



WASTE REPORT for January 19, 2016

Uncle Sam, Registering Wine In Moldova

It is no secret that wine is a global industry. **When considering a glass from abroad, you might try a Moldovan vintage, particularly because last year the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) spent almost \$500k of your tax dollars on that country's wine industry.**

Despite the already **absurd idea of spending U.S. tax dollars on a foreign country's wine industry, this grant will not even go to produce one drop of wine.** Instead, the funding will go to the Moldovan National Agency for Rural Development to **help identify and get grape grower signed up with the "Wine and Vine Registry."**¹

It turns out that in 2007 the Moldovan government passed a comprehensive wine law, regulating various aspects of wine making and paving the way for an industry-wide promotional campaign. Part of the law was a mandatory registration for entities involved in grape growing, wine making, storage, etc. Because government cannot interject itself in an industry without letting its tentacles reach down to everyone involved, even to peasant farmers.

So why is Uncle Sam getting involved eight years later? According the award, **"...at the moment, in Moldova, there are no comprehensive official data about grapes [sic] producers and areas under vineyards."**² **In other words, they do not know who should be registering.**

To accomplish the task of getting everyone registered, the Moldovan government will produce pamphlets and posters noting the benefits of being on the registry. And while mailings and phone calls will likely be sufficient to get mid and large-sized producers registered, it will take extra effort to get the smaller peasant farmers onboard. So, after a series of national and regional training sessions, **local 2-man teams will descend on villages and even go house-to-house to promote the registry.**³

But there is a further problem is in how the registration process will be conducted. "The declarations will be filled in, signed and submitted by vine and wine producers to the local teams that will be located within the premises of mayoralty offices." Although registering is a legal requirement, **"this process implies, however, voluntary participation, and thus it will take time until producers realize benefits of submitting the declaration and of being registered in the VWR."**⁴ So the whole thing might not even work.

A benefit to registering with the government...huh? At least one of the selling points for this program is that it is "free-of-charge" to register...for the Moldovan winemaker, not the U.S. taxpayer.⁵

¹ *Moldovan Vine and Wine Register (MVWR) Project* Cooperative, United States Agency for International Development Washington, D.C. January 2015; Agreement No. AID-117-A-15-00001

² *Ibid* pp. 17

³ *Ibid* pp. 20 & 23

⁴ *Ibid* pp. 23

⁵ *Ibid* pp. 17