



WINE Intergroup meets outside Brussels for the first time - European wine regions visit Burgenland

For the first time since its foundation, the WINE Intergroup, the association of European wine regions at the level of the European Committee of the Regions, is meeting outside Brussels.

At the invitation of Burgenland, the 3rd meeting of the Intergroup took place on October 21 and 22, 2025, in Eisenstadt and Donnerskirchen. The WINE Intergroup, which was founded on the initiative of Burgenland, is chaired by Robert Hergovich, Burgenland's representative on the Committee of the Regions. The aim of the Intergroup is to represent the interests of European wine-growing regions, promote exchange between regions, and strengthen the links between viticulture, sustainability, nature, and economic development.

Dialogue on wine, economics, and sustainability

During the two-day meeting, representatives from European wine regions discussed current challenges such as climate change, sustainable production, and regional value creation. The program also included visits to wineries in Burgenland and presentations on educational initiatives and joint export strategies.

One of the main topics was the World Health Organization's (WHO) position on alcohol and wine, on which the Intergroup adopted a joint statement. This statement emphasizes the cultural, social, and economic importance of wine in Europe and calls for a balanced, scientifically based debate on alcohol policy.

Joint statement by the WINE Intergroup

In the "Joint Statement on the WHO's Position on Alcohol and Wine," the Intergroup points out that wine is much more than an alcoholic beverage: "Wine is part of Europe's cultural heritage and an expression of a centuries-old tradition. It brings people together, strengthens regions, and stands for conscious, moderate enjoyment," says WINE Intergroup President Robert Hergovich.

The WINE Intergroup rejects blanket statements such as "there is no safe level of alcohol consumption" and advocates for an open, fact-based dialogue between health institutions, politicians, scientists, and the wine industry. At the same time, the Intergroup is clearly committed to responsible alcohol consumption, the prevention of abuse, and the promotion of awareness and education.

The wine sector is a significant economic factor in Europe: around 3 million people live directly or indirectly from viticulture, which contributes around €130 billion to the EU's GDP.

Burgenland as host to European wine regions

The meeting began on October 21 in Eisenstadt with an official reception and a working session in the Burgenland state parliament, followed by visits to two wineries in Burgenland. On October 22, the Intergroup met at the House of Wine in Donnerskirchen, where topics such as wine tourism, wine education, and international marketing were the focus.

Background

The WINE Intergroup – *Committee of the Regions Wine Intergroup for Nature and Economy* was founded in 2024 on the initiative of Burgenland. It includes representatives from wine regions across Europe. The aim is to strengthen the European wine sector as a cultural and economic asset, promote sustainable development, and unite the voice of wine regions in EU policy.

