

We are still number one but hopefully not for long – Europe’s alcohol consumption

WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018

More than 3 million people died as a result of harmful use of alcohol in 2016, according to a report released by the World Health Organization (WHO) today. This represents 1 in 20 deaths. More than three quarters of these deaths were among men. Overall, the harmful use of alcohol causes more than 5% of the global disease burden.

Europe continues to have the highest per capita consumption in the world. The good news is that per capita consumption has decreased by more than 10% since 2010. However, Europe has the highest rates of current drinking among 15–19-year-olds, followed by the Americas (38%) and the Western Pacific (38%). School surveys indicate that, in many countries, alcohol use starts before the age of 15 with very small differences between boys and girls.

European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) wants to remind the European Institutions of the Council Conclusions on *Cross-border aspects in alcohol policy – tackling harmful use of alcohol during the Estonian Presidency* in December 2017.

Mariann Skar, Secretary General of Eurocare said:

“Juncker’s Commission has neglected and ignored alcohol policy. We are still waiting for decision on such, one might imagine, simple issue as whether consumers should have calories on the labels. Not to mention the missed opportunity of Audiovisual Media Services Directive to reduce exposure to alcohol advertising. Last but not least, we still have minimum excise duties from 1992. The progress we are seeing in Europe is because of courageous actions at a Member States level, countries such as Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Scotland, Finland have implemented progressive alcohol policy solutions’.

Member States have clearly shown that there is a will to do more to tackle alcohol related harm. Juncker’s Commission has to quickly increase its efforts to find a way to actualise these Council Conclusions.

Conclusions highlighted several areas of action and call on the European Commission to:

- Produce and adopt a new EU Alcohol Strategy
- Monitor and evaluate the adequacy of the current measures in the online advertising of alcoholic beverages
- Support Member States in the framework of a new Joint Action - RARHA
- Support research and studies in areas such as for instance cross-border purchases
- Propose better provisions for alcohol labelling by the end of 2019

WHO’s Global status report on alcohol and health 2018 presents a comprehensive picture of alcohol consumption and the disease burden attributable to alcohol worldwide. It also describes what countries are doing to reduce this burden.

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The European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) is an alliance of non-governmental and public health organisations 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.

www.eurocare.org