

Alcohol and Europe

Interim report of work done during October 2004-June2005.

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This project is preparing a policy report for the European Commission on the health and social consequences of the inappropriate use of alcoholic drinks in the Member States as well as in the Candidate Countries, EEA Countries and Switzerland. The policy report will summarize the available information on alcohol at the country and European levels (economic factors, health and social problems, health promotion, prevention and treatment, alcohol policies) and describe options for action at the country and European levels.

The project comprises five tasks:

1. Building a sustainable database of country profiles on alcohol, the harm done by alcohol and the policy and programme responses
2. Understanding the position and the needs of the different European countries, European institutions and organizations (stakeholders), and preparing conclusions and recommendations in the policy report that consider their positions and needs
3. Reviewing the scientific and experiential evidence and drafting the text of the policy report
4. Preparing the summary and editing the text to ensure that it is written in accessible language
5. Producing the text in the English and French languages and the 4 page summary in the languages of the European countries.

On the advice of the European Commission, an extension of the project was sought and approved to complete the project by September 2005. During the nine month period October 2004 to June 2005 the database has been completed; the survey of the stakeholders has been completed and the data entered into an SPSS data file; all the scientific evidence has been identified and reviewed; the structure of the report has been reorganized into ten chapters, four of which are completed and edited, and six of which are at final draft stage. During July and August 2005, the remaining six chapters and the summary will be completed and edited; the French translation will be started to be completed during September. During August and September 2005, the summary will be translated into the languages of the countries of the European Union to be completed during September 2005. During August 2005, the data of the stakeholders' survey will be analyzed and a report completed.

The content of the report and some of its headline findings have been presented to the stakeholders in a series of three meetings: representatives of the beverage alcohol industry (January 2005); members of the Alcohol and Health working group of the European Commission (March 2005); and representatives of non-governmental organizations (May 2005). A further meeting with representatives of the beverage alcohol industry is scheduled for August 2005. The draft text of the report has been peer reviewed by the scientific advisers of the Institute of Alcohol Studies. A meeting was held with Mr. Antoni Montserrat Moliner of the Health Information Unit within DG SANCO during March 2005 to ensure consistency between the data used in the report and that of the European Commission.

The project is on schedule within the extended timeframe, there are no envisaged alterations to the project proposal and there are no expected or perceived obstacles to completing the project on time.

The remaining parts of this interim report describe the work done to date (October 2004 to June 2005).

1 Building the sustainable database of country profiles on alcohol, the harm done by alcohol and the policy and programme responses

A sustainable database has been built of profiles and reports for each country on alcohol, the harm done by alcohol and the alcohol policy and programme responses. The country reports are to be found on the Eurocare website <http://www.eurocare.org/btg/countryreports/index.html>. Clicking on the map (for example England), will bring one to the updated versions of the profile on alcohol policy and the profile on alcohol. Links are also made to the infrastructures questionnaire detailing the available infrastructures for alcohol policy in the country, and to the European Commission co-financed PHEPA project, detailing information on primary care responses to alcohol.

2 Understanding the position and the needs of the different European countries, European institutions and organizations, and preparing conclusions and recommendations that are conducive to their positions and needs

A questionnaire which captures information on positions and needs in relation to alcohol policy, perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to the development and implementation of evidence based policy, and understanding of existing policy initiatives has been completed by 63 responders from governmental and non-governmental personnel and representatives of the beverage alcohol industry. The data has been entered into an SPSS data file and will be analyzed and reported during August 2005.

3 Reviewing the scientific and experiential evidence and drafting the text of the policy report

The report has been restructured to ten chapters, with each chapter including a summary and a conclusion.

3.1 Introduction

The final draft of Chapter 1, an introductory chapter, outlining the background to the report, describing the way of working and defining the terminology used in the report will be completed during July 2005.

3.2 The history and economy of alcohol

The final draft of chapter 2, which discusses the social, cultural and historical role of alcohol in Europe, as well as the economical role of alcohol, will be completed during July 2005. Chapter 2 includes new and original analysis of the social cost of alcohol to Europe. The analysis is based on a paper to be submitted for publication, which will provide peer review to ensure the accuracy and validity of the analysis.

3.3. The use of alcohol in Europe

The final draft of Chapter 3, which describes consumption patterns and trends, including low risk drinking, hazardous and harmful alcohol use, intoxication and dependence on alcohol will be completed during July 2005. It draws on the data from the database described above.

3.4. Alcohol and the health of individuals

Chapter 4 which is a detailed and comprehensive review of the relationship between alcohol and the social, mental and physical health of individuals (including beneficial effects of alcohol) is completed.

3.5. Alcohol and the health of Europe.

Chapter 5 which is a detailed and comprehensive review of the relationship between alcohol and the social, mental and physical health of Europe as a whole, providing summary statistics will be completed during July 2005. The chapter also reports on the cross sectional and time series relationships between alcohol consumption and health indicators.

3.6. The effectiveness of alcohol policy

Chapter 6, which is a detailed and comprehensive review of the effectiveness, impact and cost effectiveness of a wide range of policies and programmes in reducing the harm done by alcohol, is completed.

3.7. Alcohol policy in Europe

Chapter 7, which is a comprehensive description of global (World Trade Organization and World Health Organization) and European (World Health Organization and European Union and Commission) frameworks and influences on alcohol policy (including descriptions of the European Commission Institutions, European Court of Justice, Common Agricultural Policy, and DG SANCO) is completed.

3.8 Alcohol policy in the countries of Europe

Chapter 8, which is a comprehensive description of existing policy initiatives in the countries of Europe, is completed. It draws on the data from the database described above.

3.9. Making alcohol policy

The final draft of chapter 9, which will provide a discussion on the roles of different organizations and players in making alcohol policy from the global to the local level, will be completed during July 2005. It draws on findings of chapters 6, 7 and 8.

3.10 Conclusions and recommendations

The final draft of chapter 10, which will be the main conclusions and recommendations of the policy report, will be completed during July 2005.

Annex 1 Glossary of terms

Annex 1, which will be a glossary of terms used in the policy report, is being compiled as the report is being finalized.

5.4 Preparing the summary and editing the text to ensure that it is written in accessible language

The chapters are being edited as they are completed. The four page summary, which will be based on the individual chapter summaries will be completed by August 2005.

5.5 Producing the text in the English and French languages and the four page summary in the languages of the European countries.

The text will be translated into French during July and August 2005, and edited by the National Association for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems (ANPA) in France by September 2005.

The non-governmental member organizations of Eurocare will translate the summary into all of the languages of the included countries by September 2005.

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