

## Food labelling: Council ignores European Parliament

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Ministers oppose obligatory nutrition labelling on front of package foodstuffs

The future EU regulation on food labelling is now far from being a done deal. EU Ministers for consumer protection today issued various amendments to a proposal by the European Parliament making a swift agreement on the issue less likely. "Council has taken up some of our recommendations, such as the deletion of national labelling systems, as they would undermine the European single market. On many other points, however, which command the broad support of the European Parliament, Council has not taken them on board", said Renate Sommer MEP, Rapporteur on the provision of food information to consumers.

Council does not support mandatory nutrition labelling on the front of food packaging. It does not even recommend the labelling of the energy content of foodstuffs. Nor does Council propose the deletion of the confusing kilojoule indication which has already been welcomed by stakeholders and the public.

"I've got the sneaking suspicion that the decision by the Council was rushed. The result is a flawed draft that neglects various important details. For instance, Council is calling for the labelling of alcopops and food imitation products without specifically defining what those items are, the result of which is legal uncertainty", said Ms Sommer.

"This is a disappointing result. Especially when we consider that national Government departments have many experts at hand capable of solving the tricky technical details. However, with its hastily adopted position, Council has passed the buck back to the European Parliament. As a result, we are facing difficult negotiations in second reading. Consumers have to further wait for clearer labelling rules on foodstuffs, that is if they can be achieved at all", said the Rapporteur.