

Newsletter

The Brewers of Europe



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European Parliament Bier Club

Message from Finnish Member of the EP Bier Club, Alex Stubb, MEP



The upcoming Bier Club reception is bringing Finnish beers to Brussels on the occasion of Finland's Presidency of the European Union.

Finland has a long tradition of brewing quality beers. Finnish breweries are among the most modern breweries in Europe with a strong focus on environmentally favourable operating methods.

The brewing industry has increased the efficiency of its own internal workings in order to reduce environmental loading. This work has succeeded excellently compared with any European standards.

The Finnish bottle recycling system is one of the best in the world. The bottle return rate has been close to a hundred per cent for years. About 90 per cent of cans are recycled, too. This has a huge effect on the environmental impacts caused by the drinks industry.

European Commission will continue working on an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm. The problem of misuse concerns us all. All stakeholders together should find ways to reduce alcohol misuse and especially underage drinking.

However, it should not be forgotten that consumed in moderation, beer can be part of most enjoyable moments in life and also good for your health. I'm looking forward to seeing you over a glass of Finnish beer on November 29th!

Kippis!

Alex Stubb, MEP

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EU Strategy on Alcohol-Related Harm



EU policy on alcohol and health reached another landmark recently with the publication by the European Commission of a Communication on 24 October. The Health Council meeting on 30 November/1 December will consider the Communication, before the debate moves to the European Parliament in the New Year.

The Communication sets out an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm. The Commission has identified areas where the EU can offer such support, such as financing projects through the Public Health and Research Programmes, exchanging good practice on issues such as curbing under-age drinking, exploring cooperation on information campaigns or tackling drink-driving and other Community initiatives.

In particular, the Communication proposes an Alcohol and Health Forum of interested parties and sets out areas where industry can make a contribution, notably in the area of responsible advertising and marketing. The Commission has said it acknowledges the role of Member States in this policy area and does not intend to propose legislation at European level – a marked change from the situation earlier in the year.

The Secretary-General of The Brewers of Europe, Mr Rodolphe de Looz-Corswarem, commented:

“The brewing sector is involved in numerous initiatives designed to tackle alcohol misuse, in partnership with EU member state governments and other stakeholders.

“The identification and sharing of the widespread good practice that exists and continues to be developed in countries throughout Europe will help in the process of learning what can work and encouraging the adoption of tailored and targeted solutions in member states.

“We have a positive role to play as part of the solution to misuse. We look forward to working constructively with the European Commission, Member States and other partners in developing this process.

“However, we will support policies only if they are based on clear and objective evidence. We remain of the view that it is not practical to attempt a ‘one size fits all’ policy on alcohol for all of Europe. Given the widely divergent nature of cultural attitudes to alcoholic beverages across Europe, any legislative action in the future should remain the responsibility of Member State governments rather than the EU.”

The Brewers of Europe Oppose the Increase of Minimum Rates for Beer



The Brewers of Europe disagree with the Commission proposal to increase the minimum rates of excise duties for beer, contained in the revision of the Directive 92/84 EEC. The Commission proposal contains an increase by 31% to enter into force in 2008, and offering to some Member States transitional periods up to 2010.

This issue has been widely discussed within the Council in November 2006, however during the discussion different opposing views were presented, showing clearly the nonsense of the proposal.

It is the view of the brewing sector that the only result of the increase would be to disadvantage consumers and discriminate against a dynamic and innovative industry with heavy cultural, economic and social importance in many Member States. Furthermore, the direct financial impact will be far bigger than the one cent (€ 0.01) suggested by the Commission, because of the multiplier effect of VAT and the impact of trade margins, and consequently will penalise the consumer with higher prices. Economic circumstances and, in particular, typical individual income levels are different in each country and the real tax burden will be greater in some Member States than in others.

Instead of increasing the minimum rates, the real causes of cross-border trade distortions, such as excessive high rates in the northern countries should be solved first.

This file shall be discussed within the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee in the European Parliament from January 2007.

Finnish Bier Club Reception



To promote the activities of The Brewers of Europe, and to mark the current Finnish presidency of the EU, this event will be held on 29th November 2006 from 18.00 till 20.30 hrs.

The European Bier Club is an exclusive club – [membership is open only to Members of the European Parliament](#). The Bier Club hosts a reception twice each year at the Brewers House in Brussels, to mark the rotating presidency of the European Union.

The Finnish Bier Club event will be hosted by Alexander Stubb (an MEP from Finland and a member of the EPP-ED group), Ralf Hollmén (President of the Finnish Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry) and Ulf Spendrup (President of The Brewers of Europe).

Photographs of the event will appear on [the EP Bier Club website](#).

Updates



- The next Bier Club Reception will be held in spring 2007 and will celebrate the German Presidency of the European Union.
- If you are interested in becoming a member of the EP Bier Club, please send an e-mail to info@brewersofeurope.org

Contacts



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