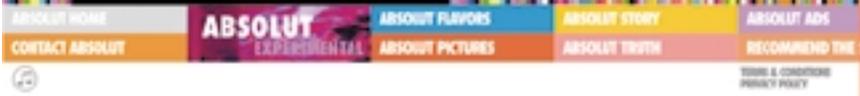
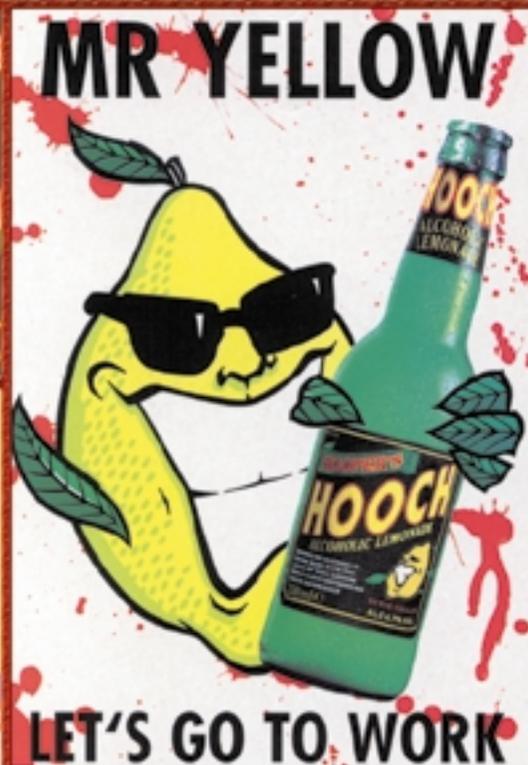
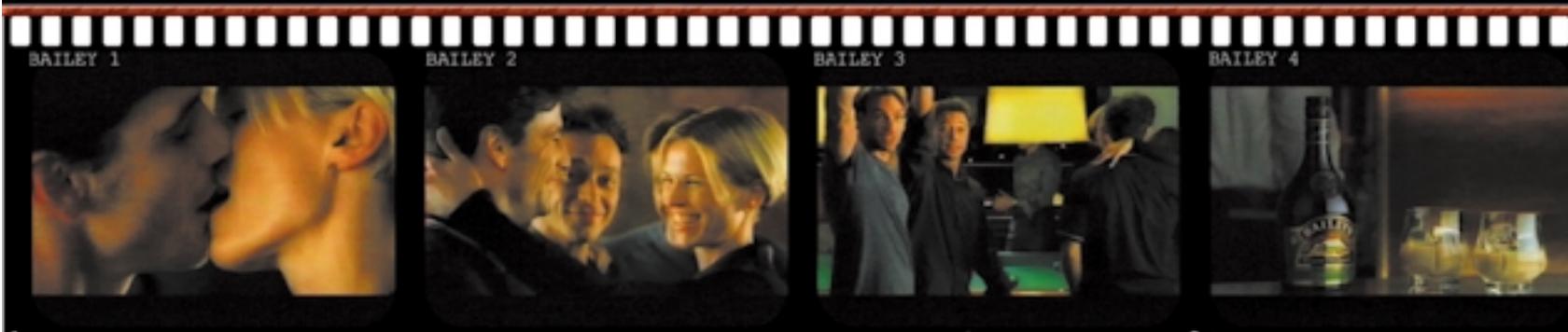


Marketing alcohol to young people



The WHO European Charter on Alcohol explicitly states that “all children and adolescents have the right to grow up in an environment protected from the negative consequences of alcohol consumption and to the extent possible, from the promotion of alcoholic beverages”. Not only are children growing up in an environment where they are bombarded with positive images of alcohol but the youth sector is a key target of the marketing practices of the alcohol industry. The drinks industry is always trying to recruit new drinkers. The level and pervasiveness of alcohol advertising in the lives of young people should cause concern. While codes of practice do exist, and the alcohol industry publicly accepts the need for them, alcohol producers are breaching the spirit of these by targeting many of their advertisements to the adolescent market.

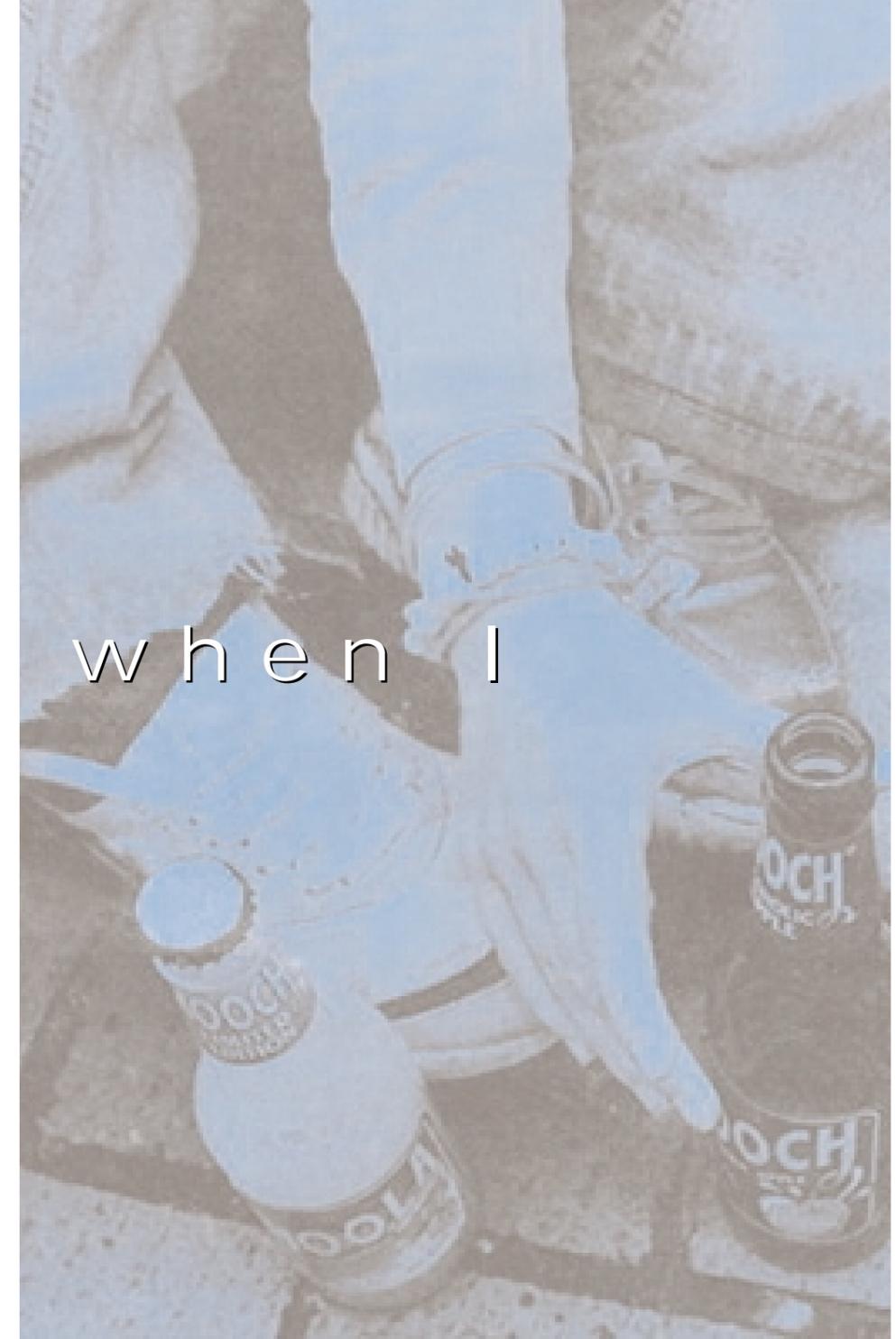
“ I w a s d r u n k w a s o n l y 1 1 ” ²

Children are growing up faster and are adopting adult ways of life much earlier than 30 years ago. As a result, not only are young people drinking at an earlier age but there is an increase in the amount that they are drinking on each occasion.

Children and adolescents are an important target group for the alcohol industry. This target group represents the market of the future. The youth market is a key growth sector of strategic importance to drinks manufacturers in building brand loyalty. The market is divided into two segments. The “starter drinkers” (aged 11-15) and the “established drinkers” (aged 16-24)¹. Both

markets are large enough to provide the industry with a sustainable return on investments.

Alcohol advertising is pernicious because it tells people that drinking is harmless. Underage drinkers perceive alcohol to be a non-risky substance mainly because they are exposed to it by extensive marketing. They are constantly being bombarded by images of alcohol that portray people who drink as successful, glamorous, sexy and accepted by their peers. Young people can struggle with feelings of loneliness and generally want to fit in. Alcohol advertisements portray alcohol use as integral to social acceptance.



Regardless of whether alcohol advertisements are specifically targeting young people, the reality is that young people are exposed to these advertisements and develop expectations about their likelihood of future drinking based on them:



Cutty Sark's notions of social acceptance

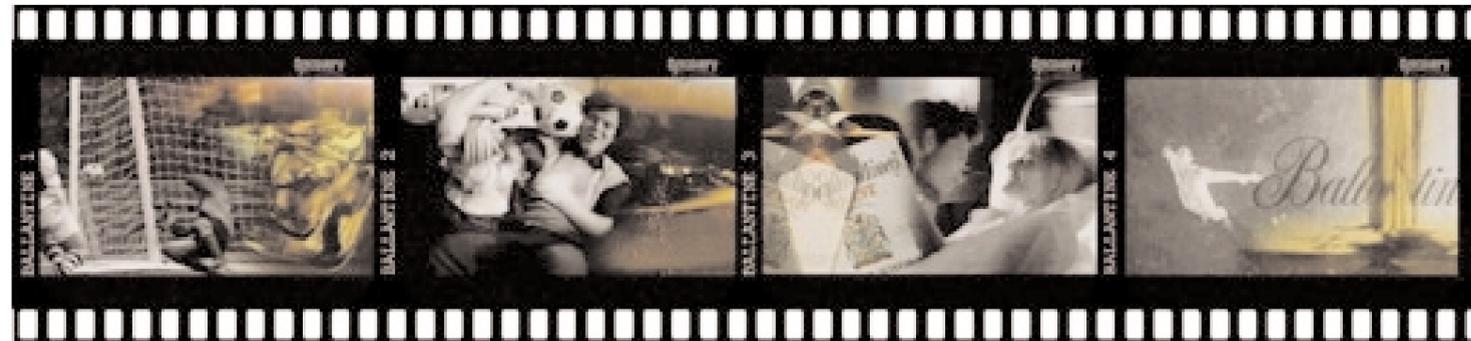


Baileys...
on how
to flirt

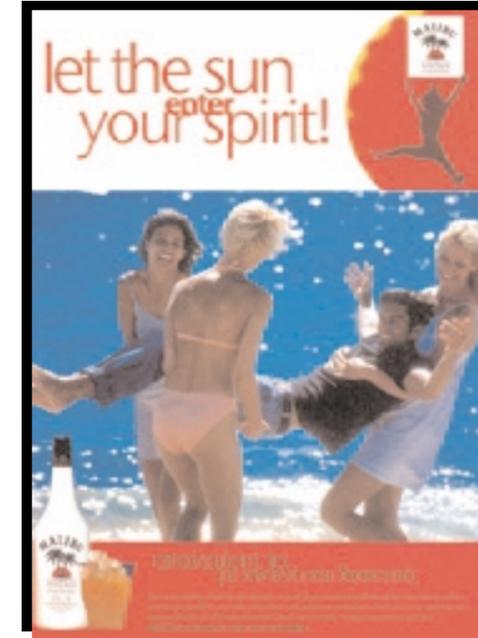


Manhood, according to Ballantine is linked to their drink

"It's
what's inside that
counts", is their
message



You can be anything
you want to be ...if
you drink Ballantines



Having fun on the beach with Malibu



The whisky look

Marketing Blitz



“Alcohol abuse during the formative years sets a pattern for later life”³

For years, alcohol companies have denied that their advertising campaigns target teenagers. Yet there is strong evidence of increasing alcohol consumption among children and adolescents.

In the UK 21% of 11 to 15 year olds drink at least once a week. By the age of 13 almost half of adolescents will have experienced severe drunkenness.

In Germany, a study revealed that 10% of 14 to 24 year olds reported alcohol abuse.

In Spain, one in five adolescents in the 14 to 18 age group had been drunk in the preceding month

In France, there is a growing problem of drunkenness among teenagers which is associated with violence, truancy, theft and the use of illegal drugs.⁴

The alcohol industry claims that it is not encouraging excessive drinking. However, the future of the drinks industry not only depends on recruiting new members, but increasing the usage of alcohol among those who already drink. Alcohol companies exploit the “occasions market”, using holidays and a wide variety of events to encourage people to drink more, skillfully promoting them as drinking holidays. For the World Cup 98, Carlsberg developed a marketing ploy where anyone buying 24 cans of lager at once, won an England/Carlsberg T-shirt. By collecting stamps at selected pubs Budweiser gave away free World Cup merchandise. Every beer entitled a person to one stamp and all the stamps had to be collected in the same pub. Anyone buying 48 cans of Budweiser at once was entitled to a football. None of the company’s “drink responsibly” messages appeared anywhere.



Guinness developed an entire marketing strategy focusing on St. Patrick’s Day, to win over new recruits and promote heavy drinking. TV Vox Pop style interviews and competitions to win free board games on the Internet were techniques used to encourage adolescents to drink more as a way to associate their products with this holiday.

Cartoons and Gimmicks

“Watching a beer ad does not cause a kid to drink”⁶

Alcohol companies have used many animal characters to promote their products. A well-known example is that of the Budweiser frogs. According to a survey conducted by the Center on Alcohol Advertising, elementary

school children are more familiar with Budweiser’s cartoon frogs crooning “Bud-Wei-Ser” than they are with cartoon cereal characters such as Tony the Tiger and Snap Crackle and Pop.⁷

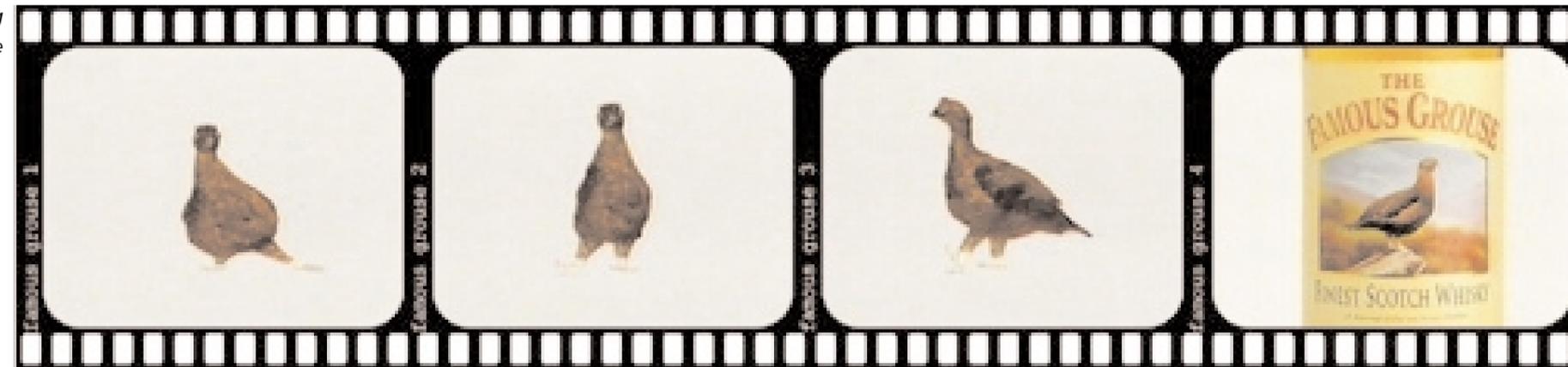


School children are more familiar with Budweiser’s cartoon frogs



“Are you sick of red”. Apparently Santa Claus is, because he is wearing Cutty Sark yellow

The tap dancing grouse





Designer Drinks

Industry myth: marketing activities do not recruit new drinkers - they only serve to convince those who already drink to switch brands



The alcohol industry develops attractive looking and gimmicky bottles designed especially to appeal to adolescents. When Hooper's Hooch was introduced it signalled the arrival of a whole new generation of alcoholic soft drinks designed to appeal to the young.



Since the introduction of the first alcipop in 1995, the industry has come up with a wide variety of alcoholic drinks that are likely to appeal to children and teenagers. In fact, the sweet taste, the use of cartoon images, bright colours, psychedelic lettering and glow-in-the-dark labels, together with rebellious, anti-establishment names can only appeal to children and teenagers. By using words such as "lemonade" or "cola", children are misled by the packaging and may mistake these alcoholic beverages for soft drinks.

Alcipopps, by appealing to younger people's palates, are designed to accustom them to the taste of alcohol and propel them into the alcohol market.

If the industry claims that their marketing is intended for brand switching then why are these beverages designed to appeal to younger consumers?

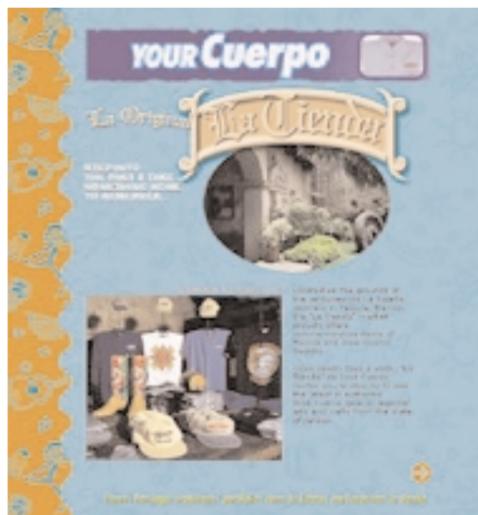
Agwa's claim to fame is that it improves sexual stamina. Marketed in Ireland, the distributors claimed that Agwa contained three natural herbs which give you a rush while opening up your blood vessels and increasing blood flow. The promotion to sell Agwa in night-clubs used language explicitly associated with illegal drugs, and "dealers" to offer clubbers one shot and the chance to "score" a second free. In addition, the packaging claimed that the guarana contained in the drink is "reputedly used by Brazilians to improve the stamina of their love life".



" There are too many young inexperienced people drinking too much alcohol " ⁵

World Wide Web

“Just because a site has a game on it doesn't mean it's appealing to children”.⁸



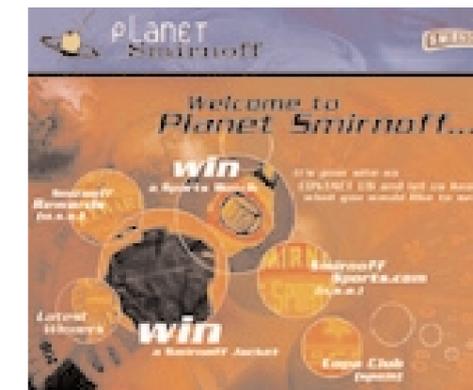
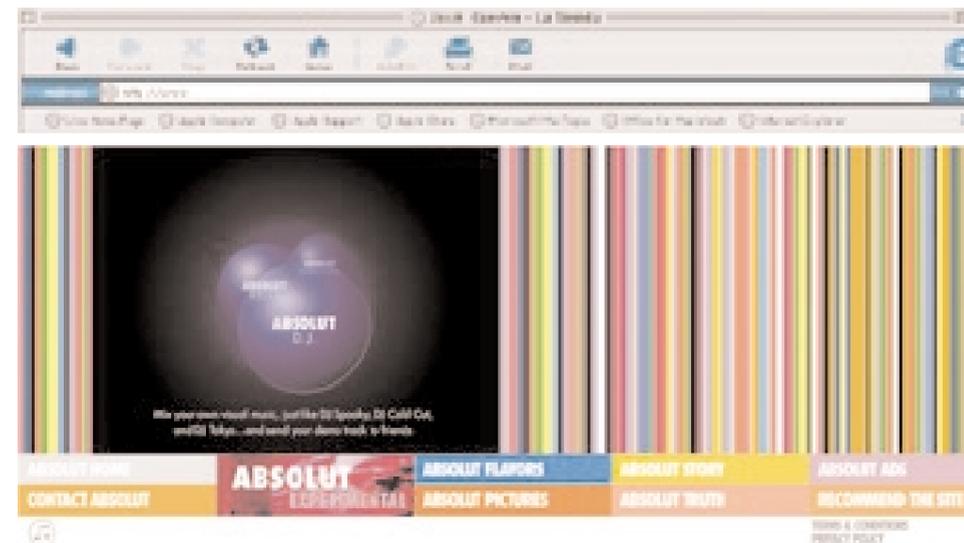
The World Wide Web and the major online services have become powerful forces in many children's lives. World Wide Web sites and other interactive online services are being designed to capture the loyalty and the spending power of the “lucrative cybertot category”. The exploitation of the vulnerable young computer users is a new form of alcohol marketing. The Internet is subject to almost no regulation and as a result, alcohol companies are able to pursue children and young people with very few restraints.⁹

Most alcohol products have captivating web sites, which attract young people through sophisticated marketing strategies. Alcohol companies can establish a direct relationship with underage youths. The sooner they can turn them into consumers of alcohol, the better. By capturing their attention online, the alcohol industry is not only circumventing the parents but also the voluntary codes in the name of long lasting brand loyalty.

Most of the companies selling alcohol have developed and maintain their own web sites advertising their products. The industry will claim again that the websites are not aimed at people under 18, knowing fully well how easy it is for underage youths to provide a fake birth date in order to enter the site. Once the youngsters have access to the web site they enter an environment created specifically to entice them into the culture of drinking.



The Jose Cuervo site encourages visitors to play games, download screensavers and enter a drawing to win a free t-shirt. At the Budweiser site, web users can choose from a variety of colourful screen savers, free e-mail, electronic postcards and contests for free football tickets. Absolut Vodka developed an interactive “visual music” internet site featuring DJs and soundtracks which appeals to a younger audience. Bailey's also invites young computer users to enter the “Pleasuredome” to win prizes. Cutty Sark entertains young computer users with an amusing puzzle game and Heineken has a chat room, lists the films playing in cinemas and offers free e-mail addresses. All these sites portray drinking as fun and cool.



Cross Border Transmissions

New technological innovations have increased the speed and intensity with which people receive information. Satellite television has made it possible to broadcast simultaneously in many different countries. The globalisation of media has also radically changed the face of advertising. As a result alcohol commercials can be transmitted in countries where alcohol advertising is prohibited. The “country of origin” principle allows the alcohol industry to bypass regulations regarding advertising, whereby a television broadcast complies with the law of the country from which it originates enabling it to circulate freely in the rest of the EU. This makes it possible for an alcohol commercial produced and transmitted in England to be shown on Danish television where alcohol commercials are forbidden. The receiving member-state cannot block the commercial despite having stricter provisions in place.

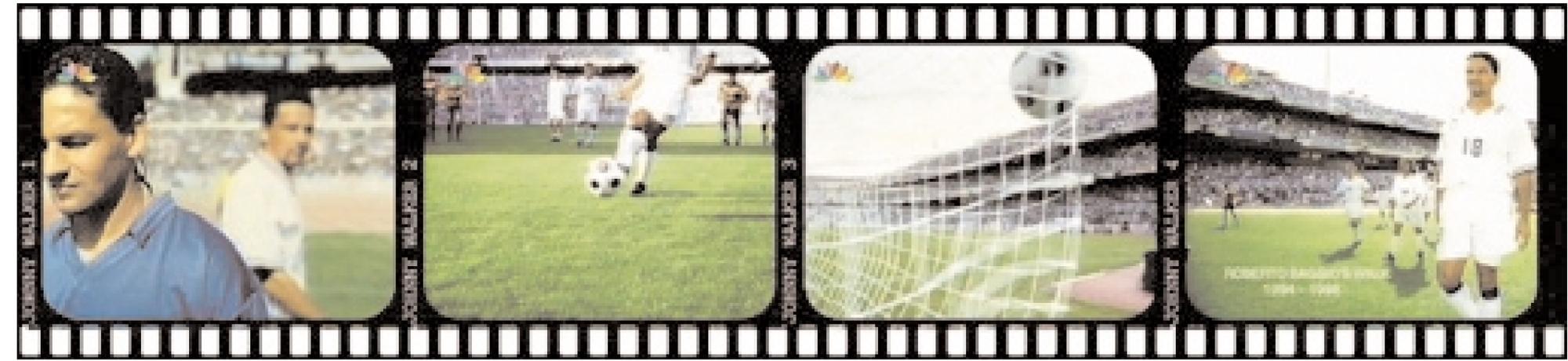
In January 2000 TV Danmark launched a new channel TV Danmark 1 to be transmitted from the United Kingdom to Denmark in order to “profit from the more liberal UK advertising rules...on alcohol ads”¹⁰. Carlsberg commissioned an advertisement to be transmitted in Danish from Denmark 1 in order to get round the Danish Government's regulations and Carlsberg's own code which applied in Denmark. The channel is positioning itself as a channel for young audiences, also broadcasting boxing competitions, football, blockbuster movies and entertainment shows aimed primarily at younger people.

Sports Sponsorship

“ There is enough evidence... to make the sponsorship by the drinks business of ostensibly health-giving activity-sport - deeply paradoxical ” ¹¹

The alcohol industry funds sporting events and athletic teams as a way of reaching younger and larger audiences. The amount of sports marketing by the drinks industry has increased dramatically in the past few years. Having a brand associated with a popular sports team is a way of transferring sports values onto the product, which creates unparalleled brand allegiance.

Sports sponsorship links alcohol with sporting prowess, fitness success and enjoyment, using a marketing mix in which events, sports clubs, teams, stars and supporters clubs and materials - including toys - are all connected with a particular brand of alcohol.



The World Cup, is no longer only about football, It has become one of the leading drinking occasions. The alcohol industry has ensured a high profile presence every four years.

Besides sport sponsorship, the alcohol industry also makes use of sports celebrities who endorse their products. Using his sporting prowess, Baggio an idol for many young people around the world, is promoting whisky in the football field.

It is inconsistent that most advertising codes of practice do not allow alcohol to be associated with images of sporting prowess and yet sponsorship linking teen idols with alcoholic brands in a visual and unambiguous way is so prevalent across Europe.

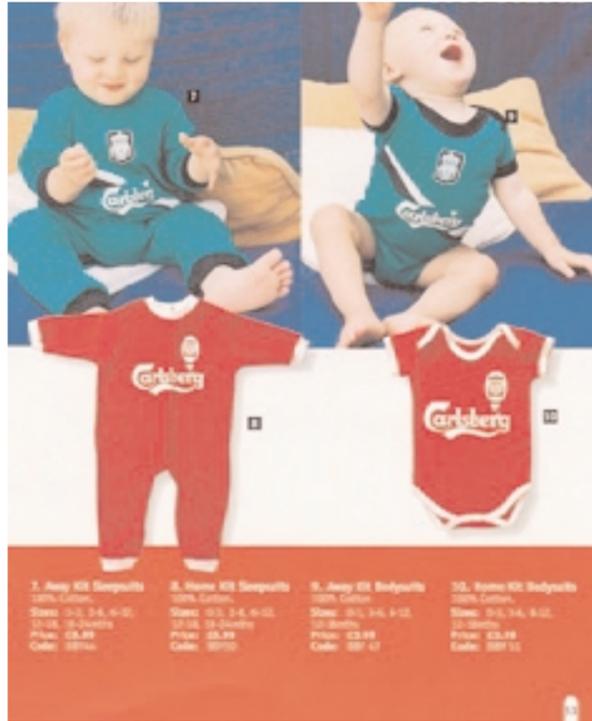




Children and young people constitute an important target group because they represent the market of tomorrow, the drinkers of the future. Creating brand

allegiance among children and young people is an investment the industry is sure to cash in on. The temptation to advertise alcohol to youngsters is too strong to resist. Sports activities are an important part of a child's upbringing. Most children not only play sports but watch their favourite teams and athletes on the television and read about them in

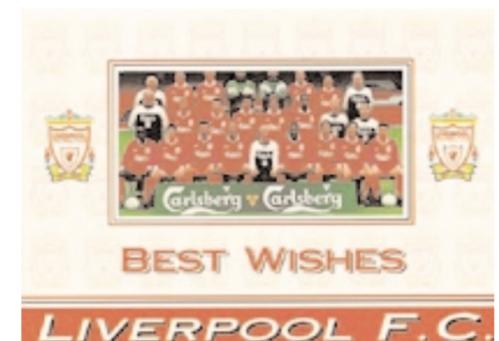
publications. In doing so, young people are exposed to astute marketing techniques ranging from logos of the alcoholic beverage on the team shirts to the strategic placement of gigantic inflatable bottles on a ski slope. Children also become live advertisements for alcohol drinks.



Living advertisements for the alcohol industry



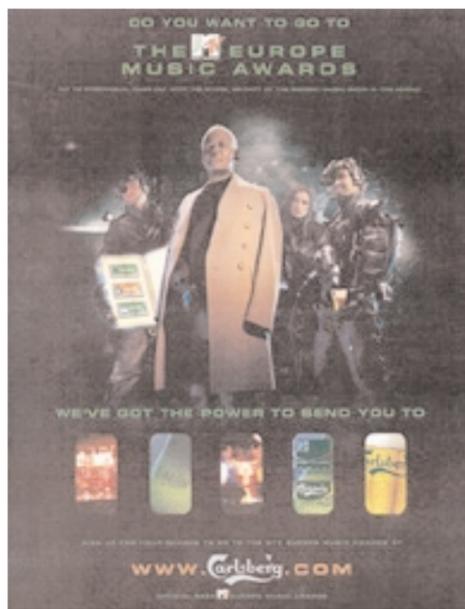
The message takes root in the perception of a child



Music and Venues

Despite denying that their alcohol products target minors, the alcohol industry advertises heavily on MTV, the satellite music channel, 40% of whose audience is made up of 4 to 18 year olds.¹¹

The drinks industry is constantly developing new marketing techniques, which target very young people. Cutty Sark released a single performed by a new band, Zombie Nation, which is played on radio stations all around Europe. The single was later featured in the company's television advertisements. The music became so popular that young people flocked to music shops to ask for the "Cutty Sark" CD where the logo of the brand is displayed on the cover. Absolut Vodka also promotes music and DJs on their internet site.



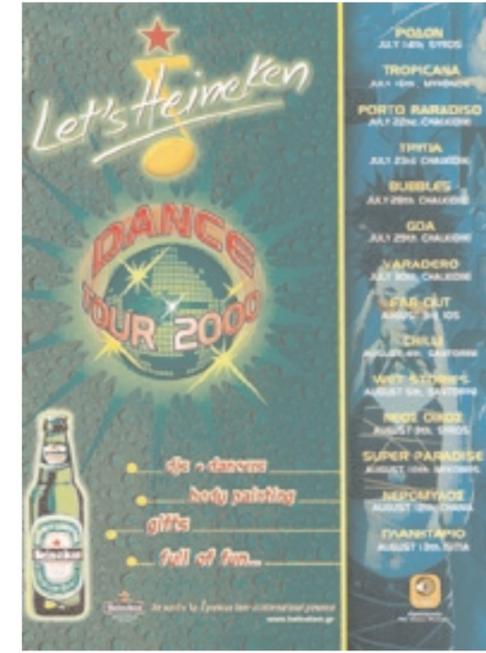
Adolescents flocked to CD shops in Greece to buy the Cutty Sark CD

Hot spots such as Ibiza in Spain and Ios in Greece are attractive tourist destinations for young people because of the widely reputed daily non-stop partying. These popular destinations not only offer cheap drinks in the form of designer drinks and sweet tasting shooters but also provide the wild setting where abandoned drinking takes place.

By sponsoring DJs in clubs and handing out free drinks, the industry is successfully recruiting teenage drinkers. The alcohol industry is free to promote its brands in bars and clubs and yet many of the venues in Greece do not control how old the clientele is. Even the girls employed by the industry, wearing skimpy outfits and handing out free drinks, are sometimes under 18.



Heineken sponsored a rock concert in Athens

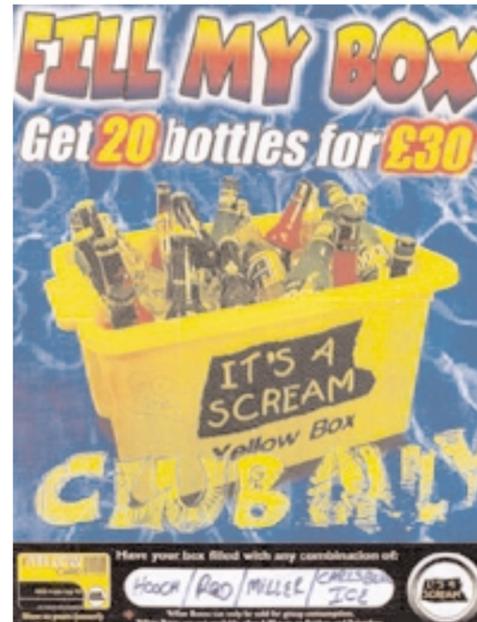


Regulation

The growth of satellite television and internet advertising defy attempts by individual member states to effectively regulate alcohol advertisements targeting young people.

The regulatory system throughout Europe is far from homogeneous. It is characterised by a complex web of self-regulatory codes and mandatory government rules. Regulations range from international and European guidelines; mandatory regulations; laws regarding marketing in general; sports marketing; and voluntary codes instituted by the advertising industry and broadcast media. While most of the codes can differ from country to country, there are many similarities. One of the similarities is that the codes appear frequently to be disregarded.

**Alcohol advertisements:
Should not encourage
excessive drinking.**



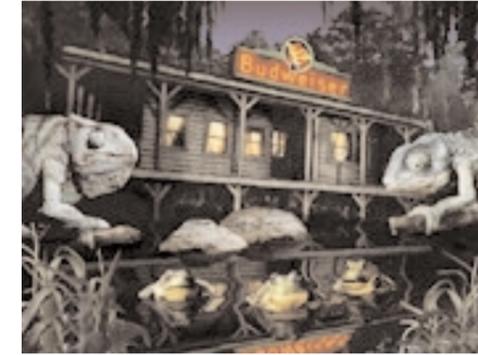
**Should not be directed at
people under eighteen**



**Should not be advertised
in a medium if more than
25% of its audience is
under eighteen years of
age**

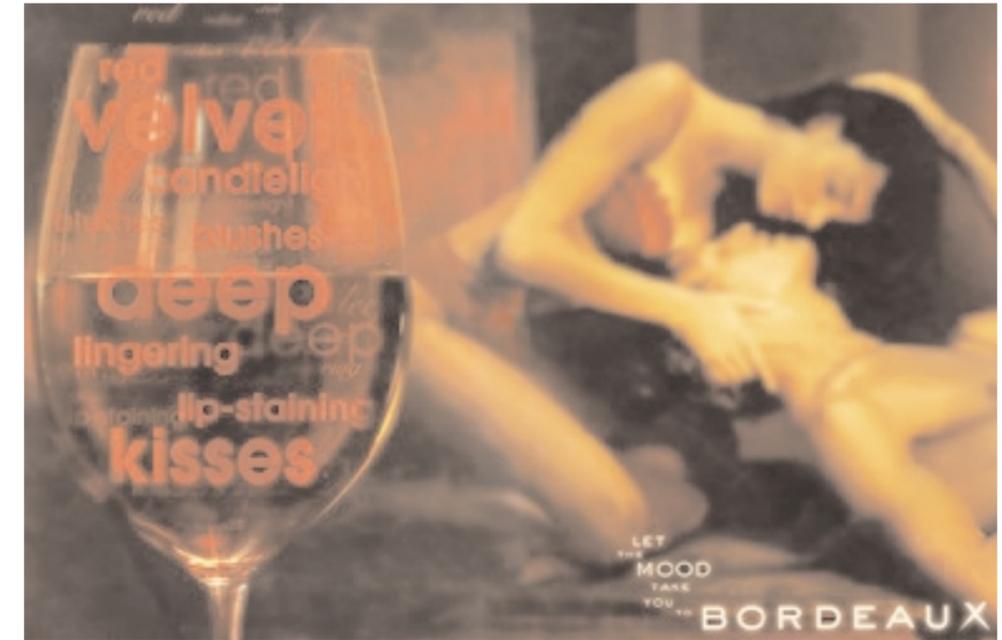


**Should not feature real or
fictitious characters who
are likely to appeal to the
under eighteens in a way
that would encourage
them to drink**



**Should not suggest that
any alcoholic drink can
enhance mental physical
or sexual capabilities,
popularity, masculinity,
femininity or sporting
achievements.**

A complaint that the Bordeaux Wine advertisement linked drinking with sexual activity was not upheld by the UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The ASA agreed with the advertisers who claimed "the advertisement depicted a couple, in an established relationship, sharing a moment of intimacy in a private setting". They refuted the suggestion that the advertisement depicted a one-off sexual encounter or enhanced sexual prowess and explained they had deliberately sought to avoid that impression by photographing the couple head-to-head, not body-to-body, and clothing the models in underwear.



The Amsterdam Group, an association of European alcohol companies, recognises that “misuse” of alcohol takes place. The group states that marketing should not target young people and that alcohol companies should comply with existing self-regulatory practices. While they give the impression that the industry is promoting responsible drinking by discouraging excessive consumption of alcohol and not targeting marketing practices to adolescents, there are many examples where the alcohol industry has repeatedly broken the spirit and many times the letter of the codes.

In the UK, a code of practice on the naming, packaging and merchandising of alcoholic drinks was launched by the industry body, the Portman Group, following an unprecedented level of public outcry over the targeting of alcoholic “soft drinks” at young people. The code remains voluntary and, where producers are deemed to breach its provisions, there are no sanctions that can be used to force them to comply. The existence of the code is therefore not stopping producers from continuing to launch new products onto the market which appeal to young people, have connotations with illegal drugs, or use sexual innuendo to market them. In addition, decisions about compliance with the code are made by a Panel put together by the Portman Group, many of whose members and funders are themselves producers of the drinks being considered. It is

hard to see how objective judgements can be made. The process by which decisions about complaints are made is not transparent, creating major concerns that products continue to be sold following a failed complaint with packaging that clearly appeals to teenagers and children.

The following are examples of the alcohol industry breaking their own codes of practice. It is also common practice for many alcohol manufacturers to completely ignore the codes and the warnings of the Portman Group. Carlsberg-Tetley was advised by the group not to launch an alcoholic jelly drink called Thickhead. The company chose to ignore the complaints and went ahead with it anyway.



Hi Fever

Complaint: The metallic lettering conjures up the world of computer games which would appeal to under 18s.

Decision: not upheld

Frappe

Complaint: Frappe crushed ice format is appealing to young people

Decision: not upheld

Jealous Lover

Complaint: The name of this product suggests an association with aggressive behaviour

Decision: not upheld

Shooter

Complaint: The name has strong drug connotations

Decision: not upheld



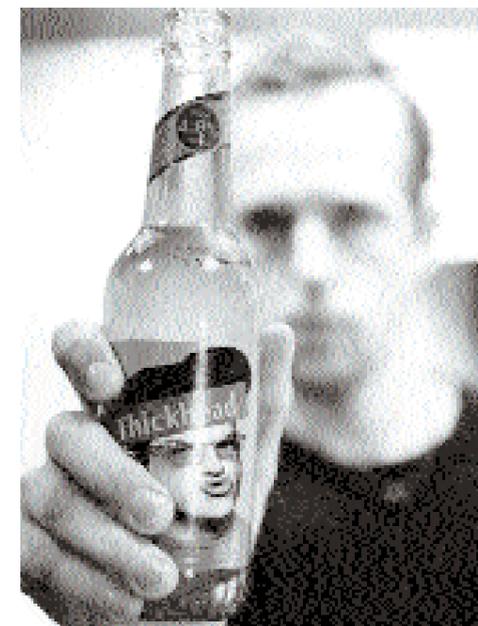
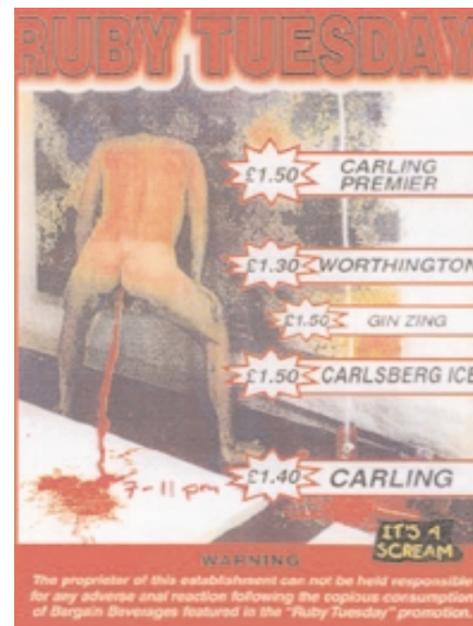
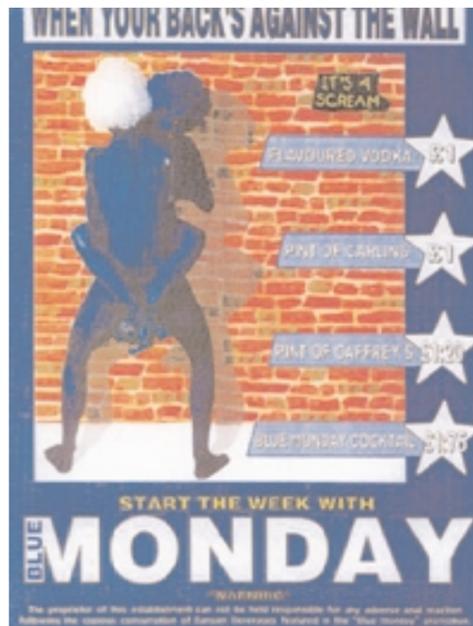
While the alcohol industry is more restrained in countries where there are regulations, in much of the world there are not any.

In most European countries making health claims about alcohol in advertising is not allowed by the codes. Yet, in Malaysia, Guinness ran an advertising campaign implying that Guinness improves male fertility. Benedictine liqueur (alcohol content 40%) is claimed to be “good for mothers in confinement”.

This leads us to the following question: If the industry’s practices are not consistent between countries, then this severely questions the industry’s commitment to the ethical principles underlying the codes of practice in countries where these regulations are supposedly in place.



How can the alcohol industry even consider itself to be responsible when it is using publicity for its bars like “It’s a Scream” (Owned by Bass, a founder member of the Portman Group) which contains sexually explicit and lavatorial imagery and glamourises the excessive consumption of “bargain beverages”



Recommendations

Alcohol problems are complex. A range of policy measures is needed to tackle alcohol problems around the world. Controls on marketing, advertising and sponsorship are an important weapon in helping to alleviate the negative consequences of alcohol use.

However, there are weaknesses in the current regulatory system, which continues to allow the alcohol industry to target young people and influence their drinking patterns. In addition, the systems are inadequately equipped to meet new challenges such as

technological innovation and virtual advertising that cross international borders. Modern alcohol advertising knows no frontiers.

Young people are drinking more and they are drinking to experience a higher level of sensation. Children are exposed to the promotion of alcohol from the moment they begin to understand their surroundings. The main feature of contemporary drinking cultures is their thoroughgoing commercialisation. Marketing is of the

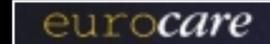
essence, and this applies particularly to young consumers who, in most of Europe, have become one of the main engines of the alcohol market.

If the alcohol industry truly believes in the codes of practice that exist in some countries then it should apply these to all its promotional products and in all the countries in which it operates. Not to do so reveals a cynical industry which pays lip-service to concerns about the welfare of young people and of the developing world.

- **The global alcohol industry, through associations such as the Amsterdam Group, should apply consistently high standards in a common code of advertising practice applicable in all the markets in which it operates. This code should apply to web sites as well as to other media.**
- **The WHO should monitor the alcohol industry's adherence to the regulatory codes and encourage compliance at international, regional and national level.**
- **National governments and sporting authorities should consider whether continued alcohol sports sponsorship is compatible with the WHO Charter on Alcohol which states that "all children and adolescents have the right to grow up in an environment protected from the negative consequences of alcohol consumption and, to the extent possible, from the promotion of alcoholic beverages".**
- **Policies of governments which prohibit alcohol sports sponsorship should not be undermined, and international sporting authorities and the alcohol industry should respect the national regulations of countries where sporting events are taking place.**
- **Governments should ensure compliance with the regulatory codes and sanctions should be applied in cases of infringement.**
- **In order to prevent unacceptable marketing practices governments should ensure that there is an appropriate system in place for monitoring and regulating production, packaging, and promotion, particularly in relation to new products before they are launched.**
- **Pricing and other point-of-sale promotions likely to encourage alcohol abuse should be prohibited.**

References

- 1 Jackson M, Hastings G, Wheeler C, Eadie D, Mackintosh A-M (2000). "Marketing alcohol to young people: implications for industry regulation and research policy." In *Addiction*, supplement 4 S597-S608
- 2 *Times*. January 25th 2001.
- 3 *BBC News. Health. Teenage drinking. Quote from British Medical Association*
- 4 *Council Recommendation "Drinking Alcohol by Children and Adolescents" COM (2000)*
- 5 *BBC News. Health.*
- 6 *Francine Katz (Vice-President of Anheuser Busch) on the reason why Anheuser-Busch continued using the frogs in their advertisements.*
- 7 *Centre on Alcohol Advertising, USA*
- 8 *Spokesperson for the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.*
- 9 *Centre for Media Education, 1996*
- 10 *SBS Broadcasting www.sbsbroadcasting.com*
- 11 *The Guardian. August 31, 1999*



EUROCARE
acknowledges the assistance of the following contributors
to the brochure:

Mary Assunta – Consumers Association of Penang Malaysia
Wim van Dalen – Coordinator Alcohol Campaigns Netherlands
David Jernigan – The Marin Institute San Rafael Ca. USA
Mary-Ann McKibben – Alcohol Concern UK
Andrew McNeill – Institute of Alcohol Studies UK
Dr Alicia Rodriguez Martos Dauer – Socidrogalcohol Spain
Derek Rutherford – Institute of Alcohol Studies UK

Special thanks are due to
Gina Dafalias of Greece - who researched and wrote the script.
ALKOKUTT Norway for their generous financial donation and staff time

Secretariat
Elmgren House, 1 The Quay, Saint Ives,
Cambridgeshire, PE27 5AR England.
Tel +44 (0)1480 466 766
Fax +44 (0)1480 497 583
email eurocare@bbs.eurocare.org.

EU Liaison Office
Rue des Confédérés 96-98,
1000 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel +32-2 736 05 72
Fax +32-2 736 73 51

