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Alcohol makers fail to meet consumers' expectations for on-label information

Information about the ingredients and nutritional value – such as the amount of sugar - of alcoholic drinks will still escape mandatory labelling rules which apply to all soft drinks. This is the disappointing conclusion of the [alcohol industry plans](#) published today.

The proposal allows beer, wine and spirits manufacturers to choose between on-label and online information, the latter being a no-go from the consumer perspective. These plans are the industry's reaction to a European Commission deadline to improve the nutrition and ingredients labelling of alcoholic products.

For BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation, it is unacceptable that the nutrition information and ingredients list of alcoholic beverages remain optional whereas they are mandatory on all soft drinks such as fruit juice and sodas. BEUC calls again on the EU for binding rules and to end the alcohol sector's labelling privileges.

Monique Goyens, Director general of BEUC, commented:

"The industry is granting itself too much flexibility to decide how much information consumers can see. As consumers make shopping decisions in a matter of seconds, it is unrealistic to expect they will take a few minutes to check online how calorific wine or vodka is.

"Let's not forget that in most countries more than 3 out of 10 consumers do not own a smartphone¹, not to mention that the signal can be very weak in some places. So on-label information is the best way to reach consumers equally. Even if consumers own a smartphone, manufacturers should make their lives easy and enable them to compare drinks in the blink of an eye.

"Alcoholic beverages can be calorie bombs, as a glass of wine can contain as many calories as an ice cream. To make healthier choices and know at a glance what an alcoholic drink contains, consumers need the information *on* the bottle, not screen swipes away.

"Last year the Commission rightly acknowledged the need to boost alcohol information to consumers. It is good news that some sectors such as beer makers are open to transparency, but this is not enough to ensure seamless information for consumers. For all alcohol makers to label information systematically and in a consumer-friendly way, the only solution we see are EU-wide mandatory rules."

¹ Newzoo, [Global Mobile Market Report](#), 2017

Background:

[One year ago](#), the EU Commission granted alcohol manufacturers 12 months to come up with a proposal to improve the nutrition and ingredients labelling of their products.

The industry's main proposals are:

- Online or offline information for producers to choose;
- Energy only or all nutritional values for producers to choose;
- Serving size is still preferred option for spirits, instead of comparable information per 100ml.

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