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Germany’s Finance Committee Backs a 2027 Tax Bill That Spares Sparkling Wine

The revised measure widens levies on mixed drinks up to 15% alcohol after lawmakers dropped the planned sparkling wine increase

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Germany’s Finance Committee approved changes to the country’s excise tax plans on Thursday, November 12, backing an amended 2027 budget-related bill that would spare sparkling wine from a planned alcohol tax increase while broadening the alcopop tax to cover mixed drinks with up to 15% alcohol by volume.

The committee vote advanced the tax package tied to the federal government’s 2027 budget bill after a session focused on its tax provisions. According to the Bundestag’s parliamentary news service, the coalition parties supported the revised draft, while the opposition parties AfD, the Greens and The Left voted against it. Amendments submitted by the coalition were also rejected by all opposition factions.

The approved changes would delay the introduction of a tax on sugary drinks by six months, moving its start to January 1, 2028, and phasing it in over three steps. On alcohol, the revised bill drops a planned increase for sparkling wine. In return, it expands the alcopop tax to cover a wider range of mixed drinks, though at a lower rate than originally proposed.

The Bundestag notice said the new alcopop rules would still increase the tax burden on affected products. It gave one example: a 0.33-liter mixed drink with 10% alcohol by volume would face an added tax of about 1 euro. It also said 1% of alcopop tax revenue, up to a maximum of 1 million euros, would be earmarked for addiction prevention.

In comments cited by the parliamentary notice, the CDU/CSU said a 20% increase in the alcohol tax from January 2027 was substantial, but described it as the first such increase in nearly 44 years and said it would still leave Germany around the European average. The bloc said health experts had also recommended higher duties. It argued that the increase for sparkling wine was being dropped because of the difficult situation facing German winemakers.

The CDU/CSU also said the alcopop tax rate would be reduced by 45% from the earlier plan even as the tax base was widened. It said the broader scope would still produce additional revenue and compensate for the decision not to raise the sparkling wine tax. The party added that some of the revenue would be used for addiction prevention.

The SPD defended the broader package as part of a larger budget effort, saying the coalition had shown it could consolidate 34 billion euros through spending cuts and higher revenue. On the drink taxes, SPD lawmakers said higher taxes on tobacco and alcohol, together with a sugar tax, were justified on public health grounds. They said it was right to revise the government’s original proposals and to abandon the increase for sparkling wine.

The SPD also said the alcopop market had changed since that tax was first created and that drinks with higher alcohol content had become much more common. It stressed that there would be no tax increases on beer or wine. On the sugary drinks tax, the party said the six-month delay was important for manufacturers and for customs authorities, giving both more time to prepare. It said implementation would be gradual and designed to limit bureaucracy, and that no additional customs posts would be created for the new tax.

Opposition parties attacked both the process and the substance of the changes. AfD criticized the late submission of the coalition’s amendments and said the dispute showed divisions inside the governing alliance. The party argued that the budget was not being structurally consolidated and said costs were being shifted through special funds and delayed repayment measures. It also said the tobacco tax would end up producing lower, not higher, revenue.

AfD’s own motion, which was rejected by every other parliamentary group, called for the government to reverse tobacco tax increases, abandon other planned tax hikes and scrap what it described as minor taxes. It also urged the government not to introduce new levies such as the sugar tax and a plastics tax. The CDU/CSU sharply criticized that proposal, saying rolling back the tobacco tax increase would send a damaging signal for both health policy and public finances.

The Greens also criticized the late presentation of the amendments, calling it an improper procedure. On substance, the party said a sugar tax could generate less revenue if it worked as intended by changing consumer behavior. The Greens said they had long supported introducing the tax later so it would have a better chance of success, but they opposed the amendment package overall and called for a broader

long-term reform of alcohol taxation.

The Left voiced similar concerns about the process and said the revised package would raise extra revenue through consumer spending in a way that would weigh especially on lower- and middle-income households. The party argued that, at a time of inflation and multiple crises, people should not be asked to absorb additional price increases.

For beverage producers, importers and retailers, the committee’s changes could reshape tax pressure across several categories. Distilled spirits and ready-to-drink mixed beverages appear set to face higher burdens from January 2027, while sparkling wine would avoid the planned increase. That could affect retail pricing, company margins and demand patterns in parts of the alcohol market, even as beer and still wine remain outside these specific increases. The delayed sugar tax also gives soft drink makers more time to adjust recipes, pricing and compliance systems before January 1, 2028.

The committee’s approval did not end the legislative process, but it marked a significant step for the tax provisions attached to the government’s 2027 budget bill.