

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **FORMULA ONE PUTS HEINEKEN IN THE DRIVING SEAT**

### **F1 glorifies new sponsorship deal with drinks company**

**40** public health and civil society organisations from around the world are calling for an end to alcohol sponsorship in F1.

Heineken recently launched their new sponsorship agreements with F1, a five-year deal estimated to be worth \$150 m. With this new deal, Heineken will place themselves as one of the main sponsors of the sport, with both trackside billboards, branded name of the events and other promotional activities. Alcohol brands are now dominating sponsorships in F1, linking a popular motor sport to a significant cause of avoidable physical, mental and social harm and more specifically one of the major killers on our roads, drink driving.

Mariann Skar, Secretary General in the European Alcohol Policy Alliance, says:

“F1 should ask themselves if they want to be a motorsport or an alcohol brand event? When monitoring F1 in Monaco Grand Prix 2015, we found 11 references to alcohol brands per minute, averaging one reference every five seconds. How will it be when Heineken comes in as main sponsor in addition to the others? If both the sport and the drinks producers want to be seen as responsible industries, they should stop this deal and move away from alcohol sponsorship in F1”.

Drink driving is one of the key killer on the road alongside speeding. The United Nations’ new Sustainable Development Goals aims to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents in their target 3.6.

The principles not to link alcohol brands and driving are clearly established in both the EU regulation for advertising (Audio-Visual Media Services Directive) and in the drinks industry’s own codes.

It is surprising that both F1 management and Heineken chose to interpret their sponsorship practice as something other than advertising.

We are, therefore, asking for stronger legislation, both from the European Commission and from individual Member States, who should follow France’s example of banning alcohol sponsorship of sport events.

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**The European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare)** is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations with 60 member organisations across 25 European countries advocating prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm in Europe. Member organisations are involved in advocacy and research, as well as in the provision of information and training on alcohol issues and the service for people whose lives are affected by alcohol problems.

### Facts and figures about alcohol

- Alcohol is the 3<sup>rd</sup> top risk factor in Europe for ill health and NCDs such as cancer and cardiovascular disease <sup>1</sup>
- Alcohol is a toxic substance in terms of its direct and indirect effects on a wide range of body organs and a cause of some 60 diseases. Taking all diseases and injuries at global level into account, the negative health impact of alcohol consumption is 31.6 times higher than benefit
- 12 million people in the EU are dependent on alcohol<sup>2</sup>
- Around 9 million children in the EU are living with one parent addicted to alcohol<sup>3</sup>
- **1 of 4 road fatalities in EU are due to alcohol; in 2010 nearly 31,000 Europeans were killed on the roads of which 25% were related to alcohol<sup>4</sup>**
- Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can lead to birth defects and developmental disorders. It may cause the unborn child physical, behavioural and learning disabilities
- The social cost attributable to alcohol is 155,8 billion Euro yearly (was third is now first bullet point)<sup>5</sup>
- Alcohol is the leading risk for ill-health and premature death for the core of the working age population (25-59 year) (was first is now second bullet point)<sup>6</sup>
- Alcohol is responsible 1 in 7 male deaths and 1 in 13 female deaths in the group aged 15–64 years, resulting in approximately 120 000 premature deaths<sup>7</sup>

**Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship in FormulaOne – A Dangerous Cocktail**, please see [http://www.eurocare.org/resources/policy\\_issues/marketing](http://www.eurocare.org/resources/policy_issues/marketing)

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation (2014) *Global status report on alcohol and health*

<sup>2</sup> Rhem J, Shield D (2012) *Interventions for alcohol dependence in Europe: a missed opportunity to improve public health*

<sup>3</sup> Anderson P, Baumberg (2006) *Alcohol in Europe: a public health perspective*

<sup>4</sup> European Transport Safety Council (2011) 5<sup>th</sup> Road Safety PIN Report

<sup>5</sup> Rehm, J. et al (2012) *Interventions for alcohol dependence in Europe: A missed opportunity to improve public health*

<sup>6</sup> Scientific Opinion of the Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (2011) *Alcohol, Work and Productivity*

<sup>7</sup> WHO (2013) *Status report on alcohol and health in 35 European countries*

