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Wine economists gather in Zaragoza to address global trade challenges and market shifts

Experts discuss tariffs, consumer trends, and strategies for adapting to evolving international wine markets and economic pressures

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More than one hundred wine industry specialists gathered in Zaragoza, Spain, from May 15 to 17 for the fourth annual conference of the European Association of Wine Economists (EuAWE). The event brought together academics, researchers, and

professionals to discuss the current challenges and opportunities facing the global wine sector. The conference opened on Thursday, May 15, with a plenary session featuring Kym Anderson, executive director of the Wine Economics Research Center at the University of Adelaide in Australia, and Rafael del Rey, an international wine market consultant.

Kym Anderson addressed the impact of U.S. tariff policy on international trade in wine and spirits. He explained that recent tariff increases by the United States affect not only the European Union but also other countries exporting to the U.S. market. According to Anderson, these tariffs influence both consumer willingness to spend and investor confidence, which could slow global economic growth. He noted that alcoholic beverages are particularly sensitive to changes in consumer spending during economic downturns.

Rafael del Rey focused his presentation on recent trends in international wine markets. He outlined current threats and opportunities for producers, with special attention to Spain’s role as a major exporter. Del Rey highlighted shifting consumer preferences, emerging markets, and the importance of adapting marketing strategies to new global realities.

Throughout May 15 and 16, participants presented scientific papers on topics such as consumer behavior, industrial organization, regulatory policies affecting the wine sector, sustainability practices, agronomic issues, business management, marketing strategies, and wine tourism. The conference aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors shaping the future of wine production and trade.

In addition to academic sessions, attendees had the opportunity to sample wines from several Aragonese appellations of origin: Calatayud, Campo de Borja, Cariñena, Somontano, Aylés, and Urbezo. On Saturday, May 17, technical visits were organized to vineyards in Campo de Borja and Cariñena. These excursions allowed participants to learn about local viticulture practices and regional characteristics directly from producers.

The conference also served as the setting for EuAWE's general assembly on Wednesday, May 14. During this meeting, Raúl Compés—director of CIHEAM Zaragoza—was reelected as vice president of EuAWE. The association was founded in 2020 with the goal of fostering knowledge exchange among European wine economists and strengthening relationships within the sector.

The event was co-organized by the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Zaragoza (UNIZAR), CIHEAM Zaragoza (the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies), and CITA (the Center for Agri-Food Research and Technology of Aragón). It received support from Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), Aragón's Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, Zaragoza City Council, Cajamar bank, and Mercazaragoza.

The discussions in Zaragoza reflected growing concerns about protectionist trade policies and their effects on European wine exports. Experts agreed that adapting to changing market conditions will be essential for producers across Europe. The conference highlighted both risks and opportunities as global demand evolves and new challenges emerge for one of Europe's most important agricultural sectors.