

JOINT LETTER

To: Members of the European Parliament
Cc: MEP Prof. Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Rapporteur, Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)
MEP Dr Peter Liese, MEP Nicolas Gonzalez Casares, MEP Michèle Rivasi, MEP Joëlle Mélin, MEP Pietro Fiocchi, MEP Giorgos Georgiou, Shadow Rapporteurs

Brussels, 10 February 2022

Subject: No amendments to the BECA report's recommendations on alcohol and cancer risk

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

In February 2021, the EU Commission adopted the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, a structured approach to fight cancer. A strong focus has been put on prevention measures with actions addressing well-established risk factors for cancer incidence.

Alcohol consumption is a major preventable risk factor for cancer, which in 2020 accounted for an estimated 181,000 cases of cancer within Europe¹. Alcohol has been classified for decades as a **Group 1 carcinogen** (highest classification of causality of cancer) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)². Emerging evidence indicates that in terms of cancer prevention there is **no safe level of alcohol consumption**³. For this reason, **labelling of alcoholic beverages** should not report ambiguous wording such as 'moderate' and 'responsible' drinking, but instead include clear and visible **health warnings**, alongside a **full nutrition declaration** and a **list of ingredients on the bottle**. Consumers have the **right to accurate health information** in order to facilitate making informed and healthier choices which protect themselves, society, and the economy at European and national level. It is essential that there are statutory requirements for the alcohol industry to explicitly inform their customers of the proven risks of adverse outcomes as a consequence of consuming their products.

It is therefore unacceptable that the BECA report, which was fully adopted by the BECA committee last December, is further amended by vested interests other than those of public health.

Please help us protect Paragraph 15, 16, and 44 of the BECA report during the upcoming plenary vote. The vision of "*Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer*" is only attainable if we are ambitious and consistent.

We look forward to your full support!

¹ Rumgay, H. et al., 2021. *European burden of cancer in 2020 attributable to alcohol use*. European Journal of Public Health, vol. 31, suppl. 3. Available from: https://academic.oup.com/eurpub/article/31/Supplement_3/ckab164.857/6405090?login=true ² IARC, 1988. *IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of the Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Volume 44*. Available from: <https://publications.iarc.fr/62>; ³ Burton, R. and Sheron, N., 2018. *No level of alcohol consumption improves health*. Lancet, vol. 392, n. 10152, pp. 987-988. Available from: [https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736\(18\)31571-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(18)31571-X/fulltext)

Yours sincerely,

Florence Berteletti, Secretary General, European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare)
Dr Sheila Gilheany, CEO, Alcohol Action Ireland
Nijole Gostautaite Midttun, Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition (NTAKK)
Prof. Frank Murray, Policy and Public Health Committee member, EASL
Emil Juslin, European Policy Officer, IOGT-NTO Sweden
Dr. Wendy Yared, Director, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
Mihaela Lovše, President, Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control
Prof. Andreas Charalambous, President, European Cancer Organization
Dr Milka Sokolović, Director General, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
Marko Korenjak, President, European Liver Patient Association (ELPA)
Hilkka Karkkainen, President, GAMIAN Europe
Prof. Em. Raymond Vanholder, Acting Chairman, European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)
Prof. Patrizia Burra, Chair of Public Affairs Committee, United European Gastroenterology (UEG)
Dr Christiaan Keijzer, President, Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)

