'It's a tragedy.' French winemakers face devastation after worst weather in 30 years.

By Hanna Ziady

One of France's biggest export industries is facing a devastating blow after an unusually severe _____ earlier this month damaged vineyards across the country.

The frost has affected 80% of _____ in France's primary wine growing areas, according to the European Committee of Wine Companies.

Winemakers tried to keep air temperatures up by _____ candles and braziers in their vineyards, but in many cases it was not enough to protect their budding vines.

"An important share of the harvest has been lost. It's too early _____ give a percentage estimate, but in any case it's a tragedy for the winegrowers who have been hit," said Christophe Chateau, director of _____ at the Bordeaux Wine Council.

Not since 1991 have farms faced such a devastating weather _____, according to French Prime Minister Jean Castex. Government _____ Gabriel Attal told journalists on Wednesday that in some areas "almost the whole annual production" of certain crops could be lost.

The crisis comes at a particularly difficult time for _____ winemakers, who are suffering weaker sales as a result of coronavirus lockdowns in key international markets and the collapse of tourism due to the _____.

Exports of French wine and spirits fell nearly 14% to €12.1 _____ ($14.5 billion) in 2020, with sales to the United States tumbling 18%, according to the Federation of Wine and Spirits Exporters of France.

SPOKESPERSON	VINEYARDS	FRENCH	BILLION	LIGHTING
TO	PANDEMIC	COMMUNICATIONS	FROST	EVENT

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