

Jurisdictional news



France: Two Châteaux in Gironde condemned for pesticide spraying near a school

Following a long court case, two NGOs have obtained the condemnation of two Bordeaux Châteaux for illegal pesticide spraying. Even though it seems negligible from a financial point of view, the condemnation is highly symbolic because French wine production, which makes the country's reputation, comes with an intensive use of pesticides, a source of many neighbourhood problems in wine-producing regions such as Bordeaux. On May 5, 2014, following pesticide spraying under inadequate weather conditions, with strong winds, in the vicinity of the Villeneuve-de-Blaye elementary school, 23 pupils fell ill and their teacher had to be urgently hospitalized. NGOs Sepanso and Générations Futures [brought legal proceedings](#) against Château Rémy Castel and Château de Barbe, the two wine-producing properties at the origin of the spraying, but the case was dismissed in 2017, in the absence of formally established proof that winds were blowing at more than 19 km/h at the site of the events during the disputed spraying. There was no anemometer on site! Following the NGOs' appeal against this order, it was quashed by the Bordeaux Court of Appeal, which referred the case back to the Libourne Criminal Court on July 3, 2018. On April 30, 2019, the two Châteaux were again discharged by the Libourne Criminal Court. However, the Bordeaux Public Prosecutor's Office decided to appeal against this decision, and in a decision dated November 18, 2020, the Bordeaux Court of Appeal sentenced the Châteaux to a suspended fine of 5,000 euros. The castles must also pay the amount of 3,000 euros in damages to the civil parties.