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French Wine Industry Seeks €200 Million in EU Aid as Crisis Deepens and Harvest Falters

Producers warn of widespread closures without urgent government and European intervention amid falling consumption and rising costs

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Joël Boueilh

The French wine industry is facing a period of deep uncertainty and growing concern as producers and cooperative wineries wait for urgent government action to address a worsening crisis. On October 12, Annie Genevard was reappointed as Minister of

Agriculture, a move seen by many in the sector as a sign of stability after months of political turbulence. However, industry leaders are calling for immediate and decisive measures to support struggling winegrowers and prevent what some describe as an impending disaster.

Joël Boueilh, president of the Vignerons Coopérateurs, has been vocal about the urgent need for restructuring aid for cooperative wineries. He describes the current situation as a “pressure cooker,” warning that without intervention, the consequences could be severe. Boueilh points out that while €10 million in aid was promised for restructuring, none of it has reached producers so far. He argues that the delays are costing valuable time and that planning must already begin for 2026. According to Boueilh, the problems facing cooperative wineries have been known for months, and he first raised concerns with then-Minister Marc Fesneau in February 2024.

The wine sector’s difficulties are compounded by broader economic and political challenges. Consumption is down, and the general mood among both producers and consumers is described as anxious and resigned. The weak 2025 harvest has driven up production costs, while export markets remain uncertain due to geopolitical tensions. Domestically, consumers are cautious about spending, further reducing demand for wine.

Industry representatives are also waiting for the results of an audit by the General Council for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (CGAAER), expected on October 31. The findings will determine how the €10 million in restructuring aid can be distributed. However, Boueilh and others believe that the audit will only confirm what they have been warning about: that many cooperative wineries are on the brink of collapse.

Another pressing issue is the request made by France to the European Commission for access to crisis reserve funds to finance permanent vineyard grubbing-up. The request was submitted in early September, but there has been little response from Brussels so far. Producers say that strong signals from both national and European authorities are needed to restore confidence in the sector.

Jérôme Despey, president of the wine council at FranceAgriMer and vice-president of FNSEA, emphasizes that political stability at the Ministry of Agriculture is crucial for addressing these challenges. He notes that while Annie Genevard's reappointment brings continuity, urgent action is needed to match the pace of the crisis. Despey calls for emergency measures such as permanent or temporary grubbing-up and crisis distillation, as well as longer-term support including promotion aid, contractualization, segmentation, and adaptation of production methods.

Genevard has previously met with representatives from the Association Générale de la Production Viticole (AGPV) and pledged to develop an action plan after this year's harvest. In a recent statement on social media following her reappointment, she acknowledged her responsibility to provide immediate answers and consistent public action for farmers.

The wine industry is now pushing for a meeting with Genevard as soon as possible to discuss their proposals and expectations. Despey hopes such a meeting can take place next week to review progress on key issues like crisis reserve funding from Europe. The sector is seeking at least €200 million from Brussels and wants France to secure co-financing in its next budget.

As tensions rise within the industry, leaders warn that time is running out. The poor harvest has acted as a catalyst for frustration among producers who feel increasingly anxious about their future. Many believe that only swift government intervention can prevent widespread closures and lasting damage to one of France's most iconic industries.

In the meantime, representatives from the French wine sector will participate in European Wine Day on October 20 at Strasbourg's regional hotel, where they expect to meet with European Commissioner for Agriculture Christophe Hansen. This event may provide another opportunity to press their case at both national and European levels as they seek solutions to a crisis that shows no signs of easing.