

## Alcohol: Marketing and young people

## Background

Alcohol is a common commodity consumed in most countries around the world. Drinking is considered part of the culture in most of the European Union and, although rates and patterns vary across countries, **the EU has the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the world** (WHO 2004).

55 million  
European adults  
drink to  
dangerous levels

Alcohol is a leading cause of death and disability in the EU with significant costs to society and to Europe's economy. The negative impact of alcohol consumption is seen across many sectors including health, social services, justice and education. Each year the EU and Member States spend millions of Euros to address the negative impacts of alcohol through policies and programmes aimed at reducing harmful alcohol consumption. Activities include regulation of sale and marketing and specific legislation and initiatives aimed at the general population or targeting groups such as young people, pregnant women or drivers.

Some European countries have seen a decline in alcohol consumption in recent years however, many have experienced a concerning rise, particularly among young people with earlier initiation and increased harmful drinking behaviours such as "binge drinking"<sup>1</sup> (Anderson 2007, EC Recommendation 2001). This behaviour is not confined to young people but is also becoming increasingly common among older age groups (Anderson 2007<sup>2</sup>). While 24% of people 15-24 reported binge drinking at least once a week in 2006, the rate was 18% for those over 55 years (Eurobarometer 2007<sup>3</sup>). Among young people who have not started to drink, their expectancies are influenced by normative assumptions about teenage drinking as well as through the observation of drinking by parents, peers, and role models in the mass media (Anderson 2009a).

This rise in overall and problem drinking is accompanied by an increase in alcohol related harm (Anderson & Baumberg 2006). Alcohol related harm includes not only ill-health but also violence, accidents and injuries and social problems such as unemployment, crime and family problems. In the case of young people, in addition to the immediate negative impacts of drinking such as problems in school, violence and injury, drinking in adolescence damages brain development and is associated with poor learning outcomes, social problems and alcohol-related harm in adulthood. The risk increases with the level of drinking.

Alcoholic beverages are marketed across Europe. Comprehensive and sophisticated strategies make use of multiple channels to reach potential customers. Simultaneously, new products are rapidly developed to keep pace with changing trends. These, along with core products such as beer, wine and spirits, are marketed via both traditional means such as print, television and radio advertising and via new means using internet tools. Targeted strategies reach key audience by tying products to lifestyles and subcultures using popular music, cultural references and sports.

<sup>1</sup> Harmful drinking: Regular consumption of >20g day (♀) or 40g day (♂). Binge drinking: >50g on one occasion (approx. 5 drinks). (as defined in Anderson 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Refers to EU15: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to EU25: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

## EU priorities

Over many years, national and regional governments, and national, international and European level organisations have undertaken action on alcohol policy and implemented projects to research and provide recommendations on alcohol related harm and young people. The European Commission has financed or co-financed a number of European projects, for example the ELSA project (Enforcement of national Laws and Self-regulation on advertising and marketing of Alcohol), coordinated by STAP (National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention in the Netherlands) which includes representatives from 24 European countries. The main objective of the ELSA project is to examine the degree of implementation of the *Council Recommendation on the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents (2001/458/EC)* a key European policy document aimed at reducing alcohol related harm among children and young people.

- **Council Recommendation on the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents (2001/458/EC)**

Makes recommendations for action in research and policy related to alcohol and young people and for action on the advertising and marketing of alcoholic beverages within Member States' different legal, regulatory or self-regulatory environments (text regarding promotion, marketing and retailing on next page). The Recommendation states that evidence from some Member States shows concerning changes in drinking patterns among young people, noting: an increase in heavy and binge-drinking; unsupervised drinking outside the home at an earlier age; an increase in drinking among girls; and, a trend to consume alcohol in combination with other drugs.

A number of EU policy documents are mentioned in the Recommendation including: the 1986 Resolution on alcohol abuse (OJ C184, 23.07.86) which states that the increase in alcohol abuse is causing serious concern for public health and social welfare; the programme of Community action on injury prevention (OJ L 46, 20.2.1999) which mentions alcohol-related injury; the EC communication 'Priorities in EU Road Safety' and subsequent Council conclusions on 5 April 2001 which identify the issue of young drivers and riders; and, Council Directive 89/552/EEC "Television Without Frontiers" which set criteria for the advertising of alcoholic beverages and young people (Art. 15). Directive 2000/13/EC regarding labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs elaborates rules for listing ingredients of alcoholic beverages and was proposed partially in response to the increase in alcoholic beverages designed to appeal to young people.

- **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2007/65/EC)**

Amends and renames the Television Without Frontiers Directive (89/552/EEC) (amended by 97/36/EC) and states: "*audiovisual commercial communications for alcoholic beverages shall not be aimed specifically at minors and shall not encourage immoderate consumption of such beverages*". (Article 3e, 1e):

This is significantly different to the original wording in 89/552/EEC and 97/36/EC which stated the following criteria for alcohol advertising and teleshopping for alcoholic beverages:

- "(a) *it may not be aimed specifically at minors or, in particular, depict minors consuming these beverages;*
- (b) *it shall not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced physical performance or to driving;*
- (c) *it shall not create the impression that the consumption of alcohol contributes towards social or sexual success;*
- (d) *it shall not claim that alcohol has therapeutic qualities or that it is a stimulant, a sedative or a means of resolving personal conflicts;*

- (e) *it shall not encourage immoderate consumption of alcohol or present abstinence or moderation in a negative light;*
- (f) *it shall not place emphasis on high alcoholic content as being a positive quality of the beverages.*

- **An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm (2006)**

The strategy identifies five priority themes, relevant to all Member States and for which Community action as a complement to national policies has an added value:

- Protect young people, children and the unborn child;
- Reduce injuries and death from alcohol-related road accidents;
- Prevent alcohol-related harm among adults and reduce the negative impact on the workplace;
- Inform, educate and raise awareness on the impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, and on appropriate consumption patterns;
- Develop and maintain a common evidence base at EU level.

The Strategy outlines action at three levels: European Commission; national; and, local. At the EC level action is focused on supporting and working with Member States to monitor drinking patterns and develop strategies and action to tackle harmful drinking.

From: Council Recommendation 2001/458/EC

*“II. Member States should, having regard to their different legal, regulatory, or self-regulatory environments, as appropriate:*

*1. encourage, in cooperation with the producers and the retailers of alcoholic beverages and relevant non-governmental organisations, the establishment of effective mechanisms in the fields of promotion, marketing and retailing;*

*(a) to ensure that producers do not produce alcoholic beverages specifically targeted at children and adolescents;*

*(b) to ensure that alcoholic beverages are not designed or promoted to appeal to children and adolescents, and paying particular attention inter alia, to the following elements:*

- *the use of styles (such as characters, motifs or colours) associated with youth culture,*
- *featuring children, adolescents, or other young looking models, in promotion campaigns,*
- *allusions to, or images associated with, the consumption of drugs and of other harmful substances, such as tobacco,*
- *links with violence or antisocial behaviour,*
- *implications of social, sexual or sporting success,*
- *encouragement of children and adolescents to drink, including low-price selling to adolescents of alcoholic drinks,*
- *advertising during, or sponsorship of, sporting, musical or other special events which a significant number of children and adolescents attend as actors or spectators,*
- *advertising in media targeted at children and adolescents or reaching a significant number of children and adolescents,*
- *free distribution of alcoholic drinks to children and adolescents, as well as sale or free distribution of products which are used to promote alcoholic drinks and which may appeal in particular to children and adolescents;*

*(c) to develop, as appropriate, specific training for servers and sales persons with regard to the protection of children and adolescents and with regard to existing licensing restrictions on the sale of alcohol to young people; 16.6.2001 EN Official Journal of the European Communities L 161/41*

*(d) to allow manufacturers to get pre-launch advice, in advance of marketing a product or investing in a product, as well as on marketing campaigns before their actual launch;*

*(e) to ensure that complaints against products which are not being promoted, marketed or retailed in accordance with the principles set out in points (a) and (b) can be effectively handled, and that, if appropriate, such products can be removed from sale and the relevant inappropriate marketing or promotional practices can be brought to an end;*

*2. urge the representative producer and trade organisations of alcoholic beverages to commit themselves to observe the principles described above.*

*III. The Member States, with a view to contributing to the follow-up of this recommendation at Community level, and acting as appropriate in the context of the programme of action in the field of public health, should report, on request to the Commission on the implementation of the recommended measures,"*

## Key Facts

### *Alcohol is a leading cause of ill-health and death in the EU*

- Alcohol is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading risk factor for ill-health and death in the EU
- 7.4% of all ill-health and premature death in the EU is due to alcohol
- 55 million European adults drink to dangerous levels
- Some 23 million Europeans are dependent on alcohol in any year
- 25% of all male deaths and 11% of all female deaths between 15-29yrs are due to alcohol
- 80million Europeans aged 15 years plus reported binge drinking at least once a week in 2006

**HARMFUL & BINGE DRINKING ARE RISING**

Harmful: >2 drinks day (♂) >1 day (♀)  
Binge: >6 drinks in one session (60g+)

### *Alcohol harms the EU economy*

- Alcohol related disease, injury and violence cost the EU €125bn in 2003 (1.3% GDP)
- The costs of alcohol related harm impact health, welfare, employment, criminal justice Alcohol contributes to absenteeism, unemployment and accidents at work
- Intangible costs of criminal, social and health harms caused by alcohol were estimated at €270bn in 2003

### *Health risks*

#### *Alcohol, cancer and vascular disease*

- Alcohol is a carcinogen, causing cancer of the oral cavity and pharynx, oesophagus, stomach, colon, rectum and breast, with no safe level.
- Persistent use damages the liver and can lead to liver cirrhosis or cancer
- Alcohol increases the risk of stroke, and, in high doses, coronary disease and heart failure

#### *Alcohol and pregnancy*

- Alcohol is a teratogen, affecting the development of the baby.
- Drinking during pregnancy can damage the foetus and increase the risk of miscarriage
- Each year in the EU approx. 60 000 babies are born below normal birth weight due to alcohol

#### *Alcohol and driving*

- Over 1 in 3 deaths in traffic accidents are caused by drink-driving (approx 17 000 /year)
- Over 10 000 people killed as a result of drink-driving each year are not the driver

#### *Alcohol and risk taking, violence, accidents and injury*

- Alcohol intoxication increases the risk of unsafe sex therefore increasing transmission of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies
- 4 of every 10 homicides in the EU (>2000) are attributable to alcohol
- 10 000 suicides a year (1 in 6) are attributable to alcohol

#### *Alcohol and children/young people*

- Brain development in young people and children is damaged by alcohol use
- Alcohol is estimated to be the cause of 16% of cases of child abuse
- Over 1 in 8 of 15-16 yr olds have been drunk more than 20 times in their life

## Discussion

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Adolescent drinking is associated with ill health, premature death, unplanned pregnancy, violence and injury among other social and physical harms. Early onset drinking is also associated with alcohol dependence and the use of other drugs an association not strongly linked to genetics, but rather environmental factors (de Bruijn and Johansen 2009). Recent evidence shows alcohol marketing as one environmental factor linked to beginning to drink and the volume and pattern of young people's drinking. Over 1 in 8 European students aged 15-16 years have been drunk more than 20 times with over 1 in 6 reporting binge drinking in the previous month (Anderson and Baumberg 2006). In Europe approximately 25% of all male deaths and 11% of all female deaths between 15-29 years are due to alcohol (Anderson & Baumberg 2006).

Drinking patterns vary across Europe with different beverages more or less popular in different countries, however, there are some consistencies. Despite the introduction of "alcopop" style drinks (sweetened, often brightly coloured drinks of around 5% alcohol) beer still remains the first choice of drink among young people in Europe accounting for over half of the total in 11 European countries (5 non-EU) with spirits being slightly more popular in Norway, Italy and Portugal (Anderson and Baumberg 2006). New products evolve quickly and recent introductions include energy drinks in the 1990s, which combine alcohol with high levels of caffeine (Jernigan 2001 (WHO)).

### **Adolescent development and adolescent lifestyles**

During adolescence the brain is undergoing major changes and development. At this time young people are more impulsive and experience greater sensitivity to pleasure and reward. Furthermore, young people lack experience of drinking and have a lower tolerance to alcohol making them less able to appropriately regulate their drinking. Not only is there evidence of adolescent drinking leading to later alcohol problems, those adolescents who drink heavily often experience poorer educational outcomes and ill health (mental and physical) in adulthood (Anderson 2007). Alcohol use in adolescence can lead to structural changes in the area of the brain related to learning and at high levels can permanently impair development (Anderson 2007).

This is a particularly vulnerable stage of life not only in terms of physical development but also socially. Adolescents are more vulnerable to persuasion both from commercial communications and also feel pressure to conform to social and peer expectations and behaviour, although it is important to note that adolescents' perceptions of social and peer behaviour is often distorted with adolescents frequently believing that peers or adults drink more than they actually do. Young people are highly influenced by a desire to identify with and obtain membership of a perceived lifestyle or subculture. Lifestyle elements such as music, fashion, recreational activities and venues and use of technology identify one as belonging to a particular group. Specific products and behaviours are embedded in the context of these lifestyles through marketing, making them more desirable to young people and also simultaneously shaping young people's perceptions of what is approved behaviour and what is desirable. Importantly, youth cultures and the products and marketing that accompany them are international, crossing borders via channels such as the internet, film, television, magazines, electronic games and mobile phone technology.

### **Alcohol marketing in Europe**

Advertising alcoholic beverages is one aspect of a broad marketing strategy and works in tandem with mutually reinforcing elements. Marketing strategies are multilevel and include not only marketing communication and promotional activities, but also product development, pricing, physical availability, and market segmentation and targeting (Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum 2009). Marketing and advertising include print, television, radio, internet, merchandising and advertising at the point of sale. A number of

recent studies have looked at the relationship between exposure to alcohol marketing and drinking behaviour of young people, specifically the pattern and volume of alcohol consumption including the age at which young people first begin to drink. Increasingly sophisticated advertising in mainstream media is supported by sponsorship of sports and product placements, and by direct marketing using new technologies such as the internet, podcasting and mobile phones (WHO 2007).

As noted in a 2009 report by the Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, marketing communications are just one aspect of the determinants of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm and it can be difficult to isolate the impact of one aspect from another (Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum 2009). Therefore it is important to consider overall marketing strategies. Alcohol marketing to youth includes developing new products to keep pace with changing youth subcultures and linking products to these subcultures and lifestyles through music, fashion, use of technologies, and sports. Using this strategy specific brands and products are embedded in young people's lifestyles (Jernigan 2001). For example, energy drinks are linked to all-night clubbing culture.

Alcohol brands have organised and sponsored music festivals such as: T In The Park (Scotland, sponsored by Tennent's Lager), Frequency Festival (Austria, minor sponsors Jack Daniels and Ottakringer Brauerei), Roskilde (Denmark, sponsored by Tuborg (Carlsberg)), T-Mobile INmusic (Croatia, minor sponsor Tuborg Green (Carlsberg)) and Opener (Poland, sponsored by Heineken) and smaller concerts while many song lyrics from country to rock to hip-hop contain references to specific alcoholic beverages.

Males are the largest consumers of alcohol (Anderson 2007) and sports sponsorship gives access to a large, predominantly male audience. Carlsberg's sponsorship of the Euro 2000 football included on site promotions, branded merchandise and sweepstakes-style games (Jernigan 2001). The current Carlsberg web site offers interactive features around Liverpool football club and mobile phone games for download among other promotional activities.

Companies such as Heineken sponsor music and sports events, investing in rugby, football and music festivals in Europe. Heineken's association with the European Rugby Cup, also known as the Heineken Cup, is said to be an investment of approximately €10million. Heineken's Ireland's Marketing Director stated "*The Heineken Cup is an excellent property and brilliant for the Heineken brand. Is it value for money? Definitely. It covers four international markets: Ireland, the UK, France and Italy.*"<sup>4</sup> In 2009 Heineken started a four year sponsorship of the Champions League football. Part of the 2009 strategy included a website where fans can watch game highlights, create Heineken themed E-cards to email to friends to invite them home or to a bar in order to "Get together the perfect match night", do quizzes, and view Heineken commercials online. This web site is accessible by entering any birth date which indicates that the viewer is over 18 years.

### **Alcohol marketing regulation in Europe**

In 2007 twenty-four European countries had at least one regulation covering alcohol marketing and advertising and most had more than one (49 statutory and 27 non-statutory regulations in 24 countries). Twenty-three countries had one or more forms of statutory regulation and 17 one or more forms of non-statutory regulation. However, there is no information on to what extent regulations are implemented (Anderson 2007). The only European statutory regulation is the Television without Frontiers Directive which states criteria for the advertising of alcohol beverages. There is no body of information which indicates to what level the Directive is implemented (Anderson 2007). There is a Council

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathon Hall, Marketing Director, Heineken Ireland quoted in Hospitality Ireland magazine interview at: <http://www.heinekenireland.com/content/live/JonathanHall.pdf>

Recommendation (2001/458/EC) on the drinking of alcohol by young people which includes guidelines for Member States with regard to the marketing of alcohol and young people. Again there is no information on the degree to which this is implemented. Of the countries which had statutory regulation, most covered the majority of the elements of the Council Recommendation with all of them covering at least four. All countries except Portugal have at least two procedures for monitoring regulations (Anderson 2007).

Several European countries rely on self-regulation, implemented by economic operators, including advertising, media and alcohol producers. In order to be effective, self-regulation needs a clear legislative framework. It is important that regulations cover the entire range of forms of marketing activities that reach young people, including new media. Self-regulation works best when monitored by third-party review of complaints concerning breaches. Otherwise a conflict of interest occurs where the interested persons who create and agree to abide by a code are also those who monitor its application. Without sanctions and the threat of sanctions there is no means to ensure compliance. Monitoring of alcohol marketing practices should be the responsibility of an independent body or a government agency and should be performed systematically and routinely (Anderson 2009b). One study looking at the assessment of breaches of an industry developed code was undertaken in Australia between 2004 and 2005. During the study period 14 complaints were lodged with the industry regulatory board, none of which were upheld. The authors recruited six independent experts to review the advertisements and complaints in light of the code. In no case did a majority find an advertisement to not be in breach of the code. Of the 14 advertisements 8 were agreed by the majority to breach the code, 2 were unanimously agreed to breach the code and 4 were 'hung' (evenly divided between breach and non-breach of the code) (Jones et al. 2008).

In contrast the French Loi Evin provides statutory regulation of advertising alcoholic beverages and challenges to this law have been unsuccessful before the Court of Justice of the European Communities (Court of Justice of the European Communities 2004). The Loi Evin defines advertising restrictions on drinks over 1.2% alcohol and defines places and media where advertising is allowed.

Specifically:

- no advertising should be targeted at young people;
- no advertising is allowed on television or in cinemas;
- no sponsorship of cultural or sport events is permitted;
- advertising is permitted only in the press for adults, on billboards<sup>5</sup>, on radio channels (under precise conditions), at special events or places such as wine fairs, wine museums. When advertising is permitted, its content is controlled:
  - messages and images should refer only to the qualities of the products such as degree, origin, composition, means of production, patterns of consumption ;
  - a health message must be included on each advertisement "l'abus d'alcool est dangereux pour la santé": alcohol abuse is dangerous for health. (Regaud and Craplet 2004).

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<sup>5</sup> Advertising on billboards was allowed by a more recent law.

## Questions for Consideration by Policy Makers

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### **Is there evidence of a link between exposure to alcohol marketing and drinking behaviour?**

Various methodologies may be used to assess the impact of exposure to alcohol advertising on drinking behaviour. Longitudinal studies, which measure variables over time, e.g., exposure to advertising at Time A and drinking behaviour at Time B in the future, are considered the most accurate method for determining a relationship, provided that potential confounding factors (e.g. intention to drink, peer drinking, family attitudes to drinking) are accounted for (Science Group 2009). Furthermore, research has linked exposure to portrayals of alcohol use in the mass media with the development of positive drinking expectancies by children and adolescents (Anderson 2007).

Two peer reviewed systematic reviews of longitudinal studies identified 13 studies which looked at the impact of marketing communications on initiation and continuation of drinking among 38 000 people aged 10-21 years from four countries (Anderson *et al.* 2009; Smith & Foxcroft 2009). A third review examining the effects of pricing and promotion for the UK Department of Health (Meier 2008) addressed the total population and covered multilevel marketing and the impact of advertising restrictions. The systematic reviews report consistent results across the studies which demonstrate a link between alcohol marketing and both adolescents beginning to use alcohol and drinking more if they are already using alcohol.

*“The data from these studies suggest that exposure to alcohol advertising in young people influences their subsequent drinking behaviour. The effect was consistent across studies, a temporal relationship between exposure and drinking initiation was shown, and a dose response between amount of exposure and frequency of drinking was clearly demonstrated in three studies.”* (Smith & Foxcroft 2009)

*“Longitudinal studies consistently suggest that exposure to media and commercial communications on alcohol is associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers. Based on the strength of this association, we conclude that alcohol advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol.”* (Anderson *et al.* 2009)

*“Available evidence suggests that price promotions do increase binge drinking and that exposure to point of purchase advertising predicts the onset of youth drinking. Regardless of their explicit intention there is evidence for an effect of alcohol advertisements on underage drinkers. Consistent with this, evidence suggests that exposure to such interventions as TV, music videos and billboards, which contain alcohol advertisements, predicts onset of youth drinking and increased drinking.”* (Meier 2008)

### **Would restricting alcohol marketing reduce alcohol-related harm among young people?**

The systematic reviews mentioned found convincing evidence of the impact of alcohol advertising on young people's subsequent alcohol use, including initiation of drinking and heavier drinking among existing drinkers. As it is known that higher levels of alcohol consumption correspond to increased alcohol-related harm it can be deduced that restricting advertising would have a positive impact on reducing alcohol-related harm among young people. Evidence shows that those with heavier consumption in their mid teens tend to be those with heavier consumption, alcohol dependence and alcohol-related harm, including poorer mental health and education outcome, and increased risk of crime, in early adulthood (Englund *et al.* 2008).

**Is banning/restricting alcohol marketing a cost-effective intervention?**

The World Health Organization's CHOICE project modelled the impact of an advertising ban in the EU. The model estimated that an EU wide ban on advertising could prevent 5% of all alcohol-related-ill-health at a cost of €95 million per year. This makes an advertising ban less cost-effective than increasing taxes but nearly four times as cost-effective as a brief advice programme in primary care (Anderson 2007). In 2003 alcohol related disease, injury and violence cost the EU €125bn.

**Does the European public support a ban on alcohol marketing aimed at young people?**

A 2006 Eurobarometer survey found that 76% of the EU population would approve the banning of alcohol advertising targeting young people in all Member States (European Commission 2007). Every second respondent (50%) said that they 'agree totally' with this idea. Analysis by country shows that in all polled countries the majority of respondents would favour a ban.

**Does European law support restrictions on alcohol marketing?**

In France, there have been several challenges to the Loi Evin which restricts alcohol and tobacco advertising. In 2004, the Advocate General of the European Union published his opinion in two cases before the Court of Justice of the European Communities. The court supported the right to protect public health through such restrictions. *"The Court states that the French television advertising rules seek to protect public health and that they are appropriate to ensure that that objective is achieved. The rules restrict the situations in which advertising hoardings for alcoholic beverages can be seen on television and, as a result, are likely to restrict the broadcasting of such advertisements, thereby reducing the occasions on which television viewers might be encouraged to consume alcoholic beverages."*

*The Court, therefore, holds that the principle of the freedom to provide services laid down in the EC Treaty does not preclude a ban such as that imposed by the French rules on indirect television advertising for alcoholic beverages."* (Court of Justice of the European Communities 2004)

**What policies/interventions are known to be effective in reducing alcohol-related harm in general?**

The interventions known to be most effective in reducing alcohol-related harm are:

- higher taxes for higher alcohol beverages;
- raising the minimum drinking age;
- reducing outlet density;
- reducing trading hours;
- enforcement of random breath testing;
- enforcement of licensing laws; and,
- penalties for serving intoxicated customers (Babor et al 2003, Anderson et al. 2009).

## Options

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With the internet, mobile phones, cable television and other technologies, information and marketing cross borders and can reach young people across Europe despite each Member States individual regulations. Commercials which may not be visible on television are easily visible via the internet, on mobile phones in magazines and on social networking sites. Therefore, in order to minimise young people's exposure to alcohol marketing and advertising a Europe-wide approach is needed. Such an approach needs to address all types of marketing. If only one area of marketing (e.g., television) is restricted, advertising will simply become more prevalent in another area (e.g., internet or festival/event sponsorship).

- **Maintain the status quo**

As mentioned twenty-four European countries had at least one regulation covering alcohol marketing and advertising in 2007 and most had more than one. Twenty-three countries had one or more forms of statutory regulation and 17 one or more forms of non-statutory regulation. However, there is no information on to what extent regulations are implemented (Anderson 2007). In order to ensure effectiveness it is necessary to provide support to Member States in strengthening and enforcing existing regulation and to monitor their effectiveness. Self-regulation is problematic as it is almost impossible to remove the conflict of interest inherent in such an approach. While it may seem a more economic option, in fact it requires significant government investment and oversight within a clear legislative framework in order to be effective. Evidence shows that self-regulation requires a clear legislative framework and third-party monitoring of its application (Anderson 2009b).

- **A basic package of restrictions on marketing (introduce European legislation based on the French Loi Evin)**

A basic package of restrictions would include: statutory regulation of all marketing including sponsorship; content restrictions with no lifestyle ads; bans on sponsorship; and, no advertising in electronic media.

Regulation based on the Loi Evin is one option which has been already tested and for which there is known support both from European citizens and within European law. The law itself deals with both content and volume of advertising and defines clearly what is understood to be an alcoholic beverage.

- **An optimal package of restrictions on marketing**

An optimal package of restrictions would be a ban on all forms of product marketing.

The experience of banning tobacco marketing provides a tried and tested approach. Advertising of tobacco products is effectively banned throughout the European Union. In terms of risk to health and cost to economy and society these two common products are very similar. According to the World Health Organization's Global Burden of Disease study, in the year 2000 tobacco contributed 4.1% of the total burden of premature death or disability, and alcohol 4.0%. Since then, alcohol's share has increased to 4.6% (Rehm et al 2009).

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## Related projects and web sites

The ELSA Project: [http://www.stap.nl/elsa/elsa\\_project/introduction.html](http://www.stap.nl/elsa/elsa_project/introduction.html)

EUCAM <http://www.stap.nl/eucam/home/home.html>

Carlsberg web site: <http://www.carlsberg.com/>

Heineken Champions League web site: <http://www.greattogether.heineken.com/content/index.aspx>

European Rugby Cup web site: <http://www.ercrugby.com/eng/>

TMobile INMusic Festival web site: <http://www.t-mobileinmusicfestival.com/en>

Frequency Festival web site: <http://www.frequency.at/?id=1098>

Roskilde Festival web site: <http://www.roskilde-festival.dk/uk/>

Opener Festival web site: <http://www.opener.pl/en>

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