Fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report drafted by Andres PERELLO RODRIGUEZ (S&D, ES) on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption.

It recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading, under the ordinary legislative procedure, amends the Commission proposal as follows:

Scope: Members consider that the criteria laid down in this Directive should apply equally to products manufactured in the Union and to **imported products**.

Consumer protection: Members suggest a number of amendments to protect consumer interests and provide as much information as possible, to ensure that the labelling of fruit juice is unambiguous and allow them to distinguish between different types of products:

- even if not mentioned in the product name, **all fruits used must be included in the list of ingredients** in descending order of volume, and followed by the quantity, expressed as a percentage. If any fruit is mentioned in the product name, the principal name of the product shall correspond to its dominant fruit;
- **pictorial representations** on the package shall not mislead the consumer as to the actual composition of the juice;
- nectars and specific products of Annex III may be sweetened by the addition of sugars, honey or **sweeteners**. In such cases, the addition shall be clearly indicated in the list of ingredients, as stipulated under current legislation, specifying the maximum quantity of sugar added, calculated as dry matter and expressed in grams per litre. In the case of honey, except natural honey, its full composition and/or its glucose content shall be listed;
- in order to help consumers differentiate between juice and nectar in terms of their sugar content, **the term 'without added sugar' shall be allowed** for fruit juices. By five years after the entry into force of this Directive, the use of this wording shall be reviewed;
- in the case of **fruit juices reconstituted from concentrates**, product names shall contain the words 'from concentrate' or 'juice reconstituted from concentrate', in characters at least half the size of those used for the name of the fruit juice;
- checks must be in place to ensure that **no fruit seeds are present** in the final juice product. In cases where seeds may be present in the final juice product, they shall be clearly labelled indicating the possible presence of seeds;
- the addition to fruit juice of **extra pulp or cells** shall be indicated on the labelling;
- lastly, Members state that it shall be prohibited to use misleading or ambiguous descriptions such as '**natural juice**', which suggest that juices have been produced directly from fruit when this is not the case.

Information campaigns: the Commission and the Member States shall carry out information campaigns, both generally and at sales points, in order to inform consumers of the different categories of juices and similar products introduced by this Directive.

Delegated acts: Members consider that in view of the existing differences in matters such as flavourings, decisions on the adding of authorised ingredients should not be taken by means of delegated acts.

Moreover, the powers to adopt delegated acts referred to in this Directive shall be conferred on the Commission for a **period of five years** after the deadline for transposition of this Directive. In the event of no reason arising or explicit request being made to change specific aspects of this Directive, this period shall be taken to be extended.

Transition period: there shall be an 18-month transitional period starting from the date of transposition of the Directive, in order to clear existing stocks already on the market and provide a period in which to adapt to the new legislation.

A certain number of **amendments concerning the Annexes** aim, inter alia, to:

- provide that for fruit juices that only flavour, pulp and cells from the juice which are separated during processing may be restored to the same juice;
- clarify that the water added must display appropriate characteristics, particularly from the chemical, microbiological and organoleptic viewpoints, in such a way as to guarantee the essential qualities of the juice;
- warn consumers when flavour is restored, the addition of flavour must feature on the label of the fruit juice product;
- make reference to the first point of Annex II by stating that the fruit must be sound, appropriately mature, and fresh or preserved by physical means or by treatments, including post-harvest treatments, applied in accordance with the applicable provisions in force in the European Union.