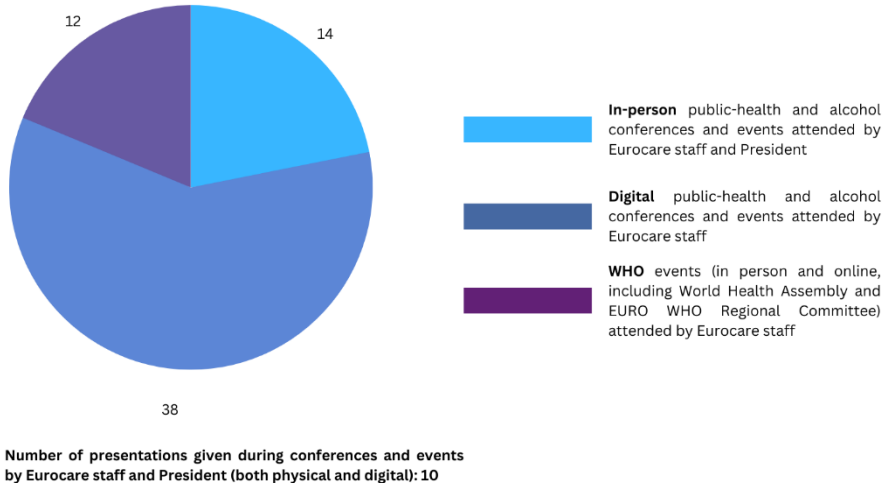


2022 - A year of engaging, informing and learning

Alcohol policy has never been at the centre of more high profile and lively discussion than it was in 2022. Many years of civil society action have finally pushed this crucial issue to the top of the political and media agenda, at both national and EU level.

The covid outbreak also helped focus attention on the central importance of health and health policy. Eurocare made the most of the unprecedented attention and the fact that it coincided with the winding down of lockdown rules, allowing for in person meetings for the first time in two years. Eurocare’s 9th European Alcohol Policy Conference in Oslo offered many in the field their first chance to reconnect.

By the end of 2022 Eurocare staff had attended 16 in person conferences and meetings and all ten WHO alcohol events, both online and in person. This latter group included Eurocare Secretary General Florence Berteletti making a live speech at the World Health Assembly and EURO WHO Regional Committee in Tel Aviv, helping to secure the adoption of the WHO Framework for Action on Alcohol.



For all the value of in-person meetings, Eurocare continued to tap the enormous potential online meetings showed in lockdown. Its staff altogether attended 40 online digital public health and specialist alcohol conferences and events online. And Eurocare staff made a total of 30 presentations to online and in person events, a key element of its dissemination and communication strategy.

Eurocare’s Board also helped spread its influence and connections across Europe in person. President Peter Rice and Board Member Sheila Gilheany attended the Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network (NordAN) conference in Copenhagen in November.

This was another important opportunity to reconnect Eurocare with the leading figures in European alcohol policy.

New voices are necessary in health policy too. To help ensure they appear Eurocare staff attended the 3rd Regional European Alcohol Policy Youth Conference in Tullamore, Ireland in July. This helped Eurocare raise awareness and interest among young people about the prevention of alcohol-related harm. It also promoted evidence-based projects and exchanges on alcohol-related harm reduction and also gave one of the more youthful members of Eurocare staff to give a speech.

Eurocare's own online monthly Alcohol Policy Coordination Meetings provide a vital ongoing platform for exchange and interaction on alcohol policy, providing maximum value at minimum cost. Eurocare maintains a wider circle of ongoing interaction in the public health community through regular participation in the Healthy Environments Coordination Meetings of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA).

Attended the virtual launch of the new edition of the publication "Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity, third edition" at the Global Alcohol Policy Alliance annual conference in October, an event which also gave cutting-edge insight into the issue of cross-border marketing. The same month Eurocare caught up with the latest thinking on alcohol and heart health from a World Heart Federation seminar, outlining its views and rationale.

November saw the presentation of the final results of the ALHAMBRA Project Task 4 on alcohol graphic warnings in Lisbon in November. Eurocare representatives presented their contribution to the project. And, a month later, Eurocare attended in person the 150th anniversary of alcohol awareness in France, an event hosted by Association Addictions France which was attended by the France's Health Minister.

Wider engagement

Alcohol harm policy advocates cannot ignore its link with other fields. Secretary General Florence Berteletti spoke about striking the right balance between promotion and education in the food sector at the European Food Forum in April. And alcohol is also part of the ongoing effort to meet UN Sustainable Development goals, as discussed at the WHO's International Strategic Dialogue on Noncommunicable Diseases and Sustainable Development Goals, again in April.

A webinar in October, called "An Introduction to the Commercial Determinants of Health", hosted by the SPECTRUM Consortium (Shaping Public Health policies To Reduce inequalities and harm). It offered Eurocare attendees an opportunity to find out about industry strategies from leading researchers and to consider ways to counter these and improve the health of local communities. A European Public

Health Alliance meeting in October gave some fresh insight into the role of civil society in the EU.

Staff also benefitted from highly focussed events. In May Eurocare staff attended a webinar exploring the technicalities of researching alcohol availability through research design and data, hosted by Ireland Alcohol Research Network UK-Ireland Alcohol Research Network (AcoRN). A WHO webinar the same months looked at cross-border alcohol marketing, advertising and promotion, a problem in Nordic countries, among the leaders in alcohol policy. And a month later, in June, Eurocare attended the online launch of the WHO/Europe Report on Minimum Pricing of Alcohol. These topics will be part of the alcohol policy agenda for years to come.

Alcohol's contribution to the burden of digestive cancers is not widely understood. The Eurocare staff attended a meeting in May hosted by United European Gastroenterology to gain the insight they need to correct this, including understanding of the rationale for primary and secondary prevention; opportunities for digestive cancers prevention in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan; Existing challenges, knowledge gaps and unmet patient needs.

“Do zero and low-alcohol beverages offer a real improvement or apparent solution?” asked WHO in a webinar in June. Eurocare learned they are not the light at the end of the tunnel of alcohol harm they are often portrayed to be and no replacement for evidence-based policy making. European Doctors (CPME) asked a more wide-ranging question that same month, “What is the vision for a European Health Union?” A member of the Eurocare staff listened in and took notes.

Many diversions and missteps have stood in the way of science-based alcohol policy in well over a century of development. But there are clear signs that the scientific evidence-base now has the chance to influence policy in the way it should. Eurocare is committed to ensuring its energetic engagement in key events in the field can play a part in ensure this happens sooner rather than later.



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