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European Parliament Panel Backs Health Labels on All Alcoholic Drinks

Approved 27 to 8, the resolution urges tighter advertising rules to reduce minors’ exposure.

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European lawmakers have moved a step closer to backing stricter health rules for alcohol labeling and advertising as part of the bloc’s broader anti-cancer strategy, approving a committee resolution that calls for prominent health information on all

alcoholic drinks and a new push to curb underage drinking.

The text was approved in Strasbourg by the European Parliament's public health committee with 27 votes in favor, 8 against and 4 abstentions. It now heads to the full Parliament for a plenary vote in the coming weeks as part of the review of the European Union's "Beating Cancer Plan."

The resolution draws an important distinction between alcohol consumption in general and what it calls "harmful consumption" of alcohol. But it also asks the European Commission to bring forward legislative proposals requiring "clearly visible" health information on all alcoholic beverages, supported by digital labeling, and to revise the EU's alcohol strategy with a specific goal of eliminating alcohol consumption among minors.

The committee's position signals that alcohol remains a central issue in EU health policy even as producers, including the wine sector, face other pressures such as climate change and weak market conditions. If the proposals are eventually turned into law, they could lead to new compliance costs and tighter marketing limits for alcohol companies across the bloc.

In the resolution, lawmakers recalled the Commission's stated intention under the cancer plan to require ingredient lists and nutrition declarations on the labels of all alcoholic beverages. They said they recognized progress made by parts of the industry in digital labeling and noted efforts by the wine sector to provide ingredient information. At the same time, they criticized what they described as limited progress toward mandatory ingredient lists, nutrition declarations and health information for all alcoholic drinks.

The committee urged the Commission and EU member states to invest in preventing alcohol-related harm and said new legislation should place special focus on protecting minors, young people and other vulnerable groups. Lawmakers also called for awareness campaigns aimed particularly at minors to provide clear information about alcohol-related harm and to help people understand the health effects of harmful drinking, especially above levels indicated in evidence-based health recommendations.

The resolution also asks the Commission to propose EU-level measures to reduce exposure to alcohol advertising and other forms of promotion, especially for minors and in digital environments. It further calls for regulatory steps to prevent alcohol advertising and sponsorship in settings where minors could be reached.

The alcohol provisions are part of a wider package on cancer prevention and public health spending. According to a press note from the committee, the resolution asks that the EU's multiannual budget allocate at least €10.05 billion to health, including €2.5 billion specifically for cancer-related actions. The text argues that prevention is the most cost-effective cancer control strategy over the long term and calls for dedicated funding to improve prevention policies as well as access to screening, diagnosis and treatment.

Beyond alcohol, the resolution also supports restrictions in other public health areas, including alternative electronic tobacco devices, higher excise duties on tobacco and nicotine products, and a mandatory harmonized EU nutrition label for food products.

In setting out its case for stronger action on alcohol, the committee cited scientific and public health findings already used in previous EU debates. The text notes that ethanol in alcoholic beverages and acetaldehyde produced during ethanol metabolism are classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as carcinogenic to humans. It also refers to estimates by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that, if the plan's targets are met, up to 1 million additional cancer cases could be prevented between 2023 and 2050.

The committee's rapporteur, Vlad Voiculescu, framed the issue in broader terms of preventable deaths and public responsibility. "Every year cancer kills 1.3 million Europeans. 40% of these deaths are preventable," he said, according to the committee statement. "With this report we are calling for stronger prevention, solid funding, responsibility from everyone and patient-centered monitoring. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan could save up to half a million lives every year."

The latest committee vote comes after years of politically sensitive debate in Brussels over how far the EU should go in regulating alcohol under its health agenda. Some earlier discussions sparked strong objections from wine-producing countries and

industry groups, especially when public messaging appeared to treat all alcohol consumption in the same way. The current committee text is more careful in its wording, repeatedly referring to harmful alcohol consumption rather than consumption as such. Even so, its practical proposals point toward a stricter regulatory approach, especially on labels, advertising and youth exposure.

For wine producers and other alcohol businesses, the language matters, but so do the proposed obligations. Mandatory visible health messages, broader nutrition and ingredient disclosures, limits on promotional activity and tighter rules around advertising placement could reshape how products are sold and marketed across the EU. The wine sector has argued in past debates that moderate consumption should not be equated with abuse and that education, not blanket restrictions, should remain central to policy. Public health advocates, by contrast, have pressed for clearer warnings and tighter controls, arguing that cancer prevention requires stronger action on alcohol.

The plenary vote will show whether the committee’s line commands broad support across the Parliament. If it does, the resolution would add political pressure on the European Commission to draft legislation in the areas identified by lawmakers, including alcohol labeling and youth protection. While the resolution itself does not create binding law, it sets out the Parliament’s preferred direction and could shape the next phase of EU health regulation affecting alcohol, food labeling and cancer prevention.