

## EU alcohol labelling rules delay branded unacceptable

Written by Marc Tarabella on 17 April 2015 in Opinion  
Opinion

Proper labelling on alcoholic beverages could help fight obesity and alcoholism, says Marc Tarabella.



Europeans are the world's heaviest drinkers, yet no one knows the amount of calories, the composition or the energy value of what they drink.

On behalf of the European Socialists, I have submitted a question to the commission on this issue. Europe is slow to introduce new regulations; a legislative position was expected last year but so far nothing has happened - this is unacceptable. Alcoholic beverages should be subject to the same regulatory labelling regime as other foodstuffs.

Before the summer, parliament will vote on a text urging the commission to legislate the sector. We want drinks to be labelled with a list of ingredients and their energy value. It should be possible, for example, to see how many calories are in a glass or in 100ml. This will also allow consumers to detect allergens.

"When calories are listed on alcohol or drink menus in bars, informed customers consume about 400 calories less than those who have not been informed"

Furthermore, this is a question of fighting for consumer protection and safeguarding people's health. We should not deprive ourselves of legislation that could help combat obesity or alcoholism.

According to a [recent study, nutrition labelling on alcohols would reduce consumption](#) [1]. When calories are listed on alcohol or drink menus in bars, informed customers consume about 400 calories less than those who have not been informed.

In addition, alcohol is an important cause of obesity, affecting 14 million Europeans and contributing up to 10 per cent of the daily calorie intake among regular drinkers.

It is therefore important that all relevant information appears clearly and directly on cans and bottles - a reference to a website is not enough, but it can complement visible data.

In 2011, alcoholic beverages were removed from the legislation on food labelling in order to explore different ways to label this type of product. Four years later, it is time to put an end to this.

I hope the industry will fully cooperate in the development of new legislation. Parliament wants the process to be as transparent as possible and consumers have a right to know.

## About the author

Marc Tarabella (S&D, BE) is a member of parliament's agriculture and rural development committee

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