

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

48th Session
Québec City, Canada,
27 October – 1 November 2024

European Union Comments on

Agenda Item 9:

Labelling of alcoholic beverages

(CX/FL 24/48/9)

Mixed Competence ***European Union Vote***

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to thank the World Health Organization for the preparation of the Discussion paper on the labelling of alcoholic beverages (CX/FL 24/48/9).

As confirmed by the Codex Secretariat, the existing General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985) and the Guidelines on Nutrition labelling (CXG 2-1985) apply to all prepackaged foods, including alcoholic beverages. Alcoholic beverages fall under the definition of 'food' and are therefore subject to the same requirements as other foods under these two Codex texts.

The EUMS are of the opinion that the requirements are sufficiently clear in these Codex texts. They consider in particular that the existing definitions are sufficiently clear and that there is no need for revising the definition of “food”, nor for establishing a definition of “drinks”, “alcoholic beverages” or “non-alcoholic drinks”.

The EUMS are therefore not in favour to develop a new Codex standard for alcoholic beverages.

The EUMS note however that the indication of the alcohol content of alcoholic beverages (alcohol by volume/alcohol strength) is not addressed in Codex texts. As this indication is an important information for consumers to enable them to make informed choices, the EUMS support work on the labelling of alcohol content on alcoholic beverages, taking into account the existing recommendations of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV).

The EUMS note furthermore that, as regards nutrition and health claims, alcoholic beverages are subject to the same requirements as other foods under the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23/1997), as they fall under the definition of 'food'. In the EU, Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods provides that beverages containing more than 1,2 % by volume of alcohol cannot bear health claims and that, as far as nutrition claims are concerned, only nutrition claims referring to low alcohol levels, or the reduction of the alcohol content, or the reduction of the energy content for beverages containing more than 1,2 % by volume of alcohol, are permitted. The EUMS are

therefore in favour of work on restrictions on nutrition and health claims on alcoholic beverages.

Finally, there is no EU level legislation concerning health warnings on alcoholic beverages and the Member States of the EU have different alcohol labelling policies.

The EUMS are therefore of the opinion that CCFL could consider work on:

- the labelling of alcohol content on alcoholic beverages in % by volume alcohol through the modification of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985), taking into account the existing recommendations of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV),
- restrictions on positive nutrition and health claims on alcoholic beverages through the modification of the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23/1997).