



November 2005

## **POSITION on VOLUNTARY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION MESSAGING**

*The Brewers of Europe, the voice of the European brewing sector, promotes sensible drinking and is opposed to the misuse of alcoholic drinks. Together with its Members, The Brewers of Europe, sharing the concerns expressed by the Council, the Commission and other stakeholders with regard to alcohol misuse, has a proven track record of initiatives that form part of our ongoing work designed to combat misuse where it occurs<sup>1</sup>.*

### **Empowering the consumer**

Clear information is important, to provide individuals with the guidance to make better informed decisions about their consumption. In this respect The Brewers of Europe is committed to ensuring that the nature of our product is clear and the consumer is aware of its alcohol content.<sup>2</sup>

### **Beer can form part of healthy lifestyles**

In addition beer, when consumed in moderation, as is done on the vast majority of occasions, can form part of a healthy lifestyle.<sup>3,4,5</sup> Whilst inappropriate beer consumption has negative consequences, any initiative aimed at reducing misuse should concentrate on promoting responsible and moderate consumption rather than warning the consumer about the product per se.

### **A voluntary initiative**

Some brewers in Europe now voluntarily use responsible consumption messaging to provide information to the consumer and help promote the responsible consumption of their products. Any current initiatives are carried out voluntarily on a company or national basis. This should remain the case in order to maintain the flexibility and take into account the patchwork of drinking cultures across Europe.

### **What do we mean by responsible consumption messaging?**

Broadly, brewing sector initiatives regarding responsibility messaging in relation to beer consumption may fall under 4 different categories:

- a) Responsible consumption messages on/in beer adverts
- b) Branded responsibility adverts
- c) Social aspects organisations' campaigns
- d) Other responsible consumption messages

### **The philosophy behind voluntary responsible consumption messaging**

- They provide a simple message;
- They focus on changing behaviour and not on stigmatising the product per se;
- They advise people on what behaviour to pursue, rather than telling the consumer what not to do;
- They may serve to reinforce the other information available on the subject of responsible or moderate consumption;
- They provide a credible message, since the producers are voluntarily encouraging 'their' consumers to drink responsibly.

<sup>1</sup> See [Worldwide Brewing Alliance Global social responsibility initiatives](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Responsible Commercial Communications – Guidelines for the Brewing Industry](#) - Article 6.1, p. 9

<sup>3</sup> Keil U. et al. (1997). «The relation of alcohol intake to coronary heart disease and all-cause mortality in a beer drinking population». *Epidemiology*, 8(2): 150-156

<sup>4</sup> Sripanyakorn S, Jugdaohsingh R, Elliot H et al. (2004). "The silicon content of beer and its bioavailability in healthy volunteers". *British Journal of Nutrition*, 91(3):403-409

<sup>5</sup> Bamforth CW. (2002). "Nutritional aspects of beer – a review". *Nutrition Research*, 22:227-237.