



HOTREC



Restaurants serve meals;
retailers sell food.



EMRA

European Modern Restaurant Association

The European Modern Restaurant Association (EMRA) was established in 1995 with the objective of enhancing dialogue with policy makers and opinion formers on all public policy issues affecting the modern restaurant industry.

The Association represents the leading modern restaurant operators in Europe.



FERCO

European Federation of Contract Catering Organisations

FERCO, the European Federation of Contract Catering, brings together the national contract catering organisations from 10 EU Member States, which represent over 4/5 of the European market. Contract catering means the contracting out of services by a company or organisation to a specialist catering company on the basis of a contract. With a turnover of EUR 15 billion, contract catering employs half a million people across the EU and supplies more than 4 billion meals a year.



HOTREC

Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe

HOTREC is the spokesperson of hotels, restaurants and cafés at European institutional level in all matters affecting the sector. HOTREC projects the voice of hotels, restaurants and cafés in the European Union, an industry that boasts 1,5 million businesses and provides 6 million jobs in the EU alone, of which over 4 million in the restaurant sector. HOTREC brings together 34 National Trade and Employer Associations representing the interest of the sector in 20 different European countries.

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Comprehensive legislation on food safety is essential for consumers as well as for food businesses. For this reason, EMRA, FERCO and HOTREC welcome the efforts of the European Institutions to secure food safety.

However, traceability and information to consumers are two distinct issues.

The Commission is now proposing to increase the amount of information to be given to consumers about the food they eat. In the case of packaged products, this will result in an increase in on-packet labelling.

But in restaurants and other out-of-the home catering*, this is neither practical nor the best way of providing information.

The food service sector wants to meet and satisfy customer expectations in relation to all aspects of its business: food quality, service, ambience and information. Restaurants and contract caterers have direct contact with their customers and suppliers. A recent study of consumer behaviour by the UK's Food Standard Agency showed that customers perceive restaurants as totally different from retail businesses.

Most restaurant customers are seeking a leisure experience that goes beyond simply buying food. They want to enjoy a good meal, presented in an attractive way, in an appealing atmosphere as part of an enjoyable social experience.

It is important that information is given to customers in an appropriate and practical way for the business concerned. For example, labelling all ingredients, allergens and other components and indicating the origin of every product

on menus would be impractical, particularly where food is cooked on the premises where it is consumed.

Most restaurants will also change their menus, and indeed their suppliers, on a regular (daily or weekly) basis, according to the market offering.

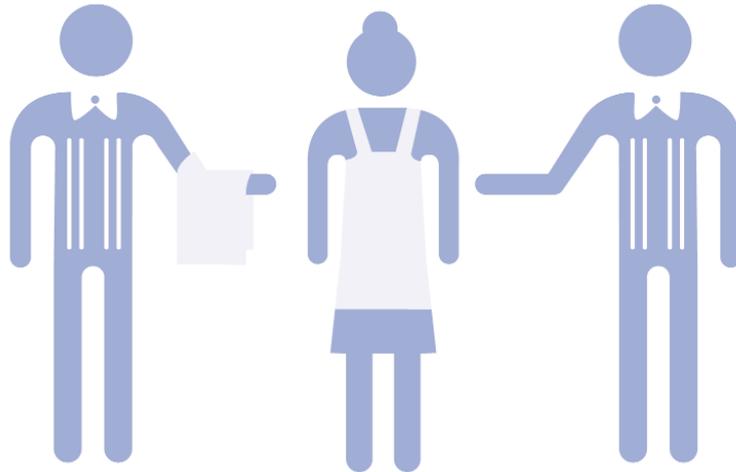
The type of information that a restaurant and a contract caterer is able to provide will very much depend on the nature and scale of that particular business.

For example, where a customer in a traditional restaurant requests specific information on the composition of a dish, the staff or the chef is available to explain what foodstuffs are used and the recipe followed. In some other types of restaurants, leaflets may be available at the point of sale. Where a restaurant is part of a chain, there may be an internet website, which contains more specialist information of relevance to particular consumer groups, or customer telephone information lines may be available to provide additional information to that available on menus or from staff.

The restaurant and contract catering sector is a specific element of the food chain, which includes other sectors with different characteristics, functions, sizes and resources from ours.

EMRA, FERCO and HOTREC want to ensure that regulators have a thorough understanding of our sector so that impractical and burdensome legislative requirements are avoided in favour of a flexible and practical approach on providing information to customers.

* In the context of this position paper, "restaurants and other out-of-the home catering" is to be understood as encompassing traditional restaurants, quick-service and contract catering, whether the meals are consumed on the place of preparation or taken away or delivered.



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