

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002229/24
to the Commission
Katri Kulmuni (Renew)
(23 October 2024)**

Subject: Harmonisation of gluten-free labelling

The only effective treatment for coeliac disease is a gluten-free diet. Coeliac disease is thought to affect around 1.4% of people worldwide, and in some countries, the prevalence is significantly higher.

The composition and labelling of gluten-free foods is governed by an EU regulation.

The practical experience of many tourists, for example, is that restaurants in different EU countries have very different practices with regard to content labelling. In some cases, there is no labelling at all.

In view of the above:

1. Is it possible to harmonise gluten-free labelling within the EU, for example by requiring restaurants to clearly state whether or not there is gluten in the dishes they serve?
2. Is reporting on gluten and gluten-free labelling sufficiently supervised within the EU?

Submitted: 23.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(6 January 2025)**

The use of 'gluten-free' and 'very-low gluten' statements is harmonised across the EU ⁽¹⁾, ensuring consistency in food information.

The Food Information to Consumers Regulation (FIC Regulation) ⁽²⁾ lists gluten among the substances or products that cause allergies or intolerances.

This regulation requires that such substances or products be declared to consumers at all times. For prepacked foods, these substances or products must appear in the ingredient list, with a clear reference to the substance or product's name as specified in Annex II of the regulation.

The reference must be highlighted to distinguish it from the rest of the ingredient list, for example, through changes in font, style or background colour.

Evidence shows that most food allergy incidents occur with non-prepacked foods, making the declaration of potential allergens particularly important. Therefore, the FIC Regulation requires the provision of allergen information also for non-prepacked foods ⁽³⁾.

While the FIC Regulation stipulates that Member States may adopt national measures regarding the presentation and expression of this information, in order to suit local practical conditions, the provision of allergen information remains vital. Allergen information must always be readily available to the consumers to ensure their safety.

Member States have a primary responsibility to monitor the application of the relevant legal provisions and to take the necessary steps for enforcement. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission will continue monitoring the situation and may decide to take appropriate action.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 828/2014, OJ L 228, 31.7.2014, p. 5.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, OJ L 304 22.11.2011, p. 18.

⁽³⁾ Those offered for sale to the final consumer or mass caterers without pre-packaging, or foods packed on the sales premises at the consumer's request.