

Newsletter

The Brewers of Europe



Bi - annually - November 2005 N° 18

European Parliament Bier Club

Tackling Alcohol-Related Harm: The Brewers put forward a Second Submission



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Summary

- **Message from Vice-President of the EP Bier Club, Gary Titley, MEP**
- **The Brewers of Europe's Second Submission in the context of the EU Strategy on Alcohol**
- **Canadian Report on the Responsible Marketing of Alcoholic Drinks**
- **Updates**
- **Contacts**

The Brewers of Europe's Second Submission in the context of the EU Strategy on Alcohol



In June 2001 the EU Health Ministers, under the Swedish presidency, invited the Commission to put forward proposals for a comprehensive Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm. A "First draft working paper" was therefore sent by the Commission to national health experts and the stakeholders including The Brewers of Europe for comments. Whilst 7 possible key areas for action were identified, each of the relevant sections was subject to revision. The second informal draft working paper submitted by the Commission focuses on 8 key areas: Drinking and driving; Under-age drinking; Commercial communication; Consumer information; Availability and price of alcohol; Protection of third parties; Early interventions in problem drinking; Exchange of information, data and research.

The Brewers of Europe shares the Commission's concern about alcohol-related harm, and supports all effective measures and initiatives to tackle the problem. However, in response to this second draft working paper we reiterate our strong view that restrictive measures aiming at a general reduction of per capita consumption will not reduce alcohol misuse. Since harm is caused by the unreasonable patterns of consumption of specific customers, the aim should be to target alcohol-related harm and its causes without compromising the right of moderate beer drinkers to enjoy drinking beer. Indeed, there is no evidence that restrictive measures such as a lower minimum purchase age, limited availability and pricing



Message from Vice-President of the EP Bier Club, Gary Titley, MEP

I am delighted that The Brewers of Europe are opening their doors on the occasion of the UK's Presidency of the European Union.

Celebrating Britain's diverse and delicious beers and foods is something I whole heartedly support. In the North West Region, where I was born and bred, we're known for enjoying good food (Lancashire Hot Pot, Cumberland sausages, Bury Black pudding and of course Uncle Joe's Mint Balls) all washed down with good ales (Thwaites, Hydes and Jennings to name a few).

But whilst we can all enjoy a beer we must be vigilant to the harm alcohol can have if it is not used in moderation. I am pleased therefore that The Brewers of Europe are continuing to take part in the consultation process on the EU strategy to tackle alcohol related harm.

I very much hope to see you at the Beer Club reception on 29 November. I look forward to raising a glass (or two) with you then!

Cheers,

Gary

Gary Titley MEP

policies have been effective: indeed, they may even have a negative effect on people's attitude to beer, and can lead to uncontrolled production and consumption of illegal products.

The Brewers of Europe supports the need for effective enforcement of legislation, but insists that this enforcement can only be effective in combination with public awareness schemes and educational messages. Rather than the introduction of stricter standardized measures, we believe that effective enforcement of existing legislation, comprehensive research, responsible service training and awareness programmes should form the cornerstone of any sensible, targeted approach to the problem.

We wish to emphasise that any initiative taken as a result of this second draft working paper should target alcohol misuse, be based on comprehensive evidence and full impact assessments, and take into account the cultural and societal diversity of Europe. The Brewers of Europe and its Members are strongly opposed to the abusive consumption of their products, and wish to continue to play an essential role in the identification and assessment of strategies aimed at tackling this problem, in order to be part of the solution.

Campaigns of the Brewing Sector

The European Brewing Sector has a proven record of initiating and supporting projects to tackle alcohol misuse, and plays a crucial role in the funding of successful strategies such as the BOB campaign. The sector supports all efforts aimed at improving server training schemes across Europe, as well as encouraging initiatives to reduce the likelihood of our products being misused, such as responsible promotions, better customer information and well-designed premises.

The Brewers of Europe will further encourage the development of training schemes to help those responsible for selling beer to address issues related to excessive beer consumption, disorderly behavior and prevention of sales to minors.

Canadean Report on the Responsible Marketing of Alcoholic Drinks



At the request of DG SANCO, The Brewers of Europe commissioned Canadean Limited to carry out a Report on the Responsible Marketing of Alcoholic Drinks in Europe, in June 2002, and have recently funded a second independent report. This report is a fact-based, European-wide review of the regulatory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms for commercial communications for alcoholic beverages in 30 countries. The Brewers of Europe trust that the Commission and the Member States have considered this study useful in the context of the

forthcoming Commission report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the Drinking of Alcohol and Young People.

The report observes that national self-regulatory rules relating to commercial communications for alcoholic drinks demonstrate a high degree of consistency. However, the diversity in cultural, commercial and legal traditions means that the mechanisms for applying self-regulatory standards are not identical in any two countries. These country-specific mechanisms must therefore be considered more appropriate than any single, harmonised method would be. As for compliance mechanisms, they remain uneven and there is clearly more work to be done in order to strengthen the self-regulatory systems in certain countries.

Throughout the industry, there is evidence of unprecedented awareness and activity: internal company codes and compliance systems complement the activities of Self-Regulatory Organisations and Social Aspects Organisations at national level. Furthermore, at EU level, drinks industry associations like The Brewers of Europe are supporting efforts to promote best practice, to improve sub-optimal national systems, and to encourage the setting up of effective self-regulatory systems in the minority of countries where there are none.



Contacts



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Updates



- On the occasion of the UK's presidency of the European Union, a UK Bier Club Reception is to be held at The Brewers of Europe House on 29 November 2005, from 18.00 till 20.30 hrs
- Following the success of the previous symposium, The Brewers of Europe is organising a 4th Beer & Health Symposium where an overview of the latest research done over the last two years on the proven and potential health benefits of moderate beer consumption will be presented. The event is scheduled to be held on 4 May 2006.
- If you are interested in becoming a member of the EP Bier Club, please send an e-mail to info@brewersofeurope.org



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