
Administratively undemanding								Bureaucratic
Well-functioning								Malfunctioning
Developing								Stagnating

As the method of evaluation of results we used an approach proposed by Koráb (2011). It is based on calculation of mean score of figures which relate to the respondents' marking on semantic differential scales. As opposite adjectives are used and, generally, adjectives with positive meaning were placed on the left side of the scale while adjectives with negative meaning on the right, calculation of mean score suggests how positively or negatively respondents perceive each particular term (see Table 3).

Table 3: Method of evaluation of results

Verbal assessment	Totally	Very	Rather	Neither	Rather	Very	Totally
Figure for calculation of $\bar{x}$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Non-structured interviews were then used to identify details and connections which could not be identified by semi-quantitative research (as argues Disman, (2000)).



### 3 Pilot study on perception of the European Wine Policy in the Czech Republic: results

The results of the empirical analysis revealed that, generally, respondents do not perceive EWP as discriminating. But there are differences between categories of respondents. Micro winemakers do feel discriminated. During interviews they stated that because of the size of their vineyards they do not receive any support from the European Union. Micro winemakers, for the same reason, consider EWP to be selfish and malfunctioning.

Bureaucracy is a problem for all categories of respondents. They mostly mentioned duties with grubbing-up, rights for planting and procedures of vinification.

Table 5: Results: European wine policy

	European wine policy			
	Categories			
	All resp	All winm	Prof	Micro
Adjectives	$\bar{x}$			
positive/negative	3.22	3.00	3.00	3
useful/useless	3.11	3.14	3.00	3.5
satisfying/irritating	3.56	3.43	2.67	4.5
financially advantageous/disadvantageous	3.33	3.29	<b>2.67</b>	<b>4</b>
important/unimportant	3.00	2.86	2.00	3
supporting/discriminating	3.67	3.29	<b>2.67</b>	<b>4.5</b>
liberal/directive	4.44	4.14	3.33	4.5
modern/ out of date	<b>2.78</b>	2.86	2.33	2.5
safe/dangerous	3.33	3.29	3.00	3.5
easy to understand/ confusing	3.78	3.86	4.00	3.5
practical/theoretical	4.11	4.00	3.67	4.5
generous/selfish	3.56	3.57	<b>2.00</b>	<b>4.5</b>
transparent/corrupt	3.33	3.57	3.00	4
administratively undemanding/bureaucratic	<b>4.56</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5</b>
well- functioning/non-functioning	3.22	3.29	<b>2.67</b>	<b>3.5</b>
developing/stagnating	3.11	3.00	3.67	3
$\bar{x}_{category}$	3.51	3.44	3.04	3.81
number of observations:	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: author's calculation<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "All resp" is the abbreviation for the category all respondents, "all winm" for all winemakers, "prof" for professional winemakers and "micro" is used for micro winemakers.

Impact on competitiveness in the Czech market, on running of vineyards and winery and on future development was measured only in the group of professional winemakers. Generally positive results are confirmed by qualitative research, when 3 respondents stated that joining the European Union and therefore obligation to European Wine Policy forced them to focus on quality of wine, invest into new technology, allowed them to compare more easily with foreign wines on international competitions, which all resulted in higher competitiveness in the Czech market. Interview with a viticulturist revealed that EWP helped the winery to get access to modern chemical sprays as well as new forms of seedlings (see Table 6).

Table 6: Results: impact on competitiveness, running of vineyards and winery, and future development

	Competitiveness	Vineyards	Future development
<b>Adjectives</b>	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$
positive/negative	2.67	3.6	2.8
useful/useless	2.67	3.8	3
satisfying/irritating	2.67	3.8	3.6
financially advantageous/disadvantageous	3.67	3.6	3.8
important/unimportant	2.67	2.2	2.6
supporting/discriminating	2.67	3.8	3.6
$\bar{x}_{category}$	<b>2.83</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>3.23</b>
<b>Number of observations:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: author's calculation

Number of observations equals the number of respondents with completed semantic differential scales.

#### 4 Discussion

The research has several limiting factors. Firstly, the sample is not large enough to generalize facts about the whole wine sector in the Czech Republic. This fact is partly reduced by the methodology, in which the researcher, using complementary methods of qualitative and semi-qualitative research, was allowed to lower this weakness. The required sample size for the total number of registered winemakers in the Czech Republic (which is 19 257 (MZČR, 2001)), with confidence coefficient at 95 %, is 377.

Also selection of respondents was a factor supporting validity, when top Moravian winemakers were interviewed, including the winners of national competition Winemaker of the year of the past three years and the director of Vinařský fond (The Wine Fund of the Czech Republic), one the most important wine sector institutions in the Czech Republic. The results may be different when larger sample is created and respondents are selected proportionally from all Czech and Moravian wine sub-regions. The sample should also include more respondents whose business activity depends on the performance of winemakers (e.g. distributors of wine, sommeliers, producers of technology). The impact of EWP on those categories is indirect, as the demand for winemaking machines depends on

the financial strength of winemakers, which is influenced by the amount of direct payments and other supportive measures of the policy. Also well-being of sommeliers is partly interconnected with performance of winemakers, when produced wine is bought by sommeliers who then use it, e.g. for private company tastings. Therefore, there could be, according to the research based on interviews, seen a “spill-over” effect of positive or negative performance of winemakers into the whole wine sector, which is determined by the implementation of European Wine Policy.

Generally, European wine policy supports production of quality wine. The research showed that it is empirically noticeable. Consider wines from micro winemakers and wines from professional wine makers substitutes. Direct payments for eligible areas mean competitive advantage for those who benefit from them (i.e. professional wine makers) and, to some extent, discrimination for others (micro wine makers). The question is, whether the consumer benefits from these measures. Winemaking, in the case of the Czech Republic, has a long tradition which is partly preserved by individuals who produce wine with passion. The question is: is this a good strategy? Do all consumers prefer quality wines? Shouldn't the Commission try to invest some effort into the support of people who keep the national heritage?

The reform of CAP after 2013 will highly probably change the system of distribution of direct payments between member states, along with other more or less significant changes, depending on the selected scenario of the overhaul. This will affect winemakers as well and the perceptions may change. The future design will also be important for micro winemakers, as some of them, under current conditions, speak, according to the interviews, about the deterioration of their profession.

## Conclusions

This paper provides an analysis of perception of European Wine Policy (i.e. Common Organization of the Market in Wine) of 11 respondents in the Czech Republic. The sample consists of owners of wineries, viticulturists, micro winemakers, a sommelier, a producer of equipment for winemaking and the director of Vinařský Fond (The Wine Fund), main Czech institution supporting marketing of wine. Primary data was collected through field research using a triangulation of methods, i.e. a combination of semantic differential (semi-quantitative method) and non-structured interview (qualitative). The results showed that the controversial aspect of the policy, direct payments, are not perceived as problematic for professional winemakers. Instead, micro winemakers perceive the policy as discriminating ( $\bar{x} = 4.5$ ), selfish ( $\bar{x} = 4.5$ ) and malfunctioning ( $\bar{x} = 3.5$ ), because of the eligibility criteria. Bureaucracy is a weakness of the policy for all respondents ( $\bar{x} = 4.56$ ), mostly because of duties with grubbing-up, rights for planting and procedures of vinification. Respondents from the category professional winemakers mostly focus on quality, therefore the impact of European Wine Policy on competitiveness in the Czech market is perceived as rather positive ( $\bar{x} = 2.67$ ), with better access to new technology, chemicals and new markets. Research with viticulturists proved this fact. Performance of wineries is connected to several other professions in the wine sector, therefore the impact of the policy on winemakers has the form of a spill-over effect, affecting sommeliers, distributors and producers of technology for winemaking.

The author poses a question whether the current system of support of quality wine is right, when micro winemakers play an important role in preserving the tradition of national winemaking. The European Commission should reconsider its supportive measures with the regard to micro winemakers.

Presented methodology with the method of evaluation of data is an original approach, which may be applied in the research on a number of other problems. The reform of Common Agricultural Policy will change the system of allocation of direct payments, therefore, the perception may significantly change after 2013. Further research should be aimed at other factors which were not included in this

study, such as the impact of European Wine Policy on competitiveness in foreign markets, on marketing and PR and on financial performance of winery, and on the changes in perception of the policy after the reform of CAP of 2013.

The study is, to the author's knowledge, the first attempt to examine the impact of European Wine Policy on Moravian winemakers, despite its obvious limitations.

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