

**Question for written answer E-003556/2026
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Protecting viticulture in Ribeira Sacra – derogations from the prohibition on aerial spraying

Article 9 of Directive 2009/128/EC prohibits the aerial spraying of plant protection products, although it provides for derogations where there are no viable alternatives or where aerial application presents clear advantages for human health and the environment over land-based methods, provided that safety and control conditions are met. France has put this derogation into practice through specific legislation.

The topic is particularly relevant in Ribeira Sacra, an area with mountain viticulture, smallholdings and steep slopes, where conventional mechanisation is practically impossible and the regulated use of drones to apply pesticide treatments could both be a tool for modernisation that is compatible with landscape preservation, and foster generational renewal.

1. Does the Commission consider that the specific characteristics of the area – terraces, small-scale farming and extremely steep slopes – justify applying the derogations, provided that EU legislation is complied with?
2. What action will it take to ensure that the application of EU legislation on aerial spraying does not create competitive disadvantages between wine-growers from different regions and that it makes it possible to take advantage, in a safe and controlled manner, of new precision application technologies, such as drones?
3. Does it consider that the use of such technologies can help retain agricultural activity in disadvantaged areas and preserve landscapes with a high cultural and environmental value?

Submitted: 8.9.2026