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ENERGY DRINKS – THE FACTS

What are energy drinks?

- Energy drinks are functional beverages with a stimulating effect.
- They typically contain a unique combination of specific ingredients including caffeine, taurine, vitamins and other substances with a nutritional or physiological effect.
- Energy drinks represent about 1% of the total European non-alcoholic beverages market¹.

How much caffeine do energy drinks contain?

- Energy drinks typically contain 80mg of caffeine per 250ml – equivalent to an espresso coffee.
- A mug of filter coffee typically contains 90mg of caffeine.
- A mug of tea typically contains 50mg of caffeine.

How are energy drinks regulated?

So that consumers can make informed purchases, EU law (Food Information Regulation 1169/2011) requires all drinks containing over 150mg/l of caffeine to display '*High caffeine content. Not recommended for children or pregnant or breast-feeding women*' in the same field of vision as the name of the beverage, followed by a reference in brackets and in accordance with Article 13(1) of this Regulation to the caffeine content expressed in mg per 100ml.

Beyond the legal provisions, UNESDA members adhere to a number of additional voluntary provisions as set out in the UNESDA Code on the Labelling and Marketing of Energy Drinks. The Code has been in place since 2010 and covers the labelling and marketing of energy drinks by all UNESDA members. Key elements of the Code include:

- Placement on pack of an additional advisory statement: "*Consume moderately*" or similar wording based on consumer understanding.
- Labels of energy drinks will not promote the mixing with alcohol or make any claims that the consumption of alcohol together with energy drinks counteracts the effects of alcohol.
- The labelling of energy drinks will also comply with the principles for the sales and marketing as outlined overleaf.

¹ Canadean Global Beverage Forecasts, 2015.

Sales and Marketing:

- When promoting the benefits of energy drinks and their ingredients, no claims will be made on alcohol together with energy drinks.
- Energy drinks are functional beverages and not sports drinks. Although normal consumption of energy drinks also provides water to the body, energy drinks will not be marketed as sports beverages which deliver a rehydration benefit.
- No marketing communications concerning energy drinks will be placed in any media with an audience of which more than 35% is under 12 years of age.
- Samplings of energy drinks will not be conducted in the close proximity of primary and secondary schools or other institutions taking care of this age group.

Off labels (eg through websites or leaflets) the industry will provide comprehensive information to consumers about energy drinks, their responsible consumption and their characteristic ingredients, including how their caffeine content relates to other caffeine-containing foods and beverages

For the full UNESDA Code for the Labelling and Marketing of Energy Drinks please go to the UNESDA website: http://www.unesda.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/UNESDA-Energy-Drinks-Code_May2012.pdf

Are energy drinks safe?

Energy drinks have been on the market for more than 25 years. The safety of their key ingredients has been assessed and confirmed by European risk assessment institutions^{2, 3, 4} and they are consumed safely and enjoyed by consumers worldwide.

Background on caffeine

- Caffeine is one of the world's most thoroughly tested ingredients. It is considered safe by food authorities around the globe and enjoyed by millions of people every day.
- Daily caffeine intakes from all sources up to 400 mg do not raise safety concerns in the general population of healthy adults, and are not associated with adverse health effects (200 mg for pregnant / breast-feeding women).

² SCF (1999). Opinion on caffeine, taurine and D-glucurono-γ-lactone as constituents of so-called “energy” drinks, adopted on 21 January 1999.

³ Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources added to Food on a request from the Commission on the use of taurine and D-glucurono-γ-lactone as constituents of the so-called “energy” drinks, adopted on 15 January 2009.

⁴ EFSA NDA Panel (EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies), 2015. Scientific Opinion on the safety of caffeine. EFSA Journal 2015;13(5):4102, 120 pp.

Background on taurine

- Taurine is a sulphur-containing amino acid which is not incorporated into proteins, but does play a role in many important physiological functions, including retinal and neurological development, osmoregulation, modulation of cellular calcium levels and immune function.
- In healthy humans, dietary foodstuffs are the main sources of taurine, however taurine can be synthesised widely amongst species including human. Approximately 0.1% of the total human bodyweight comes from taurine.
- Taurine is one of the main ingredients in energy drinks. In 2009 and 2015, in line with numerous health authorities across the world, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) - which is the risk assessment body for food and feed safety in the European Union - concluded that the exposure of taurine at levels presently used in energy drinks is not a safety concern.

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