

UNESDA rationale for the generally-recommended portion in relation to GDA nutrition labelling of non-alcoholic beverages in the EU

Introduction & background

- UNESDA members produce a wide range of beverages to meet consumers' demands, including still and sparkling water-based flavoured drinks, bottled waters, tea-based drinks, sports drinks, fruit-containing drinks and low-sugar/calorie-free drinks.
- In December 2006, UNESDA, for the beverages within its remit¹, was the first sector in the food industry to adopt its own Guideline Daily Amount ('GDA') nutritional labelling scheme² based on the CIAA GDA scheme for the European food and beverage industry.
- GDA nutrition information provides the actual energy (kilocalories) and nutrient contents on a per portion basis so as to provide more transparent information to consumers. A portion is the amount of a given food or beverage reasonably expected to be consumed by an individual on a single consumption occasion.
- As non-alcoholic beverages are almost always consumed in higher quantities than 100 ml, GDA labelling per portion - in addition to labelling on a 100 ml basis - is especially helpful for the consumer.

UNESDA portion size rationale

- *Single portion packs*: For beverages sold in a single-portion pack likely to be consumed on a single consumption occasion, for example a 330 ml can that can not be re-sealed, the size of the pack is to be considered a portion.
- *Multi-portion packs*: UNESDA has defined, as a general recommendation, a standard portion of 250 ml for beverages. This means that on multi-portion packages, GDA information will be expressed in multiples of the portion size (e.g. 1litre bottle = 4 x 250 ml).
- The generally recommended portion is intended to provide consistency and transparency to allow consumers to make more informed choices. It is widely understood that the general recommended portion is the size of a drinking glass and therefore appropriate as the portion for multi-portion packs, hence an icon representing a glass is often shown for visual simplicity on the label. The generally recommended portion size allows for 6-8 sources for fluid across the day which is in line with suggested intake levels for most consumers.
- In addition, when establishing portions for multi-portion packages, UNESDA has considered several other factors relevant to the majority of beverages including :
 - Type and function;
 - Realistic consumption levels; and
 - Consumption occasions.
- Due to the diversity of beverages within UNESDA's remit, smaller portion sizes for some specific beverages may apply.

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¹ UNESDA is the European Industry Association covering all non-alcoholic beverages apart from those that are legislated vertically in European law, ie natural mineral and spring waters and juices and nectars.

² Currently excluded from the UNESDA GDA scheme are 'sports drinks' (or drinks formulated '*... to meet the expenditure of intense muscular effort, especially for sportspeople*') falling under the scope of the European Directive for foods for particular nutritional uses (89/398/EEC).