Spirit drinks: definition, presentation and labelling; use of names in the presentation and labelling of other foodstuffs; protection of geographical indications

2016/0392(COD) - 02/02/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Pilar AYUSO (EPP, ES) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, presentation and labelling of spirit drinks, the use of the names of spirit drinks in the presentation and labelling of other foodstuffs and the protection of geographical indications for spirit drinks.

As a reminder, the purpose of the Commission's proposal is to replace Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 and bring it into line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The committee recommended that the European Parliament’s position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows.

Specificities of the spirit drinks sector: according to Members, compliance by the Member States' authorities with the Regulation shall help **maintain a high quality standard** in order to maintain the reputation and value of the spirit drinks sector.

An amendment emphasised the **special feature** of the measures applicable to spirit drinks which relates to the fact that traditional production methods shall continue to be kept alive, that spirit drinks are closely linked with the agricultural sector, the use of high-quality products, and the commitment to protecting consumer safety.

Protection of existing geographical indications: Members considered that existing geographical indications, for which a corresponding technical file has already been presented, must be automatically protected as geographical indications by the new Regulation and there must not be any way in which they could lose their protection after the new Regulation comes into force.

The electronic register of geographical indications established by the Regulation shall be **transparent, complete and easily accessible** and shall have the same legal value as Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 on geographical indications (Annex deleted by the proposal for the Commission and transformed into an electronic register). Geographical indications registered under Regulation (EC) No 110 /2008 should be automatically entered in this register by the Commission.

Delegated powers: Members introduced amendments to safeguard the rights of the European Parliament. The Commission shall thus be able to adopt delegated acts (and not implementing acts) as regards decisions concerning the **registration and cancellation of the registration of a geographical indications** , the updating of the accessible electronic register to the public and inclusion in the register of spirit drinks produced in third countries which are protected in the Union under an international agreement to which the Union is a contracting party.

As for the Commission's power to adopt delegated acts, Members proposed to limit this delegation to a renewable **five-year period**.

When adopting delegated acts to modify the technical definitions provided for in Annex I, the Commission shall take into consideration **traditional practices**.

Language used for the names of spirit drinks: the proposal specifies that the terms appearing in italics in Annex II shall not be translated either on the label or in the presentation of the spirit drink. However, it is clarified that in the case of spirit drinks produced in the Union and intended for export, the geographical indications and the terms indicated in italics in Annex II may be accompanied by translation where such translation is a legal requirement of the importing country.

Technical amendments have been introduced, adjusting the titles of categories of spirit drinks in Annex II, in the interests of greater clarity.

Consumer protection: Members stressed that the sector's **self-regulatory approach** to provide information on the ingredients and nutritional values of all alcoholic beverages shall ensure that **ingredients and nutritional information** are provided on-label and that such information complies with requirements on 'Voluntary Food Information' as set out in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers.

Lastly, technical amendments have been introduced in Annex II to address the omissions or inconsistencies in the current Regulation.