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European Alcohol Policy Alliance

Desirable elements for a new EU Strategy from the perspective of NGOs



Alcohol Policy Network in Europe



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EUROCARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
A FUTURE EU ALCOHOL STRATEGY

November 2014

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Previous documents:

- Eurocare Overview and Recommendations for a Sustainable EU alcohol Strategy” 2009
- Eurocare recommendations for a future EU Alcohol Strategy June 2012
- Initial NGOs Recommendations for the new EU Action Plan on Alcohol November 2013



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Europe's newly elected European Parliament and the College of Commissioners are taking their seats for the next five years. Now it is the moment to update the European Union Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm building on recommendations from the World Health Organisation.

The European Alcohol Policy Alliance wishes to present its view and recommendations for of a comprehensive alcohol policy in the European Union (EU) 2016 - 2025.





An EU Alcohol Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm must:

- Be based on the best available scientific evidence
- Be informed and underpinned by a coherent policy framework
- Address the full spectrum of alcohol problems and the need for whole population-level responses
- Include an approach to all EU policy-making which supports reduction of alcohol harms
- Set clear targets and objectives and be externally monitored and evaluated
- Pay attention to the need to reduce health inequalities across the EU and within Member States.

The EU Strategy should address the following areas:

- Alcohol pricing policies
 - Marketing of alcoholic beverages
 - Availability of alcohol
 - Consumer information – product labelling
 - Drink driving policies and countermeasures
 - Health sector responses for early detection, brief interventions and treatment
 - Strategies that alter drinking contexts, backed up by community-based prevention action
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- Evidence-based public awareness communication and school-based education to help reduce risks and harm from alcohol
 - Raised awareness of dangers from drinking alcohol during pregnancy
 - Protection of family and children
 - Prevention with special focus on the workplace
 - Alcohol research, data collection and monitoring programmes

Eurocare recommends that the target for the EU should be a minimum 10% reduction of total alcohol consumption in Europe by 2025.

There is a mass of evidence that the levels of alcohol related harm in any population are correlated with the overall level of alcohol consumption: higher per capita consumption tends to be associated with higher levels of harm and lower consumption with lower levels of harm

Evidence demonstrates that the harm caused by alcohol is related to **overall drinking levels**, as well as drinking patterns. A comprehensive Strategy needs to incorporate both types of intervention to reduce alcohol-related harm, **not just for problem drinkers but also for other people**, such as children, families and communities, who are negatively affected by their drinking behaviors. The harms from alcohol are therefore multidimensional and require a range of policies to contribute towards having a healthy population and reduce costs for health care services, in line with the strategic aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

With this in mind Eurocare calls on the Member States and the European Institutions to support the development of an updated comprehensive EU Alcohol Strategy with clear and targeted measures.

Way forward: how to address alcohol related harm?

One way forward to provide a more structured approach would be for the updated EU Alcohol Strategy to include:

- Fixing guidelines and timetables for achieving short, medium and long-term goals
- Establishing quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks, tailored to the needs of Member States and sectors involved, as a means of comparing best practices
- Translating European guidelines into national and regional policies, by setting specific measures and targets
- Periodic monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved in order to put in place mutual learning processes between Member States

Eurocare suggests having a 3 step period; 2016 – 2018, 2019- 2021, 2022-2025 that would be expected to produce the following outcomes:

- Enhanced mutual learning and peer review
- Identification of good practices and of their conditions for transferability
- Development of joint policy initiatives among several Member States and regions
- Identification of areas where Community initiatives could reinforce actions at Member State level.

Thank you for your attention

Tiziana Codenotti
President

17, Rue Archimède
1000 Brussels, Belgium

www.eurocare.org