

Food information to consumers

2008/0028(COD) - 13/03/2017 - Follow-up document

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, the Commission submitted a report on the mandatory listing of the ingredients list and nutrition declaration on the labeling of alcoholic beverages.

The report examines the issue of reference to the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration on the labeling of alcoholic beverages in terms of informing consumers about the identity and properties of a food. It is based on the views expressed by the various interested parties with regard to the labeling of alcoholic beverages.

Current legal framework: Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 provides for the obligation to mention the list of ingredients and introduces the obligation to issue a nutrition declaration (mentioning the energy value and quantity of fats, saturated fatty acids, carbohydrates, sugars, proteins and salt) from 16 December 2016. However, alcoholic beverages are exempt from these provisions. European consumers therefore have restricted access to the nutrition declaration and to the list of ingredients, with the exception of ingredients liable to have an allergenic effect.

The Regulation encourages food business operators to voluntarily provide information on the nutrition declaration for products such as alcoholic beverages while limiting the voluntary nutrition declaration for alcoholic beverages to the sole reference to the energy value.

Certain Member States (Austria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and the Czech Republic) have adopted national measures imposing labeling requirements for the ingredients of alcoholic beverages. These national initiatives contribute to the increased risk of market fragmentation.

New expectations: according to a study conducted in 2014 and commissioned by a brewers' association, consumers are interested in receiving the same information on ingredients and nutritional values for all foods and beverages, whether or not they contain alcohol.

The European Parliament, in the context of a [resolution](#) adopted on 29 April 2015), but also the World Health Organization and consumer and public health organisations, are now asking for new rules for the labeling of beverages particularly with respect to the labeling of energy value.

Experts from the Member States expressed certain expectations, in particular with regard to the nutrition declaration, and more particularly the mandatory mention of energy value on labeling.

As regards the definition of 'alcopops' (considered as pre-mixes of alcoholic and non-alcoholic products), several experts consider it inconsistent not to indicate the ingredients on the label of sodas mixed with alcohol, whereas this must be done for soft drinks.

At this stage, however, the Commission considers that a specific definition of the concept of 'alcopops' for labeling purposes is not necessary and does not provide real added value.

Strengthening sectorial initiatives: the report shows that the sector is increasingly willing to meet the expectations of consumers who want to be better informed about what they are drinking. It also notes that an increasing number of alcoholic beverages on the Union market already include the complete nutrition declaration.

In the light of these recent developments, the Commission suggests, as a first step, that the current voluntary initiatives to provide the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration should be strengthened. It therefore invites the industry to present, in the year following the adoption of this report, a proposal for self-regulation covering the entire alcoholic beverages sector. The Commission will evaluate the proposal submitted by the sector.

If the proposed self-regulatory approach were to prove inadequate, the Commission would then launch an impact assessment in order to examine the other options available, taking into account regulatory and non-regulatory options, including the provision of information on the energy value of alcoholic beverages.