



Members of the European Parliament will not protect young people from alcohol marketing

Members of the European Parliament (MEP) in the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) have today on April 25, voted on the draft report by Sabine Verheyen and Petra Kammerevert on Coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services in view of changing market realities.

MEPs from all parties have repeatedly voiced their concerns about the alarming levels of youth binge drinking that persist in Europe today. Yet, when the opportunity arises to put declarations into action, **the response falls short.**

The MEPs have voted for a regulation that states that alcoholic beverages shall not be aimed at minors and shall not encourage **immoderate consumption** of such beverages (*whatever that is*). Further Member States and the Commission shall encourage the development of self-and co-regulation codes of conduct regarding **inappropriate audiovisual communications** (*whatever that is*) for alcoholic beverages. Those codes shall aim to effectively reduce the exposure of minors to **inappropriate audiovisual commercial** communication for alcoholic beverages.

Mariann Skar, Secretary General of European Alcohol Policy Alliance, says *"We are deeply disappointed by the voting in the European Parliament today. MEPS choose to ignore the knowledge gathered over the years that restricting alcohol advertising is one of the crucial steps we can take to protect children and youngsters. We sincerely hope the Member States will take this scientific evidence into account while revising the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) in the coming weeks"*.

Effective rules to limit exposure to health-harmful marketing, including restrictions on advertising during peak viewing hours and on sponsorship and product placement, will protect minors and empower parents in their efforts to educate children about healthy lifestyles. Self-regulation as a regulatory instrument works best in a regulatory framework. Therefore, Member States have to take action and protect young people. The evidence clearly shows the links between marketing and health, and highlight that with the AVMSD is once in a decade opportunity to protect the well-being of Europe's future generation.

The draft report as amended was adopted, with 17 votes in favour, 9 against and 4 abstention. MEPs also adopted the mandate to enter into negotiations with the Council and the Commission with 18 votes in favour, 9 votes against and 3 abstentions.

The Council plans to adopt its general approach on May 23, so negotiations at inter-institutional level could start under the Maltese Presidency with a view to a first reading agreement.

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For editors:

The European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations with 60 member organisations across 24 European countries 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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Evidence on the link between marketing and health can be found here: The *Addiction* supplement, *Alcohol marketing regulation: From research to public policy*, is free to download from the Wiley Online Library: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.v112.S1/issuetoc>