

Beware of offers of investment in wine, champagne and spirits

24/06/2021 Warning



The FSMA once again warns the public against fraudulent investment offers in wine, champagne and spirits (see our warnings from [4 July 2019](#) and [11 February 2020](#)).

The principle remains the same: victims are contacted by phone by a salesperson, who offers them investments in wine, champagne or **spirits** and invites them to consult an **online trading platform for fine bottles**.

These companies offer the opportunity to **acquire bottles**, undertake to **stock them in a cellar** for you, and promise to **find some major buyers** so that you can earn a **handsome profit**. Would-be investors have nothing to do, the companies 'will take care of everything'! The concept, however, is **too good to be true**. In the end, despite the promises, the investors never recover their money!

The suspect companies active in recent weeks

In recent weeks, the FSMA was informed that the companies behind the following websites have been approaching Belgians with these types of offers:

- www-cap-de-France.com
- www.st-conseils.com

The FSMA warns that these companies **do not hold an authorization** and are thus **not permitted to offer investment services** in Belgium. Moreover, it is very likely that these are cases of investment fraud, which means that in the end, the amounts invested are never reimbursed.

Please note, don't trust the 'professional' appearance of the website to which they referred you; the swindlers do everything they can, of course, to appear as legitimate as possible.

How to avoid the trap?

In order to avoid such cases of fraud, the FSMA **urges you to exercise utmost prudence** and **advises you to remain alert to any indication of investment fraud**. It offers a few recommendations to this end:

- **Be wary of (promises of) completely disproportionate returns.** If a return seems too good to be true, it usually is!
- **Always verify the identity of the company who is contacting you** (company identity, home country, etc.). If a company cannot be clearly identified, it should not be trusted. **Find out as well when the company website was set up:** if the company's website is relatively new, this could be an additional sign of investment fraud.
- **Be wary if you are asked to deposit money to bank accounts in countries without any connection** to the country where the company contacting you is said to be registered or with your own country of residence. Be wary as well if you are asked to deposit money into accounts **whose beneficiary is someone other than the company itself**.

In any case, if your contact person comes across as **particularly insistent**, this is an additional indication of fraud.

More than ever, then, prudence is necessary.

If you have the least doubt about whether financial services being offered to you are lawful, please do not hesitate to contact the FSMA directly via the [consumer contact form](#). As well, feel free to notify us of any suspicious company that has not yet been the subject of a warning by the FSMA.