



Brussels, 13.3.2017  
COM(2017) 58 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND  
THE COUNCIL**

**regarding the mandatory labelling of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration  
of alcoholic beverages**

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND  
THE COUNCIL**

**regarding the mandatory labelling of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration  
of alcoholic beverages****TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction .....	3
2.	Historical Background .....	4
3.	EU legal framework on the labelling of alcoholic beverages .....	4
3.1.	Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 .....	4
3.2.	Other EU provisions on the labelling of alcoholic beverages.....	5
4.	Legislation of Member States, situation at international level and in third countries..	6
4.1.	Member States.....	6
4.2.	International organisations and third countries .....	6
5.	Consumer knowledge and interest .....	7
6.	Stakeholders .....	8
7.	Calls for action .....	10
7.1.	World Health Organisation .....	10
7.2.	European Parliament and Council.....	11
7.3.	Consultation of Member States' experts by the Commission .....	11
8.	Conclusions .....	11

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report responds to the obligation set for the Commission by Article 16(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011<sup>1</sup> on the provision of food information to consumers (the Regulation). This provision exempts alcoholic beverages containing more than 1,2 % by volume of alcohol from the mandatory list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration and states that the Commission shall produce a report addressing whether alcoholic beverages should in future be covered, in particular, by the requirement to provide the information on the energy value, and the reasons justifying possible exemptions, taking into account the need to ensure coherence with other relevant Union policies and considering in this context the need to propose a definition of 'alcopops'.

The Regulation establishes the basis for a high level of consumer protection in relation to food information, ensuring that consumers are not misled by food labels and can make informed choices. The list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration are among the key particulars that allow these informed choices.

While nutrition labelling can play a certain role in the promotion of a more moderate alcohol consumption, the issue of the labelling of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration for alcoholic beverages is examined in this report under the perspective of consumer information about the identity and the properties of a food.

This report builds on the positions on the labelling of alcoholic beverages which were expressed by the different interested parties before and after the adoption of the Regulation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The specific regime for alcoholic beverages does not originate from the Regulation.

Regarding the list of ingredients, the issue goes back to the first general labelling legislation<sup>2</sup> adopted at EU level, where it was provided that 'in the case of beverages containing more than 1,2% by volume of alcohol, the Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, shall, before 22 December 1982, determine the rules for labelling ingredients'.

The Commission presented proposals to address this request in 1982<sup>3</sup> and in 1992<sup>4</sup> but the Council could not agree on any of those proposals. The Commission then presented a new proposal in February 1997<sup>5</sup>, which was finally put on the agenda of a Council Working Group in December 2002. At that meeting, the majority of Member States agreed that the labelling of ingredients of alcoholic beverages should be more in line with the revised general labelling rules.

Subsequent to these discussions, although the specific EU requirements<sup>6</sup> for labelling ingredients, which may cause allergies or intolerances, covered also alcoholic beverages, no rules were introduced for the labelling of ingredients in general of alcoholic beverages.

According to the Commission proposal for the Regulation on food information to consumers, alcoholic beverages, including 'alcopops' (alcoholic mixed beverages, like the mix of a soft drink with a spirit), were covered by the requirement to label mandatorily a list of ingredients and a nutrition declaration, except beer, wine and spirits<sup>7</sup>. On the initiative of the European Parliament, this exemption was extended to all alcoholic beverages, and the adopted Regulation required the Commission to provide the present report.

## **3. EU LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

### **3.1. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011**

The Regulation maintains the mandatory list of ingredients<sup>8</sup> and introduces mandatory nutrition declaration (energy value and the amounts of fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt) as from 16 December 2016<sup>9</sup>. Alcoholic beverages are not covered by these provisions.

---

<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 79/112/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer - OJ L 33, 08.02.1979, p. 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 79/112/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs for sale to the ultimate consumer, COM(82)626 final.

<sup>4</sup> Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 79/112/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, COM(91)536 final.

<sup>5</sup> Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive amending Directive 79/112/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, COM(97)20 final.

<sup>6</sup> Directive 2003/89/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 November 2003 amending Directive 2000/13/EC as regards indication of the ingredients present in foodstuffs - OJ L 308, 25.11.2003, p. 15-18.

<sup>7</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers, COM(2008)0040 final.

<sup>8</sup> Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 lists certain foods which are not required to bear a list of ingredients, such as uncut fresh fruits and vegetables, carbonated water, the description of which indicates that it has been carbonated and fermented vinegars derived exclusively from a single basic product, provided no other ingredient has been added.

<sup>9</sup> Annex V of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 provides a list of foods which are exempted from the requirement of the mandatory nutrition declaration. It includes products for which consumers are aware of the nutritional value, such as salt and unprocessed foods like fruit and vegetables. It also contains products consumed in small quantities and/or with no

Regarding the list of ingredients, similarly to the previous legislation, Article 21 on the labelling of certain substances or products causing allergies or intolerances applies to alcoholic beverages. Therefore, consumers are informed when a substance or a product, amongst those listed in Annex II to the Regulation as the most common allergens, is present in alcoholic beverages, like sulphites added to wine. However, other food ingredients which were not considered by the co-legislators for the listing of substances that could trigger allergic reactions in certain groups of consumers are not in Annex II to the Regulation and would therefore not be present on the label of alcoholic beverages due to the absence of a list of ingredients. Although there is no requirement for alcoholic beverages to list their ingredients, food business operators may voluntarily provide this information to the consumers. Such information, in accordance with Article 36 of the Regulation, shall comply with the provisions governing the mandatory listing of ingredients.

Article 41 of the Regulation allows Member States to maintain national measures as regards the listing of ingredients of alcoholic beverages pending the adoption of harmonised EU rules.

Regarding the nutrition labelling, recital 42 of the Regulation encourages food business operators to provide on a voluntary basis the information contained in the nutrition declaration for foods such as alcoholic beverages for which the possibility should be given to declare only limited elements of the nutrition declaration. To this end, the Regulation allows the voluntary nutrition declaration on alcoholic beverages to be limited to the energy value.

Annex XIV to the Regulation provides conversion factors for the calculation of energy. Alcohol energy value shall be calculated using the conversion factor of 29 kJ/g, which corresponds to 7 kcal/g.

Point (k) of Article 9 of the Regulation requests the labelling of the actual alcoholic strength by volume for beverages containing more than 1,2% by volume of alcohol, a mandatory particular already requested in the previous legislation<sup>10</sup>.

### **3.2. Other EU provisions on the labelling of alcoholic beverages**

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013<sup>11</sup> provides an exhaustive set of technical standards which fully cover all oenological practices, manufacturing methods and means of presentation and labelling of wines. This Regulation describes the substances likely to be used in the production process, together with the conditions for their use via a positive list of oenological practices and treatments.

According to EU legislation on spirits<sup>12</sup>, where the labelling of a spirit drink indicates the raw material used to produce the ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin, each agricultural alcohol used shall be mentioned in descending order of the quantity used. This legislation also regulates the labelling of the maturation period, the term 'blend', and the geographical indications.

---

significant nutritional impact such as herbs and spices, coffee and tea. Another exempted food category consists in food, including handcrafted food, directly supplied by the manufacturer of small quantities of products to the final consumer or to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer. Alcoholic beverages, placed on the market under such conditions, can fall into this category.

<sup>10</sup> Commission Directive 87/250/EEC on the indication of alcoholic strength by volume in the labelling of alcoholic beverages for sale to the ultimate consumer - OJ L 113, 30.4.1987, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 – OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 672.

<sup>12</sup> Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks - OJ L 39, 13.2.2008, p. 16.

Aromatised wines, aromatized wine-based drinks and aromatized wine-product cocktails<sup>13</sup> have to comply with processing and compositional standards, and also specific labelling requirements on the designation for sale and on the nature of the alcohol, i.e. the raw material used for the alcohol production.

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited to bear health claims and the only permitted nutrition claims are the ones referring to low alcohol levels and reduction of alcohol or energy content<sup>14</sup>. When such nutrition claims are made, the nutrition declaration is required.

#### **4. LEGISLATION OF MEMBER STATES, SITUATION AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL AND IN THIRD COUNTRIES**

##### **4.1. Member States**

Only the legislative initiatives by Member States related to the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration are reported here.

Some Member States (Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Lithuania and Romania) maintained or adopted national measures imposing additional labelling requirements on ingredients or certain ingredients for alcoholic beverages or certain alcoholic beverages.

Concerning the nutrition declaration, Austria requires the labelling of the amount of sugar for certain wine products. Although for the nutrition declaration, Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 does not provide the same flexibility regarding national measures compared with the list of ingredients, Romania<sup>15</sup> and Ireland<sup>16</sup> notified, within the framework of the notification procedure laid down by Directive (EU) No 2015/1535<sup>17</sup>, draft legislation requesting nutrition labelling particulars for alcoholic beverages.

##### **4.2. International organisations and third countries**

At international level, the Codex Alimentarius Standard on the labelling of pre-packaged foods<sup>18</sup> does not exempt alcoholic beverages from the provision of the mandatory list of ingredients.

Following the Codex Guidelines on nutrition labelling<sup>19</sup>, the nutrition declaration should be mandatory except where national circumstances would not support such declaration. Certain foods may be exempted, for example on the basis of nutritional or dietary insignificance or small packaging.

In a number of third countries such as the USA, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, and Switzerland, it is mandatory to provide the list of ingredients for certain alcoholic beverages.

---

<sup>13</sup> Regulation (EU) No 251/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1601/91 – OJ L 84, 20.3.2014, p. 14-34.

<sup>14</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods, OJ L 404, 30.12.2006, p. 9–25.

<sup>15</sup> Technical Regulations Information System (TRIS) reference: 2014/611/RO

<sup>16</sup> Technical Regulations Information System (TRIS) reference: [2016/42/IRL](#)

<sup>17</sup> Directive (EU) No 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services, OJ L 241, 17.9.2015, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> General Standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods CODEX STAN 1-1985, last revised in 2010.

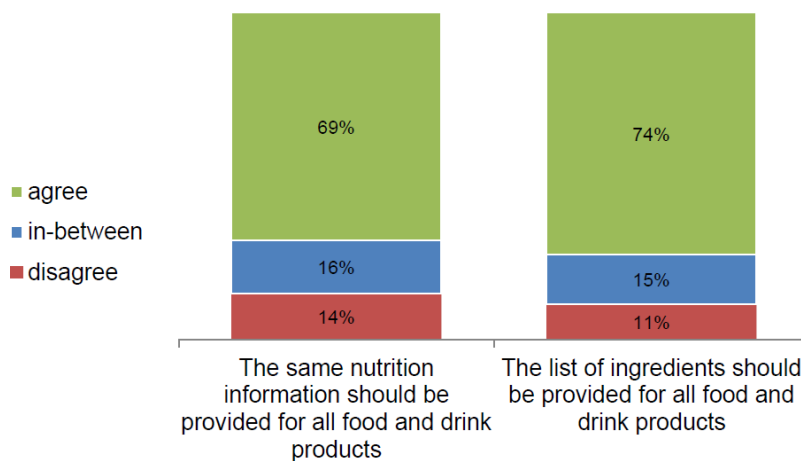
<sup>19</sup> Codex Guidelines on nutrition labelling CAC/GL 2-1985, lastly revised in 2013.

## 5. CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

As part of the Commission-mandated study on the impact of food information on consumers' decision making<sup>20</sup>, consumer behaviour vis-à-vis information on alcoholic beverages was investigated. After having been informed about the energy content of alcoholic drinks like beer, wine and spirits, 2031 respondents from 8 Member States were asked about the ideal information to be provided on alcoholic drinks in the future; almost half (49%) of the participants wanted information on the energy value of alcoholic beverages, and 16% declared their intention to reduce their alcohol consumption on the basis of this information.

According to a study<sup>21</sup> carried out in 2014 and commissioned by a brewers' association, consumers' knowledge of the nutritional value and ingredients information of alcoholic beverages is limited. The study aimed at providing a representative overview by involving almost 5400 respondents in six Member States. The results of this study show that consumers have a knowledge deficit of the carbohydrate, calorie and fat content of the different types of alcoholic beverages studied (beer, wine and spirits) and of the different ingredients that can be used in their production. As shown in figure 1, the study also demonstrates that there is a big interest in receiving the same information on ingredients and nutritional values for alcoholic beverages as currently provided for other food and drink products.

**Figure 1:** interest in the same nutrition and ingredients information for all food and drink products, regardless of whether they contain alcohol or not



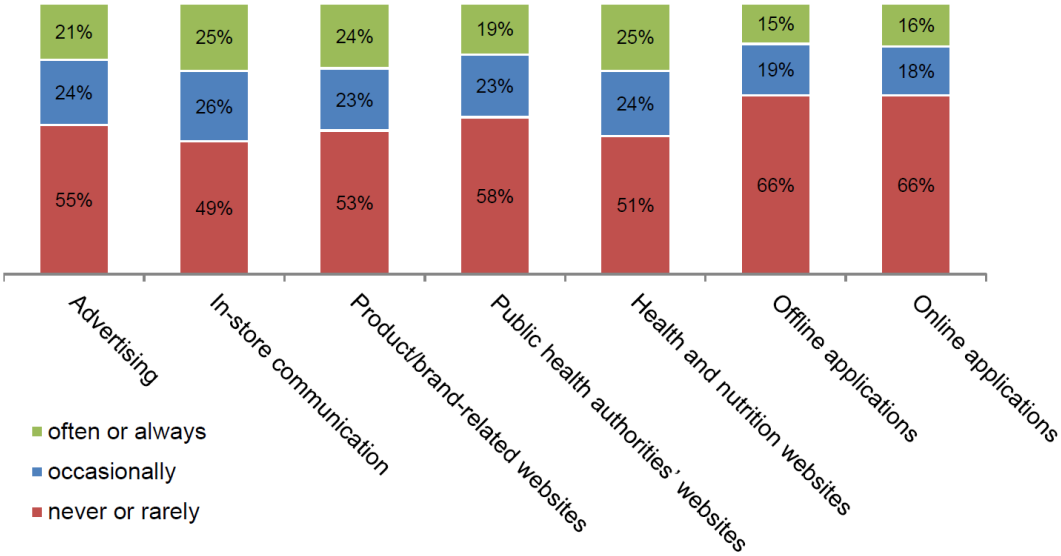
Source: GfK Belgium (2014)

The same study also provided information on the access and use of this information off-label. It appears that between 34% and 51% of respondents consulted this information occasionally, often or always (figure 2).

<sup>20</sup> TNS European Behaviour Studies Consortium, Study on the impact of food information on consumers' decision making (2014).

<sup>21</sup> [Consumer insights - knowledge of ingredient and nutrition information off-label information and its use - Report GfK Belgium \(2014\).](#)

**Figure 2:** use of off-label information sources to access information on nutrition values and ingredients of alcoholic beverages

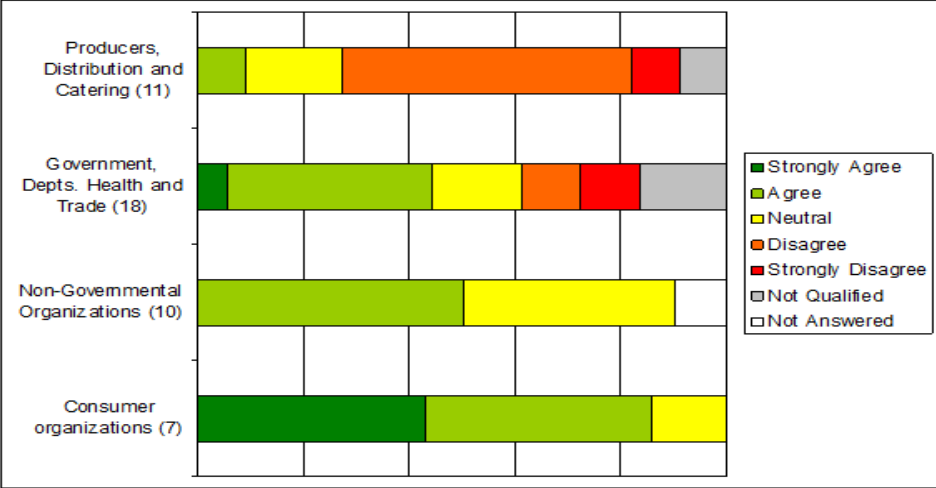


Source: GfK Belgium (2014)

**6. STAKEHOLDERS**

As a baseline, the position of the different actors on alcohol labelling is reported in a survey<sup>22</sup> done at the time when the Commission tabled the proposal for a Regulation on food information to consumers. It provides the positions of producers, retailers, public authorities, and non-governmental organisations.

**Figure 3:** reactions to the statement 'Alcohol labels should mention a list of ingredients and nutritional properties of the beverage'



Source: CRIOC (2007)

<sup>22</sup> Alcohol labelling and health warnings - Delphi survey Centre de Recherche et d'Information des Organisations de Consommateurs (CRIOC) (2007).



Since this inquiry, some of these positions have evolved.

Consumer representatives argue<sup>23</sup> that the inconsistency in the labelling between alcoholic beverages and other foods is unacceptable and that the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration should be mandatory for all alcoholic beverages in order to help consumers make informed choices about what and how much to drink.

A European beer consumer organisation also called for the mandatory list of ingredients of alcoholic beverages<sup>24</sup>.

Public health associations support mandatory labelling of ingredients and nutrition declaration as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide information and educate consumers about alcohol, as according to a group of non-governmental and public health organisations advocating prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe<sup>25</sup>, consumers have the right to know the ingredients contained in the alcoholic beverages they drink. More importantly, nutrition information such as the energy content should be provided to allow consumers to monitor better their diets and facilitate a healthy lifestyle.

The industry position on the matter has recently evolved significantly. Whereas in the past food business operators were opposed to any additional labelling requirement, today the majority of sectors acknowledge that consumers have the right to know about the content of their drinks and a number of concerted or independent voluntary initiatives are being developed and implemented by the actors of the different sectors to provide consumers with additional information.

According to an association representing the European brewers, consumers have a right to know what they consume. A voluntary initiative was organised by those brewers across Europe, the European Beer Pledge<sup>26</sup>, whose members committed to taking concerted and measurable action to improve consumer information by providing, among others, the nutrition information on beers. They consider that the choice should be given to operators to provide this information on the label or on other platforms such as websites or quick response (QR)-code-driven applications<sup>27</sup>, in which case a clear link to the information should appear on the beer label. Some members of the organisation already include on voluntary basis information on or off the label on the list of ingredients, the calories or the full nutrition declaration (energy, fat, saturates, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt)<sup>28</sup>.

The spirit sector is of the opinion that consumers would benefit from clearer and more meaningful information on what is in their drink and should receive consistent information about responsible consumption of spirits to enable them to make healthier lifestyle choices. The sector supports the provision of tailored information to consumers on calorie content. This information could be provided by means other than an indication on the label. This could give full access to such information from more consumer-friendly alternative vehicles. While some producers are committed to provide such information on-label, many spirits producers are already providing the energy value on their website as well as through social media and

---

<sup>23</sup> [Informed food choices for healthier consumers – European Consumer Organisation’s \(BEUC\) position on nutrition \(2015\).](#)

<sup>24</sup> European Beer Consumers Union Manifesto 2009-2014.

<sup>25</sup> Eurocare Reflections On Alcohol Labelling (2014)..

<sup>26</sup> Second year report - November 2014 European Beer Pledge - A package of responsibility initiatives from Europe’s Brewers.

<sup>27</sup> A quick response code is a type of 2D bar code that is used to provide easy access to information through for example a smartphone.

<sup>28</sup> Information provided by Brewers of Europe on 14 October 2016.

other platforms<sup>29</sup> and some of them have committed to extend the content of this information to provide the full nutrition declaration<sup>30</sup>.

The wine sector considers that a balanced diet is a key element for a healthy lifestyle and that consumers should carefully choose what they drink and what they eat. The sector is committed to voluntarily providing consumers with nutrition information on calories in an adapted way and off-label supports are highly privileged<sup>31</sup>. The sector has launched a concerted action and provides, on a common website, information on calories per serve and per category of wine<sup>32</sup>.

A multinational company producing spirits, wine and beer made commitments to provide consumers with the full nutrition declaration per serve and per 100 ml on the label and to apply it to all the alcohol beverages of its portfolio. The new on-pack nutrition label has already been developed on the basis of a survey which was conducted around the world to determine what information to include and how best to do so. The changes will be progressively implemented on the packaging with the objective to commercialise the first products with the new label beginning of 2017<sup>33</sup>.

Some of these commitments<sup>34, 35</sup> are also taken in the context of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, a platform where bodies active at European level can debate, compare approaches and act to tackle alcohol related harm.

It is too early to make any assessment of impact of these recent voluntary initiatives. However, it can be expected that they may raise the interest of the consumers for a more systematic provision of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration.

Producers of alcoholic beverages are generally of the view that any new requirements regarding labelling should apply equally to all types of alcoholic beverages<sup>36,37</sup>.

## **7. CALLS FOR ACTION**

### **7.1. World Health Organisation**

Following the World Health Organisation's European Action Plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020<sup>38</sup>, the 'ingredients relevant to health, including the calorie content' should be labelled and, in general, the labelling of alcoholic beverages should be the same as for the other foods, in order to ensure that consumers have access to complete information on the content and composition of the product for the protection of both their health and interests. This action plan was endorsed by 53 countries including the EU Member States at the Regional Committee for Europe in September 2011.

---

<sup>29</sup> [http://spirits.eu/page.php?id=28&parent\\_id=5](http://spirits.eu/page.php?id=28&parent_id=5) consulted on 7 April 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Information provided by Spirits Europe on 13 October 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Information provided by the Comité européen des vins on 3 June 2016.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.wineinmoderation.eu/en/content/Wine-Diet.82/> consulted on 14 October 2016.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.diageo.com/en-row/newsmedia/pages/resource.aspx?resourceid=2929> consulted on 13 October 2016

<sup>34</sup> [European Alcohol and Health Forum Commitment 1447949468140-1722, Provision of nutritional and ingredients information to consumers on label for all Heineken beers in Europe](#), Heineken International.

<sup>35</sup> [European Alcohol and Health Forum Commitment 1446732318481-1721, Informing consumers about beer ingredients and nutritional values, The Brewers of Europe](#).

<sup>36</sup> Spirit sector position at [http://spirits.eu/page.php?id=28&parent\\_id=5](http://spirits.eu/page.php?id=28&parent_id=5) consulted on 7 April 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Beer sector position at [http://www.brewersofeurope.org/site/media-centre/post.php?doc\\_id=865](http://www.brewersofeurope.org/site/media-centre/post.php?doc_id=865) consulted on 7 April 2016.

<sup>38</sup> European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020, WHO Europe.

The World Health Organisation furthermore considers that energy value is the most important nutritional value to label.

## **7.2. European Parliament and Council**

In the context of a Resolution<sup>39</sup> adopted on 29 April 2015, the European Parliament calls upon the Commission, amongst others, to present a legislative proposal requiring calorie content on alcoholic beverages labels by 2016. According to the Resolution, whereas Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 excluded alcoholic beverages from the mandatory provision of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration labelling, comprehensive information regarding alcoholic beverages is nevertheless necessary, given the nature of alcohol-related risks.

Numerous written questions on the labelling of alcoholic beverages were also submitted to the Commission, asking for the present report, underlining the lack of justification of the current exemptions to label the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration, and calling for legislative initiatives reinforcing the labelling of alcoholic beverages.

In its conclusions<sup>40</sup> adopted on 7 December 2015, the Council invites the Commission to consider the possibility to introduce mandatory labelling of ingredients and mandatory nutrition declaration, in particular the energy value, of alcoholic beverages.

## **7.3. Consultation of Member States' experts by the Commission**

In the preparatory phase for this report, a meeting of a working group of the Commission on Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 was organised on 28 October 2013 to discuss the issues covered by the report with Member States' experts from the national competent authorities; this discussion also addressed the definition of 'alcopops', which tend to be pre-mixed alcoholic/non-alcoholic products. Many Member States' experts consider that it is unjustified and inconsistent that on the label of soft drinks, ingredients mixed with alcohol do not have to be declared while ingredients of a soft drink without the alcohol would have to be declared. Similarly, there is no justification why a soft drink should provide a nutrition declaration when the same soft drink mixed with a spirit would be exempted from such declaration.

In addition, it appeared in the discussion that the notion of 'alcopops' was not always pertinent at national level and was also too vague to allow for a constructive definition. Moreover, it was considered that, a priori and without prejudging any justified exemption, all alcoholic beverages including 'alcopops' should be treated equally for the labelling particulars under consideration.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

Under the current rules, unlike for other foods, the indication of the list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration is not obligatory for alcoholic beverages. With the nutrition declaration having become mandatory for the vast majority of pre-packed food as of 13 December 2016, the particular situation of alcoholic beverages is now even more salient. European consumers have therefore reduced access to the nutrition declaration and to the list of ingredients with the exception of ingredients which may have an allergenic effect.

The European Parliament, but also the World Health Organisation, consumer and public health organisations are now asking for new labelling rules for alcoholic beverages, especially concerning the labelling of the energy value. Member States' experts indicated some

---

<sup>39</sup> European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Alcohol Strategy [2015/2543(RSP)].

<sup>40</sup> Council conclusions on an EU strategy on the reduction of alcohol related harm (2015), OJ C418, 16.12.2015, p. 6-8.

expectations, especially regarding the nutrition declaration, and more particularly for the mandatory labelling of the energy value.

In the past, the economic sectors concerned have voiced their opposition to a mandatory labelling regime. Today, the sector acknowledges the right of consumers to know what they are drinking. On that basis, an increasing number of voluntary initiatives have emerged providing consumers with information on the ingredients, the energy value or the full nutrition declaration of alcoholic beverages and addressing consumers' expectations for more information on the drinks they consume. Originally, such voluntary information was mainly accessible through new information and communication technologies. However, according to information from the sector, it should now increasingly be found on the labels themselves.

In view of the lack of legal action in this area, some Member States have adopted national rules requesting partial indication of ingredients for certain alcoholic drinks. Even if the provisions for the nutrition declaration are fully harmonised, some Member States are also notifying national measures addressing the nutrition declaration for alcoholic beverages. Such national initiatives contribute to an increased risk of market fragmentation.

The list of ingredients and the nutrition declaration are key information particulars that help consumers to make more informed and healthier choices. The exemptions from the list of ingredients and from the nutrition declaration for certain foods cover, mainly, single ingredient products, whose name suffice to inform the consumers about their content, like salt, fruits and vegetables. However, in the case of alcoholic beverages, it cannot be assumed that consumers are necessarily aware of the generally various ingredients used in the production process and of their nutritional value.

On the basis of the information reviewed, the Commission has not identified objective grounds that would justify the absence of information on ingredients and nutrition information on alcoholic beverages or a differentiated treatment for some alcoholic beverages, such as 'alcopops'. At this stage, the Commission therefore sees no need or clear added value for a specific definition of 'alcopops' for labelling purposes.

This report shows that the sector is increasingly prepared to provide responses to consumers' expectations to know what they are drinking. This is demonstrated by the expansion of concerted or independent voluntary initiatives developed and implemented by the sector to provide consumers with information on the list of ingredients, the energy value and/or the full nutrition declaration on or off label. It has to be particularly noted that a rising number of alcoholic beverages present on the EU market already bear the full nutrition declaration.

Taking into account these recent developments, the Commission considers that as a first step, current voluntary initiatives should be allowed to develop further so as to provide list of ingredients and nutrition declaration. It therefore invites the industry to respond to consumers' expectations and present within a year of adoption of this report a self-regulatory proposal that would cover the entire sector of alcoholic beverages. The Commission will assess the industry's proposal.

Should the Commission consider the self-regulatory approach proposed by the industry as unsatisfactory, it would then launch an impact assessment to review further available options: in line with Better Regulation principles<sup>41</sup> this impact assessment would consider regulatory as well as non-regulatory options, in particular, regarding, the provision of information on the energy value of alcoholic beverages; such assessment should carefully consider the impact of

---

<sup>41</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc\\_guide\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/toc_guide_en.htm)

different options on the internal market, on the economic sectors concerned, on consumers' needs and the actual use of this information, as well as on international trade.