

## **Joint Letter: What Is More Important to The Members of The European Parliament – The Health Of Their Citizens Or The Interests Of The Alcohol Industry?**

'Civil society and professional medical associations welcome the emphasis on alcohol as a cancer risk factor in the Parliamentary Report "Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer." However, we are deeply disappointed that a majority of Members of the European Parliament voted for amendments aimed at weakening its section on alcohol-related cancer.

The science and evidence are clear and unequivocal – alcohol causes cancer. Citizens across the European Union **have a right to know** how alcohol negatively affects their health, at all levels of consumption. For this reason, visible and clear health warnings on the labels of alcoholic beverages should be introduced to raise awareness.

Further, alcohol beverages should not be exempt from declaring nutritional values and a list of ingredients on its labels. Every other food or beverage product on the European market have these labeling requirements – why should alcohol be excused from this rule?

The alcohol industry has successfully lobbied Members of the European Parliament to weaken the report. ***There is a direct conflict between public health interests of EU citizens and the interests of the alcohol industry.*** While alcohol consumption leads to an increased risk of cancer and other adverse outcomes, alcohol consumption also leads to increased sales and profit for the alcohol industry. The health community is appalled that Members of European Parliament have listened to the alcohol industry rather than to scientists and public health experts.

In the words of one Member of Parliament during the debate *"We have to decide what is most important to us – the health of our citizens or the interest of the lobbyists?"*.

The right to accurate health information and warnings of the risks associated with alcohol is fundamental to the promise from the EU to "protect and improve the health of EU citizens." Regrettably, it seems as if a majority of the Members of European Parliament prioritized the commercial interest of the alcohol industry over measures to protect the health of their citizens.

Co-signatories:

European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare)

IOGT-NTO Sweden

European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)

Alcohol Action Ireland

Movendi International

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