

DWD: Let's encourage healthier drinking habits!

Limiting consumer choices on water leads to poorer hydration and impacts consumers' health

Brussels, 15.12.2020. EFBW welcomes today's EP Plenary vote on the Recast of the Drinking Water Directive with its core aim to improve access and quality of drinking water in Europe. "The health of European citizens must be our common goal! That is why access to water from every source has to be actively encouraged, because all waters support healthier choices and drinking habits", says Patricia Fosselard, Secretary General of EFBW.

Hydration plays a key role in the prevention of some non-communicable diseases and water helps to maintain good physical and mental performance¹. Available data suggests though that Europeans are not drinking enough². Improving good hydration and drinking habits can make a simple and significant contribution to health and achieving a healthier lifestyle. "Natural mineral waters, spring waters and tap water have all a special role to play. No water should be discriminated against and to make water people's first choice should always be promoted", says Fosselard.

There seems to be a misunderstanding and lack of knowledge around the essence of European natural mineral and spring waters. According to EU legislation³, "*natural mineral waters are clearly distinguishable from ordinary drinking water*", they can only come from a protected underground origin and may not be disinfected, nor chemically treated. Consumers appreciate their naturalness and the possibility to make a personal choice based on taste and mineral composition. With more than 2000 recognized natural mineral water springs all across the EU, there is indeed an impressive choice!

EFBW members are fully aware of the concerns regarding packaging and take it very seriously, sharing the ambition that no bottle, whether glass or PET plastic, should end up as litter. More needs to be done to increase collection and recycling and we are actively involved in several pan-European initiatives to promote a Circular Economy. "All the packaging we use is recyclable, so we want to make sure that each bottle is given a second life. Efficient collection systems, such as well-designed Deposit Refund Systems, are key to ensuring that this becomes a reality. We call upon the European Commission to provide harmonized guidance to member states setting up new DRS⁴", says Fosselard further.

¹ <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2011.2075>

² <https://www.hydratationforhealth.com/en/hydration-tools/liqin7>

³ [Directive 2009/54 on the exploitation and marketing of natural mineral waters](#)

⁴ https://www.efbw.org/fileadmin/DOCUMENTS/EFBW_calls_for_more_collection_01_07_19.pdf

The natural mineral water industry looks back on a long European tradition, securing employment and adding socio-economic value to mostly rural areas. The sector has been a pioneer in environmental protection and is committed to a climate- and resource-friendly economy, and thus supporting the European Green Deal. Fosselard reminds that “natural mineral and spring water producers have been safeguarding large areas of land around their sources for decades, preserving biodiversity. With rigorous environmental protection measures and cooperation with local stakeholders and the public sector, they help to protect the natural ecosystems through which water flows to reach its natural source.”

EFBW:

The European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) is the voice of the bottled water industry, dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral and spring water among EU institutions and international organizations. EFBW is a registered international not for profit federation with a membership base of national trade associations and direct member companies. EFBW represents almost 550 natural mineral and spring water producers in Europe.

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