



European Coffee Federation

Statement on California's Prop 65 suit ruling

Californian ruling, 29 March 2018, on the suit filed 8 years ago by the Council for Education and Research on Toxics (CERT), targeting coffee companies, has the potential for coffee to carry an ominous 'cancer warning' label in the state of California.

CERT argues that coffee manufacturers were in violation of California's Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act (Proposition 65), which requires businesses to provide warnings to Californians about significant exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm.

CERT asserts that because coffee contains trace levels of acrylamide, a substance naturally produced during the roasting process, coffee manufacturers and retailers must warn consumers of an increased risk of cancer. This notion runs contrary to the scientific evidence.

Coffee is one of the most heavily researched products in the world today, and the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence concludes that moderate coffee consumption of four to five cups per day (400mg caffeine), or two to three cups for pregnant women (200mg caffeine from all sources) can contribute to a healthy, balanced diet, and may even confer a range of health benefits.

Furthermore, in a review of coffee and cancer published in June 2016, the World Health Organization's International Agency on Cancer Research ([IARC](#)) classified coffee into Group 3 for agents 'not classifiable as to carcinogenicity to humans'. After thoroughly reviewing over 1000 studies in humans and animals, IARC found there was inadequate evidence for the carcinogenicity of coffee drinking overall.

In Europe, Regulation EU 2017/2158 of 20 November 2017 establishing mitigation measures and benchmark levels for the reduction of the presence of acrylamide in food, ensures food safety by laying down appropriate mitigation measures.

The European coffee industry has been and remains firmly committed to investigate and test different approaches to reduce acrylamide in coffee, and welcomes further input from academia and research institutes. We will continue to contribute to international research on the formation, measurement and potential ways of reducing acrylamide levels in coffee, without compromising food safety and taste.

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