



## **Flash Report**

### **European Alcohol and Health Forum**

### **Plenary Meeting of 19 October 2011**

The 9th Plenary meeting of the European Alcohol and Health Forum took place on 19 October 2011, focussing on alcohol and youth, and alcohol in the workplace.

#### **Commissioner Dalli's speech**

This was a special plenary marked by the address of Commissioner John Dalli who expressed his strong commitment to address alcohol-related harm as a key public health priority, given its link to the rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD). He challenged Forum Members to step-up action to reduce alcohol-related harm and to focus on delivery. Commissioner Dalli emphasized the need for further action in the area of marketing and advertising, called for enforcement of minimum age and called for a modern, dynamic multi-stakeholder approach. He also called for the use of modern tools such as digital media to increase impact and outreach of action<sup>1</sup>.

#### **New Members**

Two new Members were admitted to the Forum: the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) and the European Travel Retail Council (ETRC). This brings the number of Members to 67.

#### **Science Group's opinion on alcohol and the workplace**

The Chair of the Forum's Science Group, Professor Sir Ian Gilmore presented the Group's recently adopted scientific opinion on alcohol and the workplace, another priority theme of the EU Alcohol Strategy. The opinion presented in the report *Alcohol, Work and Productivity*

summarises scientific evidence on the links between harmful drinking and productivity and employment, and looks at concrete workplace interventions to tackle alcohol problems in the workplace carried out by major alcoholic beverage producers. Jesus Alvarez Hidalgo from Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, outlined an EU action to support workplace health promotion. The Forum agreed to see how the Science Group's suggestions for future actions could be taken forward.

#### **Presentations by Members and experts – first session**

The meeting focused on action on alcohol and young people, one of the five priority themes of the EU Strategy. The programme included a number of presentations by Forum's Members and invited experts.

The first session looked at social environment factors which can contribute to young people's healthy choices. Harrie Jonkman from the Verwey-Jonker Instituut presented the EU-funded project AAA-Prevent. Magnus Jägerskog outlined the Swedish alcohol retail monopoly's approach to supporting alcohol harm prevention through the IQ initiative. Ingunn Aanes and Jan Peloza, representing the Alcohol Policy Youth Network, described the network members' views on cultural aspects of youth drinking. Lucie Lekešová from Directorate-General Education and Culture Support addressed youth health in the broader context of EU youth policy and action. Ennio Palmesino from the European Mutual-Help Network for Alcohol-Related Problems EMNA presented the idea of supporting young people through Italian clubs of alcoholics in treatment. Links between alcohol and

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<sup>1</sup> The speech is available on the Commissioner's website: [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/dalli/docs/speech\\_alcohol\\_health\\_forum\\_19102011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/dalli/docs/speech_alcohol_health_forum_19102011_en.pdf)

violence, as well as opportunities for prevention, were analysed by Professor Mark Bellis from the Liverpool John Moores University.

### **Presentations by Members and experts – second session**

The programme continued with a short film *Alcohol and minors* describing harm prevention activities of the European Forum for Responsible Drinking. This was followed by two examples of involving young people in alcohol harm prevention:

1. the Responsible Party campaign - developed by Pernod-Ricard and implemented across the EU by the Erasmus student exchange network, presented by Damien Lamy-Preto and Leo Smith;
2. the DARE2BDRINKAWARE film and multimedia competition in Ireland presented by Fionnula Sheehan from Mature Enjoyment of Alcohol in Society.

Minimum age limits as an instrument for protecting young people were highlighted in a film *No alcohol under 16, no liquor under 18*, produced by the Belgian alcohol problem prevention association VAD. Afterwards, Angela Wiesgen-Pick from the Federal association of the German spirits industry BSI gave a presentation on a training scheme for alcohol on and off-trade.

### **Evaluation of EU Alcohol Strategy**

The Forum was informed about the external evaluation of the EU Alcohol Strategy. An independent contractor will assess the overall added value of the strategy, including the two main structures to support its implementation: the European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF) and the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA). The final report, which is planned for 2012, will be based on research and interviews with Members of the EAHF and the CNAPA. The conclusions of the evaluation will lead to decisions on EU action on alcohol and health after 2012. The first results of the evaluation will be presented and discussed in the next meeting of the Forum.

### **Commitments**

Last but not least, the Chair reminded Members of the Forum of the importance of maintaining active commitments throughout their membership in accordance with the Charter. Having said that, the scope and content of new commitments or extensions of current ones can deliver added value of substance. The Chair encouraged Members who will submit new actions to take into consideration the key messages of Commissioner Dalli in this respect.

### **Next meeting**

The next Plenary meeting of the European Alcohol and Health Forum will take place on 26 April 2012.

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