

Does Juncker's Commission have the courage to work on alcohol?

European Alcohol Policy Alliance applauds the Estonian Presidency's courage and persistence that led to the adoption of the Council Conclusions on *Cross-border aspects in alcohol policy – tackling harmful use of alcohol*.

It is encouraging to see Member States take the lead on alcohol policy, and it is equally crucial that all the good work done at the national level is not stopped by potential conflicts with EU Single Market rules. Earlier this autumn, we witnessed public health prevailing over trade interests in the landmark ruling regarding Minimum Unit Pricing of alcohol in Scotland.

These Council Conclusions clearly show that there is a will to do more to tackle alcohol related harm by Member States of the European Union. It remains to be seen whether Juncker's Commission will find a way to actualise these Council Conclusions.

Conclusions highlight several areas of action and call on the European Commission to:

- Produce and adopt a new EU Alcohol Strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the adequacy of the current measures in the online advertising of alcoholic beverages
- Support Member States in the framework of a new Joint Action - RARHA
- Support research and studies in areas such as for instance cross-border purchases
- Propose better provisions for alcohol labelling by the end of 2019

'We could not agree more with Member States that if the industry self-regulatory proposal (due by March 2018), is not following EU (Reg) 1169/2011 then a legislative proposal should be adopted and implemented as soon as possible. It is high time for European consumers to finally be told what is in their drinks. Having heard some disturbing rumours about QR codes, we are very concerned that the industry is taking us all for fools' said Mariann Skar, Secretary General of European Alcohol Policy Alliance.

'These Council Conclusions prove once again that there is a conflict at the heart of European alcohol policy. A strong need, and a strong ask by the Members States is met with hesitancy by the Commission. However, conflict is better than silent denial. We are proud of the Estonian presidency for keeping that conflict alive' said Lauri Beekmann, Executive Director of Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network

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The European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations advocating prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe. Member organisations are involved in advocacy and research, as well as in the provision of information and training on alcohol issues and the service for people whose lives are affected by alcohol problems.

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