

Bulgaria

Dr. Daniela Alexieva, April 2005

1. The country

In 1908 Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg Gotha became king of the Bulgarian people. Bulgaria took part in the Balkan War (1912) and fought together with Serbia and Greece for the freedom of Thrace and Macedonia. Bulgaria won that war, but in the subsequent war among the allies (1913) it was defeated by Romania, Turkey and by its earlier allies, who tore from her territories with a Bulgarian population.

The intervention of Bulgaria in World War I on the side of the Central Powers ended in a national catastrophe. The Neuilly Peace Treaty of 1919 imposed severe provisions on Bulgaria: it lost a great part of its lands.

In the early 1940s, Bulgaria led a policy in the interest of Germany and the Axis powers, but Bulgarian cavalry units did not fight on the Eastern Front. King Boris III supported the public pressure and did not allow the deportation of about 50,000 Bulgarian Jews.

After the end of World War II, Bulgaria was under the political and economic influence of the Soviet Union. In 1946 Bulgaria was proclaimed a Republic. The Queen-Mother, King Simeon and Princess Maria-Louisa left Bulgaria for Egypt via Turkey. The Bulgarian Communist Party came to power. The political parties outside the Fatherland Front were banned, the economy and banks were nationalised, the arable land was organised in cooperatives.

The date 10 November 1989 marked the beginning of the democratic changes in Bulgaria. A new Constitution was adopted (1991). Bulgaria chose the way of democratic development and market economy.

Bulgaria's foreign policy is oriented to cohesion with the European structures. The country has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1991. In 2004, Bulgaria joined NATO. In 1995, Bulgaria started the process of accession to the European Union. In 1999, it started the accession negotiations. On 25 April 2005, in Luxembourg was signed the Treaty of Accession of Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union.

Source: Website of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria
(<http://www.government.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0159&n=000002&g=>)

Population:	7,761,049 (31.12.2004)
Age structure:	0-14 years: 13.8% (male 551,383/female 521,828) 15-64 years: 69.0% (male 2,662,632/female 2,694,389) 65 years and over: 17.2% (male 553,595/female 777,222) (31.12.2004)
Median age:	total: 41.0 years male: 39.3 years female: 45.0 years (2004)
Population growth rate:	-0.52% (2004)

Birth rate: 9.00 births/1,000 population (2004)
 Death rate: 14.2 deaths/1,000 population (2004)
 Net migration rate: -4.3 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2005 est.)
 Sex ratio: at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female
 under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
 15-64 years: 0.99 male(s)/female
 65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female
 total population: 0.94 male(s)/female (2004)
 Infant mortality rate: total: 11.65 deaths/1,000 live births
 male: 13.16 deaths/1,000 live births
 female: 10.04 deaths/1,000 live births (2004)
 Life expectancy at birth: total population: 72.4 years
 male: 68.9 years
 female: 76.0 years (2002-2004)
 Total fertility rate: 1.29 children born/woman (2004)
 HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: less than 0.1% (2005)
 HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 586 (at 21.11.2005)
 HIV/AIDS - deaths: 100 (2001 est.)
 Ethnic groups: Bulgarian 83.9%, Turk 9.4%, Roma 4.7%, other 2% (including Russian, Armenian, Romanian, Macedonian, Greek, etc.) (2001 census)
 Religions: Christian Orthodox 82.6%, Muslim 12.2%, other Christian 1.2%, other 4% (2001 census)
 Languages: Bulgarian 84.5%, Turkish 9.6%, Roma 4.1%, other and unspecified 1.8% (2001 census)
 Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
 total population: 98.6%
 male: 99.1%
 female: 98.2% (2003 est.)

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 2004, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004
 Main Macro-Economic Indicators 2004, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004
 Current statistical data from National Statistical Institute, 2005
 CIA World Factbook
 Website of the National Statistical Institute (<http://www.nsi.bg/Population>)
 Ministry of Health (<http://www.hiv.bg/hivinfectionbg.htm>)

Economy

Bulgaria has experienced macroeconomic stability and strong growth since a major economic downturn in 1996 led to the fall of the then socialist government. As a result, the government became committed to economic reform and responsible fiscal planning. In 1997, macroeconomic stability was reinforced by the imposition of a fixed exchange rate of the lev against the German D-mark and the negotiation of an IMF standby agreement. Low inflation and steady progress on structural reforms improved the business environment; Bulgaria has averaged 4% growth since 2000 and has begun to attract significant amounts of foreign direct investment.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$61.63 billion (2004 est.)
 GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$8,200 (2004 est.)
 GDP - per capita (in milion lev): 38,008 (2004)
 GDP - real growth rate: 5.6 % (2004)
 GDP - composition by sector: agriculture: 9.4 %

	industry: 26.0 % services: 51.3 % (2004)
Labor force:	3.322 million (2004)
Labor force - by occupation:	agriculture 8.6 %, industry 33.7 %, services
57.6 % (2004)	
Unemployment rate:	12.0 % (2004)
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	4.0 % (2004)
Agriculture - products:	vegetables, fruits, tobacco, livestock, wine, wheat, barley, sunflowers, sugar beets
Industries:	electricity, gas and water; food, beverages and tobacco; machinery and equipment, base metals, chemical products, coke, refined petroleum
Industrial production growth rate:	3.6 % (2005)
Exports:	\$9.877 billion f.o.b. (2004)
Exports - commodities:	clothing, footwear, iron and steel, machinery and equipment, fuels
Imports:	\$13.260 billion f.o.b. (2004)
Imports - commodities:	machinery and equipment; metals and ores; chemicals and plastics; fuels, minerals, and raw materials
Currency:	lev
Currency code:	BGN
Exchange rates:	1.5751 lev per 1 US dollar (2004) 1.9558 lev per 1 Euro (2004)

note: on 5 July 1999, the lev was redenominated; the post-5 July 1999 lev is equal to 1,000 of the pre-5 July 1999 lev

Description of the Government.

Country name: conventional long form:	Republic of Bulgaria
conventional short form:	Bulgaria
Government type:	parliamentary democracy
Capital:	Sofia
Administrative divisions:	8 provinces (oblasti, singular - oblast); Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Dobrich, Gabrovo, Khaskovo, Kurdzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Shumen, Silistra, Sliven, Smolyan, Sofiya, Sofiya-Grad, Stara Zagora, Turgovishte, Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Vidin, Vratsa, Yambol
Independence:	3 March 1878 (as an autonomous principality within the Ottoman Empire); 22 September 1908 (complete independence from the Ottoman Empire)
National holiday:	Liberation Day, 3 March
New Constitution:	adopted 12 July 1991
Suffrage:	18 years of age; universal

President of state:	Georgi PARVANOV (since 22 January 2002); Vice President Angel MARIN (since 22 January 2002)
Head of government:	Prime Minister Sergei STANISHEV (since 16 August 2005); Deputy Prime Minister Ivaylo KALFIN (since 16 August 2005)
Cabinet:	Council of Ministers nominated by the prime minister and elected by the National Assembly
elections:	President and vice president elected on the same ticket by popular vote for five-year terms; election last held 11 and 18 November 2001 (next to be held NA 2006); chairman of the Council of Ministers (prime minister) nominated by the president and elected by the National Assembly; deputy prime ministers nominated by the prime minister and elected by the National Assembly
Legislative branch:	unicameral National Assembly or Narodno Sobranie (240 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)
elections:	last held 25 June 2005 (next to be held June 2009)
Judicial branch:	Supreme Administrative Court; Supreme Court of Cassation; Constitutional Court (12 justices appointed or elected for nine-year terms); Supreme Judicial Council (consists of the chairmen of the two Supreme Courts, the Chief Prosecutor, and 22 other members; responsible for appointing the justices, prosecutors, and investigating magistrates in the justice system; members of the Supreme Judicial Council elected for five-year terms, 11 elected by the National Assembly and 11 by bodies of the judiciary)
Flag description:	three equal horizontal bands of white (top), green, and red; note - the national emblem, formerly on the hoist side of the white stripe, has been removed

Box 1.1 Basic facts

Total area: 111 001.9 km² (2004)
Number of inhabitants: 7.761 millions (2004)
Population density: 69.9 inhabitants/km² (2004)
Capital city (name, population): Sofia, 1,164,749 (2004)
Official language(s): Bulgarian
GDP per capita: 2,548 USD (2003)

Sources: Statistical Yearbook 2004, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004
Main Macro-Economic Indicators 2004, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004
Current statistical data from National Statistical Institute, 2005

2. Alcohol consumption**Annual Average Consumption per capita**

These data are provided by the state statistics. Their use for momentary, as well as for comparative analysis should be accompanied by the explanation that from methodical point of view accessible information is not comparable within a longer historical period, since up to a certain moment it has been presented in a synthesized form (in 100 degrees pure alcohol), and subsequently - in natural parameters (in litres of the respective type of alcohol).

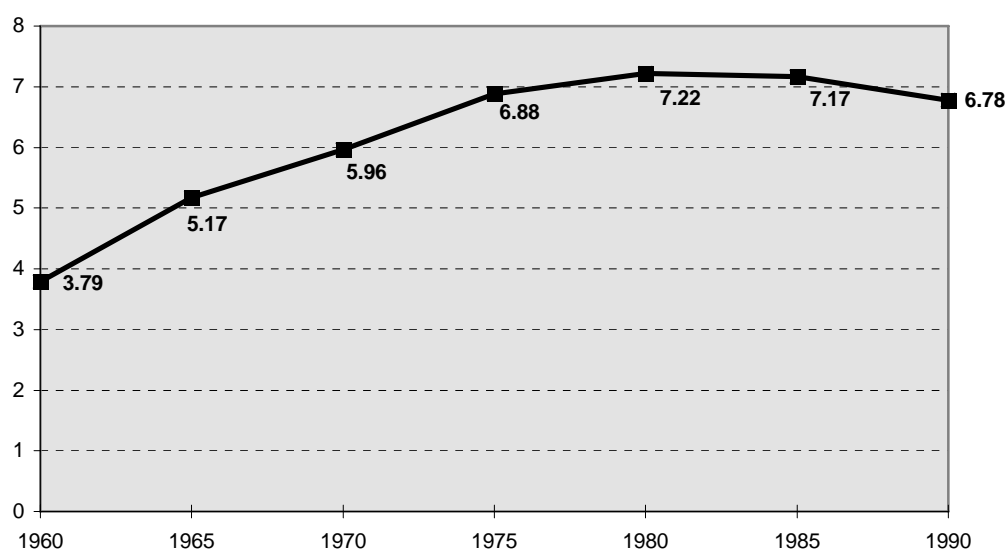
Nevertheless, these data are reliable enough for the requirements of a tentative analysis - if not to fix the quantitative parameters, at least to outline the main trends.

The development of the overall annual average alcohol consumption per capita in the period 1960 – 1990 is presented at *Figure 1* below. It is clearly seen that alcohol consumption grows steadily until the beginning of the '80s, and some stabilization with a trend of diminution comes afterwards.

Figure 1

**Overall Annual Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages per capita
during the Period 1960 - 1990 ***

(in litres of pure alcohol)



Sources: Tchudomir Merdjanov, *A Compromising Primacy*, University Publishing house "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, 1995, p. 559; Statistical Yearbooks of Central Statistical Office and National Statistical Institute.

* For each of the years depicted, there is an indication of the average number for its adjacent term, which comprises two preceding, and two subsequent years to the particular year (according to accessible data).

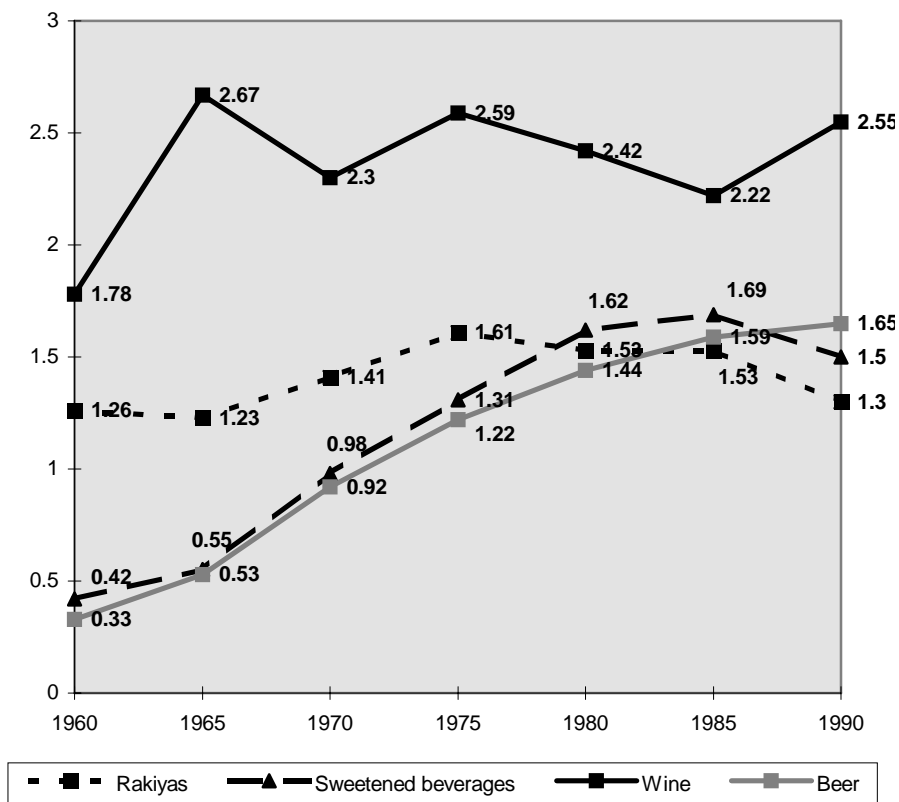
The different types of alcoholic beverages consumption have not changed in time in the same mode (see Figure 2). Practically four main trends may be noticed:

- ⇒ consumption of sweetened beverages (liqueur, martini etc.) has grown intensely until the middle of the '80s, and subsequently has decreased to 1.5 litres yearly per capita (as in the next three cases - reduced to 100 % alcohol);
- ⇒ in wine consumption there is a very intense initial growth (by nearly 50 % between 1960 and 1965), after which a relatively stable position of about 2.55 litres yearly per person is retained at certain slight fluctuations;
- ⇒ in beer consumption a very steady growth is noticeable in this 30-year period, and the increase in this case is comparatively the greatest - from 0.33 litres in 1960 up to 1.65 litres in 1990.
- ⇒ the most stable level of consumption is recorded in rakiyas (kind of domestic spirits) - 1.26 litres in 1960 / 1.3 litres in 1990.

Figure 2

**Annual Consumption of Different Types of Alcoholic Beverages
per capita during the Period 1960 - 1990**

(in litres of pure alcohol)



Sources: Tchudomir Merdjanov, A Compromising Primacy, University Publishing house "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, 1995, p. 559; Statistical yearbooks of Central Statistical Office and National Statistical Institute.

Due to the lack of comparable information, the trends mentioned above are valid for the period up to 1990 only. Nevertheless, the subsequent shift in the level of consumption during the '90s and the beginning of the new century may be tracked, even though in different, non-uniform metrical units - in litres of the respective alcoholic beverage (see Figure 3). If these data are compared to those viewed above (in Graph 13), the following conclusions may be drawn:

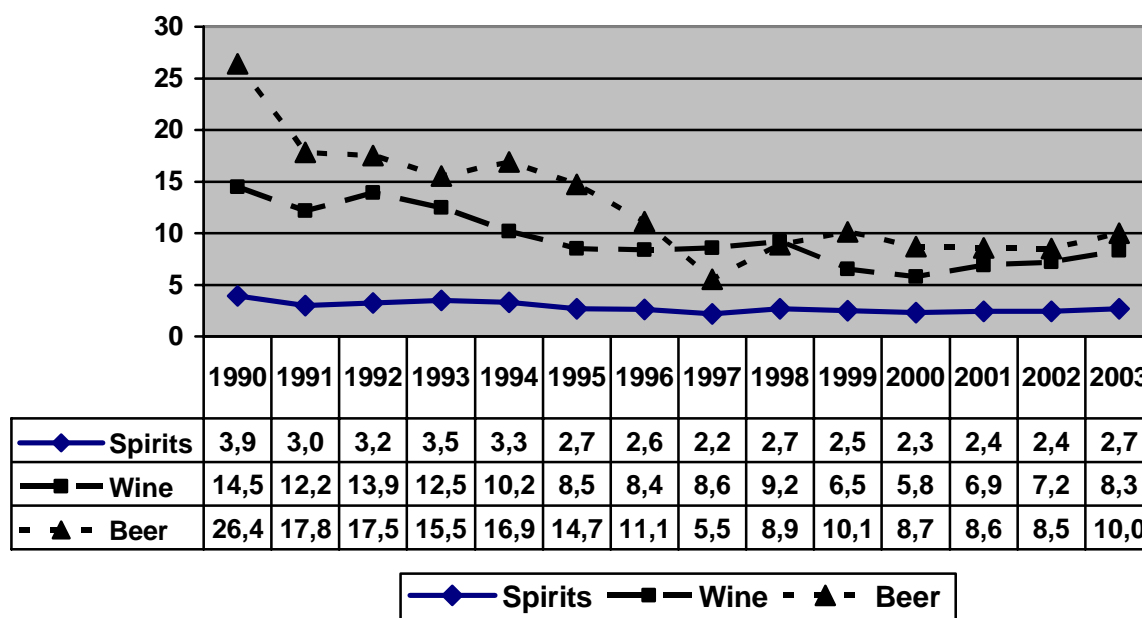
- ⇒ consumption of beer, which until the end of the '80s has been growing continuously, has recorded an evident fall from the beginning of the '90s, decreasing nearly threefold until 2003;
- ⇒ consumption of wine showed fluctuations around a stable level, but since the mid of 90's started an evident trend of diminution; in 2003 the level of consumption reached approximately twofold lower than in the beginning of 90's;
- ⇒ consumption of spirits continues to stay around a relatively fixed level.

Judging from the accessible data the total registered alcohol consumption in the '90s reveals a trend of relative diminution, but let us remind that observations during these years indicate a growth of unregistered production and import, therefore - of unregistered alcohol consumption as well.

Figure 3

Annual Consumption of Different Types of Alcoholic Beverages per capita during the Period 1990 - 1995

(in litres)



Sources: Statistical Yearbooks of National Statistical Institute.

Figures on unrecorded alcohol consumption by beverage categories

No reliable information from a survey is available, there is only anecdotal and indirect information on this area.

There was a relevant information from an interview with the head of the National Vinery and Wine Chamber Nikola Nikolov (We are European champions in drinking rakia, Tihomir Tonchev, 24 chasa, 28.01.2004): “The Bulgarian is European champion in drinking liquors; around 80 million litres of rakia were drunk last year. 30 million litres of concentrated alcohol were produced domestically. Part of the rakia, however, was offered illegally in the village pubs for 0,20-0,25 lev for 100 grams – as much as the price of one coffee.”

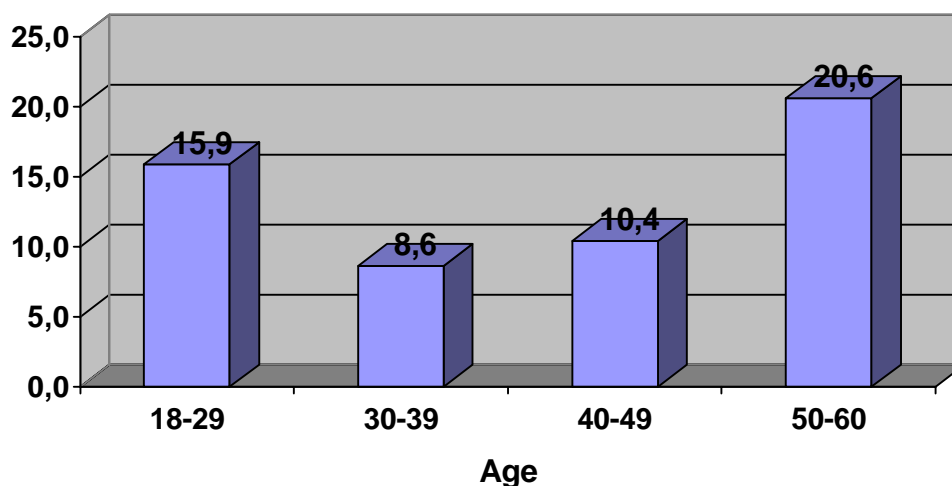
If the assessed total quantity of consumed spirits is approximately 10 litres per capita, and the registered consumption is around 2,5 litres per capita (see Figure 14), one could conclude that the unregistered consumption is approximately 75 % out of the whole consumption of spirits (rakiya) in Bulgaria.

Abstainers and consumption

Approximately 14 % out of all respondents in the frame of general population survey have responded that they have never drunk alcohol in their life. The respective percentage is higher in the lowest and highest age group covered by the study (see *Figure 4*).

Figure 4

Abstainers among different age groups among adult population



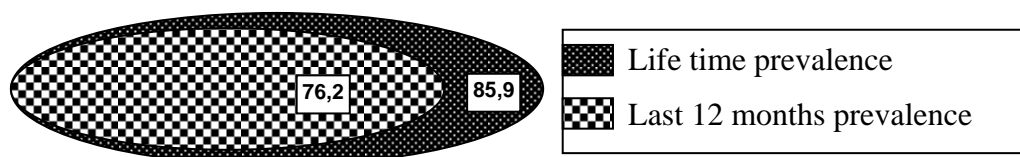
Source: National representative study among general population 18-60 years aged, 2005

There is difference also between men and women – abstainers are 5,5 % among men and 22,6 % among women. The major part of the respondents in Bulgaria (85,9 %) have drunk alcohol at least once in their life (see *Figure 5*)

Figure 5

Relative shares of these who have drunk alcohol in different periods

(in %)



Source: National representative study among general population 18-60 years aged, 2005

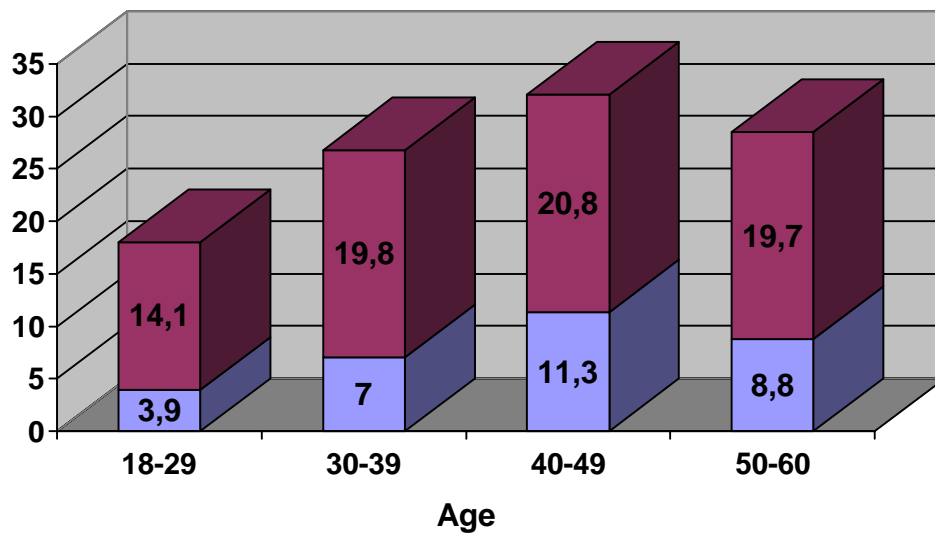
It is normal that these, who have drunk during last 12 months are less with about 10 points (76,2%).

Drinking frequencies

Approximately a fourth of the adult population (25,8 %) have drunk alcohol in average at least two times by week during the last year. Additionally 7,5 % have drunk alcohol 5 or more times per week during the last year. The consumption of alcohol is more frequent among the age group 40-49 (see *Figure 6*).

Figure 6

Frequency of alcohol consumption among different age groups in the adult population



Source: National representative study among general population 18-60 years aged, 2005

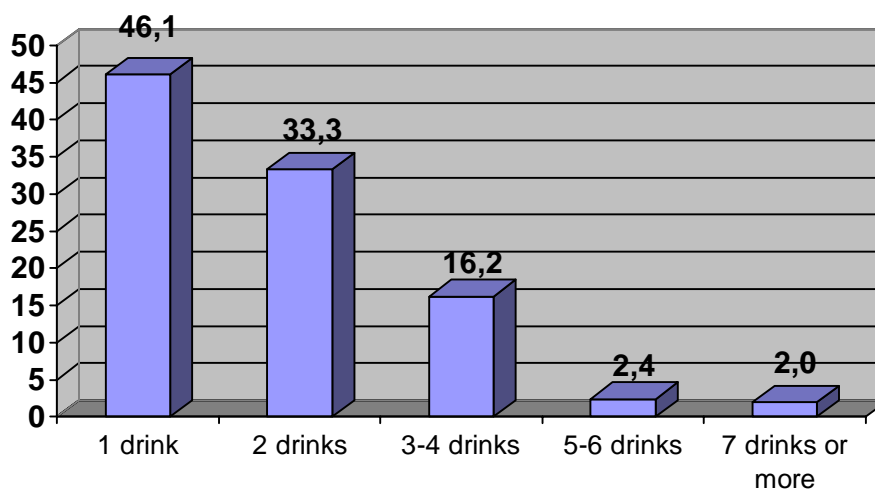
There are also differences between different sexes - 40,5 % among males have drunk alcohol at least two times in average by week during the last year, 13,0 % - 5 or more times per week. On the other hand 10,9 % among females have drunk alcohol at least two times in average by week during the last year, 1,9 % - 5 or more times per week.

Over half of the respondents, who have drunk during the last 12 months had daily use of more than one drink (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

DAILY AVERAGE QUANTITY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMED

(in % to those who have drunk)



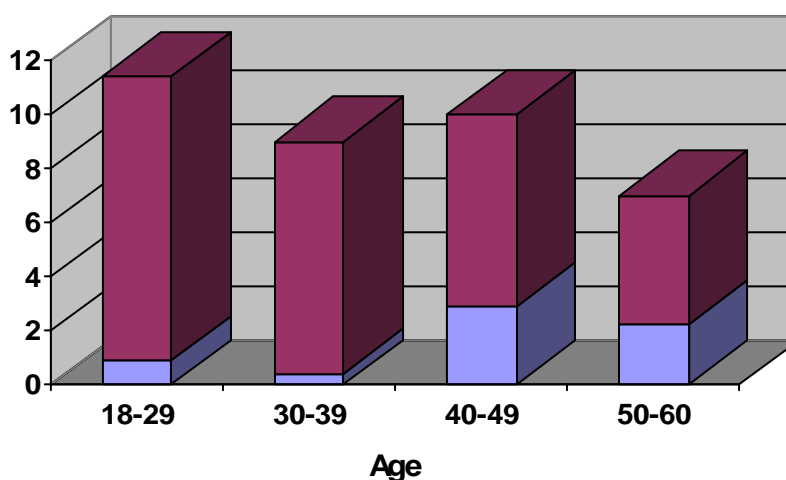
Source: National representative study among general population 18-60 years aged, 2005

Drinking frequencies by beverage type

There was a relevant information from an interview with the head of the National Vinery and Wine Chamber Nikola Nikolov (We are European champions in drinking rakia, Tihomir Tonchev, 24 chasa, 28.01.2004): “It is scary that the people massively drink over 150 grams of rakia a day, we need a programme to fight the hard alcohol use. Per capita of the population there are 10 litres of alcohol per year. In the accountings the children, old men and women were included. At the same time the consummation per year of wine was merely 36 million litres or under 4 litres per person.”

Binge drinking

9,5 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks in one occasion at least once per month; 1,5 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks every day or almost every day.



Sources: National Representative Research on Alcohol and Other Drugs Use in Bulgarian Schools (Grades 9-12), carried out by a team of the National Centre for Addictions and National Public Health Center by the methods of the European School Research Project on Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), May 2003, total number of interviewees: 1400 students of 75 classes at schools of general and vocational education throughout Bulgaria.

National Representative Study on Alcohol and Other Drugs Use in General Population in Bulgaria, carried out by a team of the National Centre for Addictions, Center for social strategies and initiatives and National Center for Studies of the Public Opinion, February-March 2005, total number of interviewees 1037 persons.

16,5 % out of the males have drunk 6 or more standard drinks in one occasion at least once per month; 3,1 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks every day or almost every day. 2,9 % out of the females have drunk 6 or more standard drinks in one occasion at least once per month; 0,2 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks every day or almost every day.

3. Alcohol production and trade

The idea of the paragraphs under this subheading is to give basic facts of the current status of alcohol production and trade in your country.

Domestic alcohol production, according to beverage categories

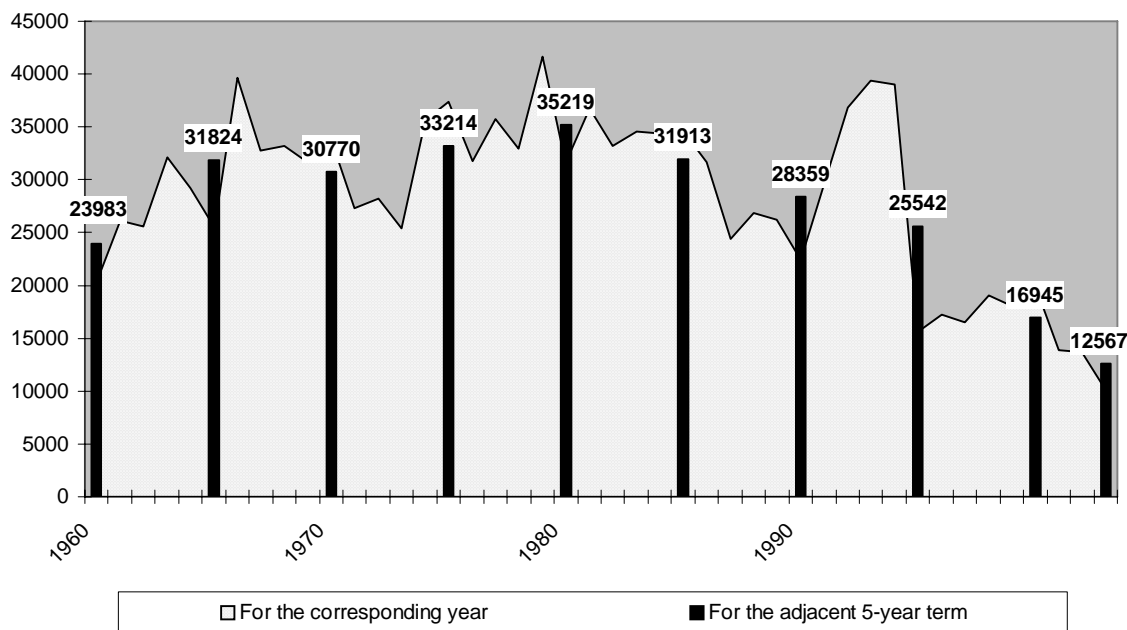
One of the most synthesized indicators of the importance of a particular product to the economy is *the state of its production*. In that sense the considerable growth of wine, rakiya and other alcoholic beverages production since 1960 until 1980 and its subsequent diminuation after that is very illustrative with respect to Bulgaria. There are some specificities, however, with the different types of beverages which are noticeable in that growth.

The registered production of rakiya during the period 1960 - 2003 is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Annual Registered Production of Rakiya during the Period 1960 - 2003 *

(in thousands of litres)



Source: Statistical Yearbooks of CSO and NSI.

* Mean values for the adjacent term are presented for each of the years, shown in bars; this term cover two preceding and two subsequent years to the particular year (according to accessible data).

In spite of the constant, almost yearly change in the direction of development (upward and downward), due to economic situation, social and climatic conditions, nevertheless the graph allows to note certain general trends and illustrative facts:

⇒ In general, during the period 1960 - 1980, the registered production of rakiya has increased almost by 1.5 times;

⇒ The decrease in the production after 1980 is very impressive. Just in a year it decreases more than twice - from 35,219,000 litres in 1980 to 12,567,000 litres in 2003, it means approximately threefold diminution of the production. This, however, affects only registered production. Most probably, unregistered production inversely increases within that period by the same proportions.

The situation is slightly different with *the registered production of grape and liqueur wine* (see *Figure 9*):

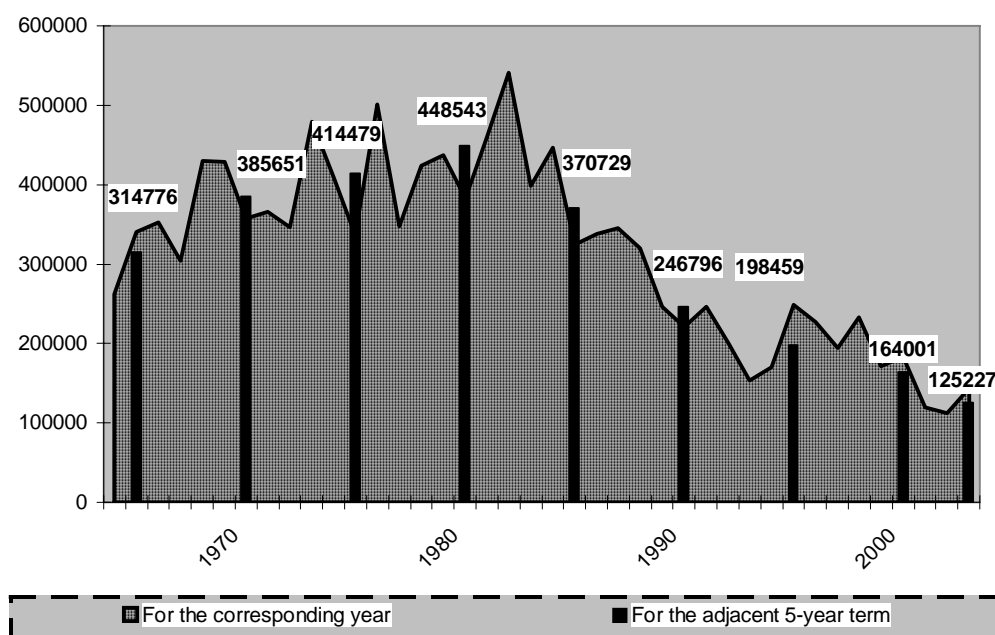
⇒ Wine production increases from 1964 to the beginning of the '80s, and thereafter a gradual decrease begins and still continues.

⇒ In 1964, the beginning of the period, production is 262,503,000 litres; in 1982, when the biggest annual output for the period is produced - 540,666,000 litres; in 1989, after a long decrease, the output is below the level of 1964 - 245,938,000 litres; in 2002, the lowest level is reached - 112,241,000 litres.

Figure 9

**Annual Registered Production of Wine (Grape and Liqueur)
during the Period 1964 - 2003 ***

(in thousands of litres)



Source: Statistical Yearbooks of CSO and NSI.

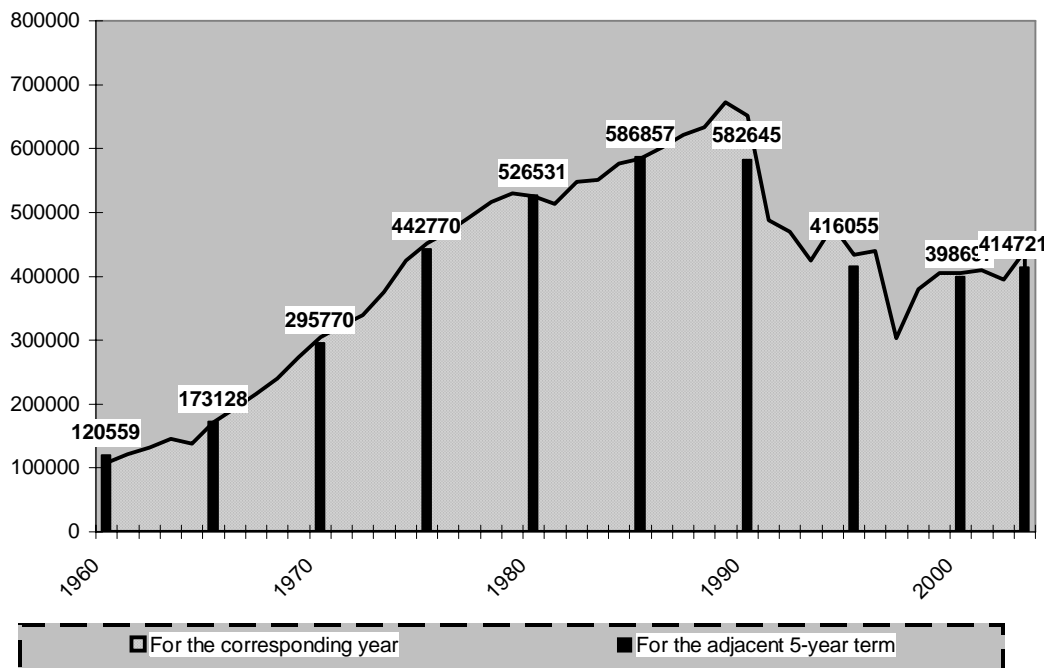
* Mean values for the adjacent term are presented for each of the years, shown in bars; this term cover two preceding and two subsequent years to the particular year (according to accessible data).

The Registered production of beer is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

**Annual Registered Production of Beer
during the Period 1960 – 2003 ***

(in thousands of litres)



Source: Statistical Yearbooks of CSO and NSI.

* Mean values for the adjacent term are presented for each of the years, shown in bars; this term cover two preceding and two subsequent years to the particular year (according to accessible data).

Several general trends could be observed in the mentioned period:

⇒ In respect of the total registered annual output, beer production in Bulgaria undergoes three stages:

1. An increase, lasting and rapid at the same time, up to the end of the 80s: in 1960 - 107,494,000 litres; in 1967 it is doubled - 216,863,000 litres; in 1971 it is three times as big - 322,416,000 litres; in 1974, four times as big - 424,192,000 litres; in 1979, five times as big - 530,253,000 litres; and in 1989, more than six times as big (the biggest annual output) - 671,966,000 litres.
2. A very abrupt decrease (by more than 160 million litres) in the course of a year - between 1990 and 1991, when the annual production is already about 488 million litres.
3. A relative stabilization since 1992 up to the end of the mentioned period within the range of 400 - 440 million litres.

⇒ In spite of the obvious decrease since the beginning of the '90s, the production at the end of the period (2003) is more than three times bigger than in the beginning of the period (1960).

Export of domestic alcohol products

Table 1

Annual Exports of Fresh Grape Wine (1993 - 2003)

Years	Quantity (thousands of tonnes)	Revenue (millions lev)	Exports Total Revenue (millions lev)
<i>1993</i>	119.0	2,213.5	102,877.4
<i>1994</i>	148.9	4,999.9	216,194.4
<i>1995</i>	199.7	8,590.0	359,663.6
<i>1996</i>	214.9	24,770.0	859,796.5
<i>1997</i>	200.1	209,933.8	8,281,386.5
<i>1998</i>	181.7	230,094.4	7,391,064.5
<i>1999</i>	97.8	151.9	7,302.6
<i>2000</i>	79.3	135.8	10,274.1
<i>2001</i>	80.9	133.4	11,176.1
<i>2002</i>	80.8	129.3	11,857.9
<i>2003</i>	85.0	122.9	13,041.9

Source: Statistical Yearbooks, National Statistical Institute, Statistical Publishing and Printing House of the NSI, Sofia1

Alcohol industry

Wine has been known in the land of Bulgaria since ancient times. Archaeology, folklore, and literature provide ample evidence that wine grapes have thrived in these lands ever since the late Stone Age: grape growing and wine making were vital to the way of life of the Thracians, Romans, Greeks, Slavs and Bulgarians.

Today, grape growing and wine making play a crucial role in the country's economy. The wine industry accounts for a considerable part of the gross domestic product. In addition, the industry contributes to the steady development of rural regions and infertile areas, maintains the ecological balance and encourages the appropriate and efficient use of the country's resources. Moreover, the industry preserves the regional diversity and the cultural traditions. Finally, grape growing and wine making secure steady employment and boost the country's credible image.

The importance of the wine and vine-growing industry for the country is evidenced by the fact that the first Wine Law enacted as early as 1879, shortly after the country's liberation, when the reinstated Bulgarian state was still in its infancy, and the First Bulgarian Constitution was not adopted yet. The Wine Law of 1978 played an important role in establishing the country as a world wine-growing authority. In the late 1970s Bulgaria ranked fourth in wine production in the world.

A new Wine and Spirits Act was passed in 1999. It is a modern legislative act designed to establish a system of economic, social and legal measures for the development and advancement of vine-growing and wine-making as well as for the establishment of the industry as a major agricultural industry in the country. The purpose of the 1999 Legal Act is to stimulate the production of quality

and regional wines by the efficient use of the country's resources and intensive advanced technology.

The vine-growing and wine-making are now, like in ancient times one of the structure-forming sectors of the Bulgarian agriculture and economy. Today the production of wine in Bulgaria is subject to modern legislation, fully harmonised with the modern enological practices worldwide. The Bulgarian wine-making companies are equipped with highly-qualified staffs combining in their daily work the modern technologies and the traditions of the Bulgarian winemakers of the ancient times.

Economic Importance of Alcohol

Even in the past the production of alcohol has gained prime importance to the country's economy in general, as well as to the private households of a considerable part of the population.

At the very end of the last century (in 1899) more than 366,000 tonnes of grape and about 200,000 tonnes of must were produced in Bulgaria - a significant amount of raw material for wine production in those times. In the same year, the private brewers produced an output of 3.5 million lev in value, and the distillers - an output of 1 million lev, at a total annual production in the private sector amounting to 75 million lev (*see Statistical Yearbook of the Bulgarian Kingdom - 1910, Central Directorate of Statistics, Sofia, 1911*). There is an elucidation that has to be added, and it is that alcoholic beverages are an important item in the turnover of other activities: hotel-keeping, restaurant-keeping, tourism, trade.

At the beginning of the present century Bulgarian alcoholic beverages start to win international recognition as well - e. g. at the Amsterdam World Exposition the Troyan Monastery is granted a Diploma for the presentation of its plum rakiya. The share of alcohol in international trade, and predominantly in exports gradually begins to increase.

In 1909, the first wine-producing cooperative society with a wine-cellar is established in Suhindol. Later in the years before World War II, nearly 450,000 private farmers, around 20,000 private enterprises, and more than 60 cooperative societies are engaged in wine and other alcoholic beverages production in Bulgaria (*see Encyclopaedia "Bulgaria", Volume 1, BAS edition, Sofia, 1982, p. 669*).

The production of alcoholic beverages is growing continuously in the subsequent decades. A variety of red and white table wine brands gain popularity in the national, as well as in the international market: Misket, Dimyat, Riesling, Rkatziteli, Cabernet, Mavrud, Gamza, and recently: Chardonnay, Traminer, Rikat, Muscat etc. Several brandy brands are well-sold in Bulgaria and abroad: Slantchev Briag, Pliska, Preslav, Akheloi, as well as are some plum and grape rakiya select brands (in the last years - Tzar Simeon, Rilski Manastir etc.)

4. Administrative structure of alcohol policy

Executive Agency on Vine and Wine (EAVW) is the official control body in vine and wine sector and is subordinated to Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The activity, the structure and the work organization of Agency is settled down with its Structure and Organization Regulation.

There are 122 permanent employees in the Agency. The Agency has 9 regional offices in the country (in Montana, Plovdiv, Rousse, Bourgas, Sliven, Blagoevgrad, Pleven, Haskovo and Varna) and 2 laboratories for physicochemical and microbiological analysis (in Sofia and Plovdiv).

Agency carries out control over the respect of the requirements of Wine and Spirit Drinks Act regarding vine plantations, grapes, designated for wine production, grape must, products from grapes and wine.

The National Vine and Wine Chamber (NVWC) is a non-governmental association of all professionals engaged in vine- growing and wine- making in Bulgaria. It is the only association of its kind in the country. It was established in February 2000. The mission of the Chamber is to defend and promote the professional interests of its members as well as to guarantee and promote the quality, authenticity, and origin of wines.

The NVWC and its 5 regional units (Plovdiv, Pleven, Sliven, Vama and Blagoevgrad) are non-governmental organizations summoned to promote further the development and competitiveness of Bulgarian vine and wine industry. For the first time, the government has delegated part of its powers to the non-governmental sector. The vine and wine chambers keep record of all vine growers and quality wine producers. They are also authorized to issue a certificate of origin to quality wines as well as a certificate of authenticity to grapes varieties. The chambers set up tasting committees to carry out the mandatory organoleptic analyses.

The NVWC defines the strategies for the development of vine- growing and wine- making and implements- the policies in the vine and wine industry. The associated community of Bulgarian vintners and wine makers is summoned to restore the reputation of Bulgarian wine by ensuring its competitiveness. By employing their expertise, emphasizing the advantages of the favourable geographical factors, and continuing the deep-rooted ancient tradition, the Bulgarian society of vintners demonstrates and confirms the strong assets of Bulgarian wines.

5. Licensing policy

Box 5.1 State control on production and foreign trade of alcohol						
State control						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Production	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Import	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Export	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
License is required						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Production	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Import	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Export	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Box 5.2 State control on wholesale and retail sale of alcohol						
State monopoly						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wholesale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Off-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
On-premise retail sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
License is required						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wholesale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Off-premise retail sale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-premise retail sale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Box 5.3 Selling or serving of alcohol in retail outlets				
	Off-licence (shops, kiosks, retail stores, supermarkets)		On-premise (bars, cafés, pubs, restaurants)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All retail outlets are allowed to sell/serve alcoholic beverages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A license is required, but all applicants get one	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A license is required, some applicants do not get one	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol is only sold/served in specific/regulated premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on alcohol production and major changes since 1995

- who is granting the licenses: *for wine – from the National Vine and Wine Chamber, for spirits – the Minister of Economic*

- are the licenses permanent or temporary: *Permanent for the wine, Temporary (5 years) for spirits.*

- do the licenses cost anything: *Yes, Fee*

- are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: *No*

Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on foreign trade of alcohol and major changes since 1995

- who is granting the licenses: *Executive Agency on Vine and Wine (EAVW)*

- are the licenses permanent or temporary: *Temporary*

- do the licenses cost anything: *No*

- are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: *No*

Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on alcohol wholesale and major changes since 1995

- who is granting the licenses: *The mayor of the city*

- are the licenses permanent or temporary: *Permanent*

- do the licenses cost anything: *Yes, Fee*

- are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: *No*

Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on off-premise retail sale of alcohol and major changes since 1995

- who is granting the licenses: *The mayor of the city*

- are the licenses permanent or temporary: *Permanent*

- do the licenses cost anything: *Yes, Fee*

- are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: *No*

Comments on the prevailing situation of the state control and licensing practices on on-premise retail sale of alcohol and major changes since 1995

- who is granting the licenses: *The mayor of the city*

- are the licenses permanent or temporary: *Permanent*

- do the licenses cost anything: *Yes, Fee*

- are there any specific rules or regulations included in the licenses: *No*

Are off-premise licenses for all or some alcoholic beverages granted only for special alcohol retail stores? Yes No

If yes, is this license for selling: distilled spirits, wine, beer.

If no, are off-premise licenses for alcoholic beverages granted for: supermarkets, ordinary grocery stores, kiosks, gasoline stations.

6. Restrictions of availability

It is written in the Law of Health (Prom. SG. 70/10 Aug 2004; in force from 1st of January 2005):

Article 54: The sale of alcohol beverages shall be prohibited:

1. to persons below 18 years of age; ...

The text in the previous People's Health Act (Promulgated State Gazette No. 88/06.11.1973) was:

Article 56: Prohibited shall be the sale of alcoholic beverages:

1. to minors and infant persons, and to persons in drunken state; ...

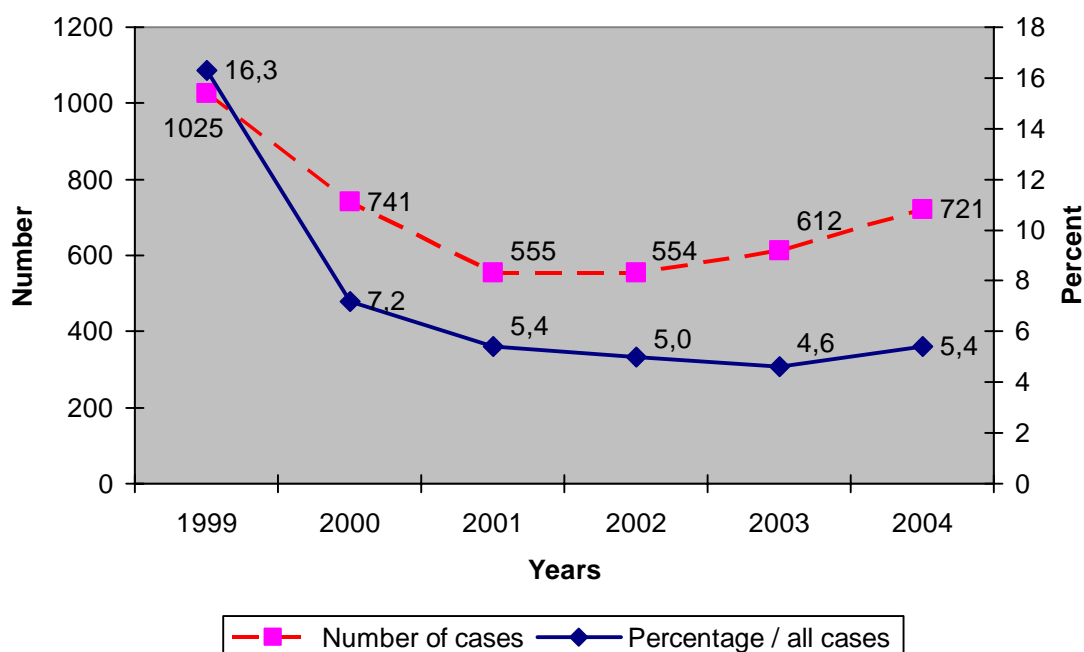
The legal status in 2005 imposes age limitation concerning buying, selling and drinking of alcoholic beverages, without any derogations concerning the age limits if accompanied by parents or a guardian, or concerning the lowest alcohol content for which the age limit is applied. Unfortunately indirect data from surveys shows that these age limits are not sufficiently well enforced, especially in the off-premise sale.

On the other hand the available data shows that the percentage of the alcohol abuse cases amongst all committed anti-social acts of minor and juvenile persons has substantially decreased between 1999 and 2001, and after that the level has been stabilised until 2004 (see Figure 11).

Box 6.1 Age limits for buying alcoholic beverages		
	Off-premise, take-away (stores, shops, supermarkets)	On-premise, drinking on the spot (cafes, pubs, restaurants)
Beer	18 years	18 years
Wine	18 years	18 years
Spirits	18 years	18 years

Figure 11

**REGISTERED ALCOHOL ABUSE AMONG MINOR AND JUVENILE PERSONS;
PERCENTAGE OF THE ALCOHOL ABUSE CASES AMONGST ALL COMMITTED
ANTI-SOCIAL ACTS OF MINOR AND JUVENILE PERSONS ***



Indicators	Years					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Cases of registered alcohol abuse among minor and juvenile persons	1 025	741	555	554	612	721
Percentage of the alcohol abuse cases amongst all committed anti-social acts of minor and juvenile persons	16,3	7,2	5,4	5,0	4,6	5,4

* An anti-social act is an offence which endangers public order, is in breach of the law or contravenes public morality and accepted norms of orderly behaviour. Upon the offenders of such acts are imposed preventive measures according the Law of Prevention of minor and juvenile delinquency.

Sources: National Statistical Institute
(<http://www.nsi.bg/Population>)http://www.nsi.bg/SocialActivities_e/Crime_e.htm

It is written in the Law of Health (Prom. SG. 70/10 Aug 2004; in force from 1st of January 2005):

Article 54: The sale of alcohol beverages shall be prohibited:

...

2. to persons in drunk state;
3. on the territory of the kindergartens, schools, hostels for students, medical establishments;
4. at sport events;
5. at public events, organised for children and students.

These texts define the general restrictions. The respective texts in the previous People's Health Act (Promulgated State Gazette No. 88/06.11.1973) were:

Article 56: Prohibited shall be the sale of alcoholic beverages:

1. ... and to persons in drunken state;
2. at manufacturing enterprises, pedagogical and cultural establishments, hostels, tourist chalets and snack bars, as well as in confectioneries and other retail outlets and places, determined by order of the Minister of Economy and Planning in coordination with the Minister of Interior;
3. at parties of young people, sport events and the like.

At present (end of 2005) in general the sale of alcoholic beverages off-premise could be done 24 hours without restrictions, including Sundays. The off-premise alcohol sales are forbidden during the day before and the day of election, as well as locally during the day of a problematic football match especially in the places near the stadium. There are no regulations regarding density of off-premise outlets. Restrictions are the same for alcohol retail shops, supermarkets, ordinary grocery stores, kiosks, retail stores etc. The restrictions are relatively well enforced.

Box 6.2 Sales restrictions on off-premise sale of alcohol						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hours of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Days of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Density of outlets is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Box 6.3 Sales restrictions on on-premise sale of alcohol						
	Beer		Wine		Spirits	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hours of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Days of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places of sale are restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Density of outlets is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

7. Alcohol taxation and prices

Excise duty is charged since April 1st 1994, when the Excise Act came into force (Promulgated in State Gazette No. 19/1994). In its very first provision it is clarified, that "Excise shall be taxable on goods and services of local manufacturers and from imports, which are subject to transactions in the territory of the country..."

A substantial part of the Act regulates the method of excise's determination (Article 4):

"1. For wine and spirit beverages - as a percentage of the producer's sales price, excluding the excise, and, correspondingly, at importation - as a percentage of the value of the goods for customs purposes, increased by the customs duties and fees due, but the amount of excise may not be lower than 10 lev per 1 alcoholic degree for wine, and 18 lev per 1 alcoholic degree for spirit beverages;
2. Wine and spirit beverages shall be put into production by the licensed manufacturers in prices including the excise paid; the amount of the excise due on the new production shall be determined in accordance with the Tariff of Excises, and a deduction of the excise paid shall not be made;
3. For alcohol-containing raw materials - as an absolute sum in lev for each alcoholic degree, and at production of spirit beverages from those raw materials excise shall be determined in accordance with item 1, as the excise paid on raw materials shall be deducted from the excise due on spirits produced, and that shall be done by procedure determined by the Minister of Finance.

...

7. For wine or rakiyas, produced by individuals, exceeding the quantities under Article 2, item 3 - as an absolute sum in lev for each litre of wine produced and each alcoholic degree of rakiya".

Since January 1999 Bulgaria has amended its excise-duty arrangements substantially as part of the tax reform. All efforts should have been focused on a well-structured pre-accession strategy in order to continue with harmonisation with EU in this field.

In December 2001, Bulgaria amended its law on excise duties, bringing it more into line with the body of EU law in this area. In particular, it harmonised the scope of application of excise duties to beer.

In January 2003 amendments to the law on excise duties introduced definitions of intermediate products, wine and fermented products other than wine and beer. The basis for the calculation of excise duty levied on intermediate products and the rate of duty applied to those products has been established in line with the Community acquis. Bulgaria has also reduced disparities with Community minimum rates by increasing the rates of excise duty on ethyl alcohol. These rates needed to be gradually raised further until they reach the minimum levels required by the Community acquis.

The record for 2004 shows that extensive transposition is still required. Rates are still well below the EU minimum for a number of products including beer and spirits. The rates applied to these products must continue to be gradually raised until they reach the minimum levels required by the Community acquis. Bulgaria also urgently needed to prepare the transposition and implementation of the acquis on tax warehouses and duty suspension arrangements.

On September 20, 2005, Parliament approved the first reading of a new Excise Duty Bill, opening the way to major changes to taxation policy in this field in line with Bulgaria's accession to the European Union. Alcohol and alcoholic drinks, energy products and tobacco products may be kept

only in excise warehouses, according to the bill. Manufacturers of goods subject to excise duties must have licensed excise warehouses. Importers of such goods may either have warehouses of their own choice licensed, or sell the goods straight away and pay the excise duty.

The law will bring excise taxation fully in line with EU requirements. It is based on the modern practice of excise warehouses. The bill stipulates the terms and procedures for licensing excise warehouses, lays down the general principles of excise taxation, regulates the types of excisable goods, and harmonises the definitions of goods subject to excises. The principle of deferred payment is introduced. It provides that while the goods are held in excise warehouses, no excise duty is payable. This duty becomes payable at the time they leave the warehouses.

Sources: Momtchil Vassilev, Alcohol consumption in Bulgaria – state, trends, problems (National Report), Sofia, July 1997

European commission (<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/e10101.htm>)

Box 7.1 Excise duty rates for alcoholic beverages to be delivered by the coordinators of the BtG country reports task force.

TARIFF OF EXCISES

Goods and services	Actual rate of excise	Former rate of excise *
I. Goods		
- Beer - all types	1.50 lev (0.767 E) per hl/plato	15 %
- Wine - all types	0,00 lev per hectolitre	22 %
- Intermediate products	90,00 lev (46.01 E) per hectoliter	-
- Spirit beverages, including rakiyas, brandy, liqueurs, vodkas, gin, rum, whisky, cognac, etc.	750.00 lev (383.46 E) per hectoliter	50 %
- Alcohol-containing raw materials	0.02 lev (0.01 E) for 1 alc. degree	10 lev for 1 alc. degree

* With respect to the *Excise Act (Promulgated in State Gazette No. 19/1994)*

Box 7.2 Taxes on alcoholic beverages in 100 percent alcohol and VAT by beverage categories to be delivered by the coordinators of the BtG country reports task force.

Value added tax is charged since April 1st 1994, when the Value Added Tax Act, passed in October 1993, came into force (State Gazette, No. 90/22.10.1993). This Act regulates taxation of transactions in goods and services, which perform economic activity in the country's territory.

When the Act was passed for the first time (1994), its Article 18 read: "The tax under this Act shall be 18 per cent". That was true until the middle of 1996, when amendments in the Act were made, and the tax became 22 percent (State Gazette, No. 56/1996); since 1998 the tax became 20 percent (State Gazette, No. 153/23.12.1998).

The precise amount of tax is determined by charging the tax rate on the value of the transaction, and at importation - on the sum of the value of the goods for customs purposes, the customs and excise duties, and the import fees. At retail sales in the shopping network the tax is included in the announced price. Practically, that means the tax is payable by the customer, in our case - by the liquor consumer.

Box 7.3 Price of alcoholic beverages		
Off-license (i.e. when purchased in an average shop, or supermarket, NOT on-premise in a restaurant or bar)	Usual quantity (e.g. 1 litre, 0.5 litres)	Price (local currency)
Average locally produced or most consumed beer	1 litre	0.93 lev
Average and most consumed table wine	1 litre	1.61 lev
Average locally produced or most consumed spirits	1 litre	4.67 lev
Average non-alcoholic soft drink (e.g. coca-cola, lemonade)	1 litre	0.45 lev

Source: National Statistical Institute, Average prices and quantities main foods purchased on the average by the household in 2004, computed on the basis of the household budget survey (http://www.nsi.bg/BudgetHome_e/BudgetHome_e.htm)

8. Alcohol advertising and sponsorship

Box 8.1 Restrictions on advertising and sponsorship*				
	Complete legal ban	Partial legal restriction	Voluntary agreement	No restrictions
National TV	S	B, W		
Cable TV	S	B, W		
National radio	S	B, W		
Local radio	S	B, W		
Printed newspapers/magazines	S	B, W		
Bill boards	S	B, W		
Internet	S	B, W		
Points of sale	S	B, W		
Cinema	S	B, W		

* Information on the extent to which alcohol advertising is regulated in different media is presented by signs B (BEER), W (WINE) and S (SPIRITS) for each type of media.

It is written in Article 55 of the new Law of Health (Prom. SG. 70/10 Aug 2004, amend. SG. 46/3 Jun 2005, amend. SG. 76/20 Sep 2005; In force from 1st of January 2005) that:

- (1) The direct advertising of spirit beverages shall be prohibited.
- (2) The indirect advertisement of spirit beverages and the advertisement of wine and beer cannot:

1. be directed to persons below 18 years of age, as well as be transmitted in programmes or published in printed publications, designated for them;
 2. use persons below 18 years of age as participants;
 3. connect the use of alcohol beverages with sport or physical achievements or with driving of vehicles;
 4. contain claims about usefulness for health, social or sexual well-being or present the abstention or the temperance in negative aspect.
- (4) The indirect advertisement of spirit beverages cannot be transmitted in radio and television programmes before 22.00 hours.

Article 80 in the Radio and Television Act (Promulgated State Gazette No. 138/24.11.1998) contains the following texts concerning advertising and sponsorship:

Article 80 ... (3) Advertising for alcoholic beverages of all varieties shall conform to the following requirements:

1. it shall not be addressed to infants and minors or inserted in broadcasts intended for them;
2. (Amended, SG No. 79/2000) it shall not use infants and minors as performers and, in particular, depict infants and minors consuming such beverages;
3. (Amended, SG No. 79/2000) the content of advertising shall not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced sporting and physical performance or to driving of motor vehicles;
4. it shall not claim that alcoholic beverages have therapeutic qualities, or that they are a stimulant, a sedative, or a means of resolving personal problems;
5. (Amended, SG No. 79/2000) it shall not encourage immoderate consumption of alcoholic beverages or present abstinence or moderation in a negative light;
6. it shall not imply that high alcoholic content contributes to the positive quality of alcoholic beverages;
7. (New, SG No. 79/2000) it shall not create the impression that the consumption of alcohol contributes towards social or sexual success.

...

Article 90 ... (2) Broadcasts may not be sponsored by persons whose principal activity is the manufacture of goods and [the provision of] services the advertising of which is prohibited.

9. Restrictions on alcohol consumption in specific situations

Box 9.1 Drink driving legislation, WHO Alcohol Policy Questionnaire (page 14).

The actually being in force Traffic Law (Prom. SG. 20/5 Mar 1999, last amend. SG. 115/30 Dec 2004) defines the obligation of the driver with respect to drinking:

Art. 5. ... (2) The driver of the vehicle shall be obliged:

...

3. not to drive road vehicle after consumption of alcohol with concentration of the alcohol in the blood over 0.5 per thousand or under the influence of anaesthetic substance.

Until 1996, the Road Traffic Act (Promulgated in State Gazette, No. 53 of July 6th, 1973), provided as follows:

"The driver of a road vehicle shall be prohibited:

...From driving a road vehicle after the consumption of alcohol or other strong opiate, before its effect is over, but not earlier than eight hours from its consumption" (Article 33, Paragraph 2).

A specification of the admissible alcohol consumption before driving is introduced with the amendment of the Act (State Gazette, No. 45/1996):

"The driver of a road vehicle shall be prohibited:

...From driving a road vehicle after alcohol consumption at an alcohol concentration of over 0.5/1000 in blood, or if is under the effect of another opiate" (Article 33, Paragraph 2).

"To hand over the driving of the vehicle to persons, to whom the respective driving licence has not been consigned, or who after alcohol consumption have an alcohol concentration of over 0.5/1000 in blood, or are under the effect of another opiate" (Article 33, Paragraph 3).

The now existing definition (as it is quoted above) has been introduced in 2002 (Promulgated in State Gazette, No. 43, 2002)

In this part of the Act is marked the borderline between the allowed and the prohibited regarding drinking and driving. Next texts define the sanctions for such illegal acts:

Art. 174. (1) Punished by depriving from the right of driving of motor vehicle, tram or self propelled machine for a period of 1 year and a fine of 100 to 300 lev shall be who drives a vehicle with alcohol concentration in the blood over 0.5 per thousand to 1.2 including.

(2) When the violation under para 1 is repeated the penalty shall be depriving from the right of driving motor vehicle, tram or self propelled machine for a period of 6 months to 2 years and the fine of 200 to 500.

(Traffic Law, Prom. SG. 20/5 Mar 1999, last amend. SG. 115/30 Dec 2004)

The previous texts concerning sanctions were part of the Criminal Code (State Gazette, No. 50/1995), where the sanctions for such illegal acts were defined as follows:

"One who drives a motor vehicle with an alcohol concentration of over 1.2/1000 in blood, ascertained by the established procedure, is punishable by imprisonment up to a year" (Article 343b, Paragraph 1), and:

"One who drives a motor vehicle with an alcohol concentration of over 0.5/1000 in blood, ascertained by the established procedure, after the same person's conviction by a sentence that has come into force for the act under Paragraph 1, is punishable by imprisonment up to two years, and by penalty from 5,000 up to 30,000 lev" (Article 343b, Paragraph 2).

Box 9.2 Restrictions on alcohol consumption in different public domains. WHO Alcohol Policy Questionnaire (page 13)

It is written in the Law of Health (Prom. SG. 70/10 Aug 2004; in force from 1st of January 2005):

Article 54: The sale of alcohol beverages shall be prohibited:

...

3. on the territory of the kindergartens, schools, hostels for students, medical establishments;
4. at sport events;
5. at public events, organised for children and students.

10. Education and information

The most developed programmes regarding alcohol consumption (information and education) are implemented in the educational system. As it was mentioned above this activity is combined with drug and tobacco issues. The main message of these preventive approaches is targeted to the students. The message contains the idea of negative consequences of alcohol consumption. These programmes are financed usually by the state budget. Open society foundation is giving some contribution.

Another important education activity is the training of primary health care professionals in early detection and early intervention of hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption. A special project supported by the Swiss Embassy in Sofia has been carried out 1998 / 1999. The new curriculum for GP's includes this topic since 1999.

11. Public opinion

Risk assessment of drug use

Two tendencies are observed in general population's beliefs as concerns the risk of use of psychoactive substances.

The first one is that upon situational use of some psychoactive substances, such as tobacco and alcohol, there is no risk and it does not harm or causes physical or other damage to people. 27.5 % of interviewees consider smoking cigarettes from time to time not risky, 42.0 % think that drinking from time to time belongs to the same category. According to the results from the study among general population the alcohol consumption "from time to time" do not represent serious risk for health – 85.8 % of interviewees have determined such risk as either non-existent, or moderate.

Smoking cigarettes regularly and drinking alcohol regularly are considered as a great risk for health by respectively 70.8 % and 69.9 % of the respondents. In fact, the regular use of all known drug substances has been determined as a serious risk, although according to answers, the alcohol consumption is relatively the less risky activity in this group.

Apart from the above ranking, the difference in allowance, permissive attitude towards different substances shows, that the greatest difference between assessments of risk upon incident and regular use (i.e. the “maybe but a little” principle) is observed upon cigarettes and mostly alcohol, it is less as concerns cannabis, and the least (i.e. the “I must not even a little” principle) as concerns heroin. A number of researches conducted with students in other Bulgarian cities/towns registered quite similar results, so they can be taken as an establishing tendency.

Attitude towards alcohol consumption

The predominant attitude towards use of drugs among general population is categorically negative. 87.3 % of all interviewed express such attitude. In fact, only 2.3 % of the respondents express a tolerant attitude towards this phenomenon.

As far as the predominant negation of drugs among adults is to a great extent something expected and well known, their attitude towards tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption is a matter of interest. Answers, obtained by the research, provide sufficient grounds for a conclusion, that public opinion is far more tolerant towards tobacco smoking and mostly towards alcohol. The generalized attitude in aggregate to the latter tends to be positive – about 54 % out of the respondents are mostly tolerant towards the alcohol consumption, probably without taking into account the problematic aspect of this phenomenon.

Sources: National Representative Study on Alcohol and Other Drugs Use in General Population in Bulgaria, carried out by a team of the National Centre for Addictions, Center for social strategies and initiatives and National Center for Studies of the Public Opinion, February-March 2005.

National Representative Sociological Research “Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Bulgarian Schools (Grades 9-12)”, carried out by a team of the National Centre for Addictions and National Public Health Center by the methods of the European School Research Project on Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), May 2003.

12. NGO's

No data about NGOs working especially in the field of alcohol related problems is available.

13. Summary

The overall annual average alcohol consumption per capita in the period 1960 – 1990 grows steadily until the beginning of the '80s, and some stabilization with a trend of diminution comes afterwards.

Practically four main trends may be noticed: consumption of sweetened beverages (liqueur, martini etc.) has grown intensely until the middle of the '80s, and subsequently has decreased; in wine consumption there is a very intense initial growth, after which a relatively stable position of about 2.55 litres yearly per person is retained at certain slight fluctuations, but since the mid of 90's started an evident trend of diminution; in beer consumption a very steady growth is noticeable in this 30-year period and an evident fall came from the beginning of the '90s, decreasing nearly threefold until 2003; the most stable level of consumption is recorded in rakiyas (kind of domestic spirits).

Judging from the accessible data the total registered alcohol consumption in the '90s reveals a trend of relative diminution, but let us remind that observations during these years indicate a growth of unregistered production and import, therefore - of unregistered alcohol consumption as well.

Approximately 14 % out of the adult population have responded that they have never drunk alcohol in their life. 9,5 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks in one occasion at least once per month; 1,5 % have drunk 6 or more standard drinks every day or almost every day.

In general, during the period 1960 - 1980, *the registered production of rakiya has increased almost by 1.5 times*; the decrease in the production after 1980 is very impressive. Just in a year it decreases more than twice - from 35,219,000 litres in 1980 to 12,567,000 litres in 2003, it means approximately threefold diminution of the production. This, however, affects only registered production. Most probably, unregistered production inversely increases within that period by the same proportions.

Wine production increases from 1964 to the beginning of the '80s, and thereafter a gradual decrease begins and still continues. In 1964, the beginning of the period, production is 262,503,000 litres; in 1982, when the biggest annual output for the period is produced - 540,666,000 litres; in 1989, after a long decrease, the output is below the level of 1964 - 245,938,000 litres; in 2002, the lowest level is reached - 112,241,000 litres.

Executive Agency on Vine and Wine (EAVW) is the official control body in vine and wine sector and is subordinated to Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The National Vine and Wine Chamber (NVWC) is a non-governmental association of all professionals engaged in vine- growing and wine- making in Bulgaria. It is the only association of its kind in the country. It was established in February 2000. The mission of the Chamber is to defend and promote the professional interests of its members as well as to guarantee and promote the quality, authenticity, and origin of wines.

Two tendencies are observed in general population's beliefs as concerns the risk of use of psychoactive substances.

The first one is that upon situational use of some psychoactive substances, such as tobacco and alcohol, there is no risk and it does not harm or causes physical or other damage to people. 27.5 % of interviewees consider smoking cigarettes from time to time not risky, 42.0 % think that drinking from time to time belongs to the same category. According to the results from the study among general population the alcohol consumption "from time to time" do not represent serious risk for health – 85.8 % of interviewees have determined such risk as either non-existent, or moderate.

Smoking cigarettes regularly and drinking alcohol regularly are considered as a great risk for health by respectively 70.8 % and 69.9 % of the respondents. In fact, the regular use of all known drug substances has been determined as a serious risk, although according to answers, the alcohol consumption is relatively the less risky activity in this group.

Apart from the above ranking, the difference in allowance, permissive attitude towards different substances shows, that the greatest difference between assessments of risk upon incident and regular use (i.e. the "maybe but a little" principle) is observed upon cigarettes and mostly alcohol, it is less as concerns cannabis, and the least (i.e. the "I must not even a little" principle) as concerns heroin. A number of researches conducted with students in other Bulgarian cities/towns registered quite similar results, so they can be taken as an establishing tendency.

The predominant attitude towards use of drugs among general population is categorically negative. 87.3 % of all interviewed express such attitude. In fact, only 2.3 % of the respondents express a tolerant attitude towards this phenomenon.

As far as the predominant negation of drugs among adults is to a great extent something expected and well known, their attitude towards tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption is a matter of interest. Answers, obtained by the research, provide sufficient grounds for a conclusion, that public opinion is far more tolerant towards tobacco smoking and mostly towards alcohol. The generalized attitude in aggregate to the latter tends to be positive – about 54 % out of the respondents are mostly tolerant towards the alcohol consumption, probably without taking into account the problematic aspect of this phenomenon.