

High hopes for future alcohol policy in the EU

European Alcohol Policy Alliance warmly welcomes the proposed Action Plan from the European Commission. We expect a comprehensive Action Plan building on the guidance given by World Health Organisation Europe 2012 – 2020, with specific targeted actions that are regularly monitored.

The European Commission articulated its plans towards the future of the alcohol policy in the EU in its meeting with the Member States. The current European Alcohol Strategy will be supported by an Action Plan for the period 2014-2017.

'Eurocare is eagerly looking forward to working together with the European Institutions to step up actions on alcohol policy and reduce the alcohol related harm in Europe. The social cost of alcohol in the EU is estimated for 155 billion Euro per year. We simply cannot afford little action in the area of tackling alcohol related harm. It is one of the best investments we can make for our children's health and future' commented Mariann Skar, Eurocare Secretary General.

The action plan should focus on the population level approach to reduce total alcohol consumption. It is crucial that it builds on the work and projects already conducted in the framework of the EU Alcohol Strategy such as for instance work on health warning labels, drinking age limits, drink driving.

Since the EU Alcohol Strategy was developed we have witnessed major changes in the way all products are marketed i.e. marketing via YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, the action plan provides an ideal opportunity to catch up on these developments and take concrete actions to protect young people from alcohol marketing.

The future work on alcohol related harm of the EU should build on the expertise and guidance given by the World Health Organisation for the most cost effective and efficient policy interventions, such as fiscal policies and reduction of availability¹.

###

NOTES TO EDITORS:

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

European Alcohol Policy Alliance
Mariann Skar Secretary General

¹ World Health Organization. (WHO 2011a). Global status report on non-communicable diseases 2010. Geneva: World Health Organization.



Email mariann.skar@eurocare.org
GSM: [+32 \(0\) 474 830 041](tel:+3220474830041)
Website: www.eurocare.org

EUROCARE (The European Alcohol Policy Alliance) is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations with around 50 member organisations across 23 European countries advocating the prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe.

www.eurocare.org

FACTS AND FIGURES ON ALCOHOL

- Europe has the highest drinking levels in the world, the highest alcohol per capita consumption and the highest alcohol- related harm problems.
- Chronic diseases, to which alcohol is the 3rd main contributory factor, are in the top of global risks next to such threats like fiscal crises and are expected to cost global economy over 30 trillion USD over the next two decades.
- €155.8 billion is the social costs attributable to alcohol in the EU on a yearly basis
- 1 in 4 of male deaths between 15-29 years are due to alcohol
- Alcohol is a major contributory factor in accidents; 1 in 4 of all road traffic deaths are caused by alcohol
- Alcohol is a risk factor in some 60 diseases such as cancer, liver cirrhosis etc. Taking all diseases and injuries at global level into account, **the negative health impact of alcohol consumption is 31.6 times higher than benefit**