



Working Towards a Holistic Alcohol Strategy in Europe: Communication, Education and Public Awareness

” The EU Alcohol Strategy calls for multi-stakeholder and multi-sector action at the EU, Member State and local level, as well as internationally alongside the World Health Organization. Within the EU, the central actors are the Member States, where the major competence in alcohol policy lies. In addition, the EU Alcohol Strategy emphasises the fundamental importance of involving all stakeholders if widespread public health benefits are to be achieved. This is based on the rationale that alcohol related harm is a multi-faceted problem that needs a concerted societal response.”

- *First Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy, September 2009*

The Silken Hotel
Brussels

30th September 2010

Organised by



Centre for
Parliamentary
Studies



“An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in alcohol harm reduction policy in Europe”

"It is my firm belief that in order to make any real change in the fight against alcohol related harm, the efforts must be high not only on the public health agenda, but also on the agenda of all stakeholders, including schools, employers, NGOs, alcoholic drinks producers, distributors, the advertising and media industries, local/national authorities, Member States and the European Union ... The Commission is determined, in co-operation with all Member States, stakeholders and institutions, to take forward meaningful actions that can contribute towards the protection of our citizens, and especially our young people, from alcohol-related harm – but we need both your commitment and contributions for more and better results."

- Markos Kyprianou, European Commissioner for Health, Assemblée des Régions Européennes Viticoles, Stuttgart, 7 June 2007

Abstract and Programme

Alcohol consumption is a growing public health issue in the EU.

Whilst drinking beer, wine and spirits is a fundamental part of the European tradition and an essential dimension of the European economy, alcohol is also a principle determinant of health risks and other problems such as domestic violence and crime and disorder. Indeed, alcohol is ahead of obesity and illicit drugs as the third highest causal factor leading to ill-health and death in the European Union.

EU citizens experience the highest rate of alcohol consumption in the world (11 litres of pure alcohol per adult each year), and on top of the already serious public health concerns over binge-drinking, statistics on alcohol-related violence make sobering reading:

- 1 in 6 cases of child abuse is related to alcohol
- Between 7 and 9 million children live in families adversely affected by alcohol
- Up to 2 in 5 cases of domestic violence inflicted on women are linked to alcohol

On 24 October 2006, the European Commission adopted a milestone for reducing alcohol related harm with a key Communication setting out a strategy to support Member States and establishing an Alcohol and Health Forum, which would help in disseminating good practices. The Progress report, presented in September 2009, demonstrated that positive steps had been made to meet the 2012 objectives, however there is still much to be done.

This timely International Symposium seeks to harness actions which have been put in place to reduce alcohol-related harm and share good practices, as well as identify gaps where further progress can be made. In order to face up to this public health 'time-bomb', as well as redoubling efforts to raise general public awareness, the European Union is seeking to work closer together with stakeholders to synergise EU policy with the national health policies implemented by Member States. The symposium will examine the latest initiatives at both EU and national level, discuss the range of alcohol-focused projects supported by the World Health Organisation and consider recommendations for future actions to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol misuse.

The *Centre for Parliamentary Studies* welcomes the participation of all key partners, responsible authorities and stakeholders. The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate.



Thursday 30th September 2010
The Silken Hotel, Brussels

09:00 *Registration and Morning Refreshments*

10:00 **Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Mrs. Mariann Skar, Secretary General, Eurocare (confirmed)

10:15 **Reducing Alcohol Related Harm – The European Commission Perspective**

- Lessons Learned from Five Priority Themes
- Soft Law Approach – Compliance Challenges in Member States
- Toward Successful Standardized Excise Duties – Challenges and Future Solutions
- Funding Programmes and Opportunities at EU Level

Speaker:

Mr. Michael Huebel, Head of Unit - Health Determinants, DG SANCO, European Commission (confirmed)

10:45 **First Round of Discussions**

11:15 *Morning Coffee Break*

11:35 **The Regional Dimension – Comparative Experiences on Alcohol Related Harm**

- Burden of Alcohol Related Consequences – Comparing Path Dependent Behaviour in Europe
- Draft Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol – Identifying Pertinent Challenges for the Future
- Alcohol Policy at Regional Level – What Have We Learned So Far?
- Recommendations for Future Actions

Speaker:

Dr. Lars Møller, Regional Adviser on Alcohol and Drugs, World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe (tbc)

12:00 **Second Round of Discussions**



Thursday 30th September 2010
The Silken Hotel, Brussels

12:30 *Networking Lunch*

13:30 **The Social Cost of Alcohol – Raising Public Awareness in Europe**

- Child Abuse and Domestic Violence – Examples of Awareness Raising Campaigns
- Protecting Children and Young People from Commercial Exposure to Alcohol – Examples of Effective Restrictions in EU Member States
- Reducing Injuries and Death from Alcohol Related Road Traffic Accidents – Latest Developments

Speaker:

Mrs. Mariann Skar, Secretary General, Eurocare (confirmed)

13:55 **Third Round of Discussions**

14:25 *Afternoon Coffee Break*

14:45 **Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – Campaigning for Greater Information and Public Awareness Across Europe**

- Protecting Unborn Children – Policy Recommendations
- Better Protection through Better Prevention
- Current Initiatives – Some Good Practices

Speakers:

Dr Kieran O'Malley, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Belfast Trust, Northern Ireland (confirmed)

Dr Nicolaas van der Lely, Paediatrician, Netherlands (confirmed)

15:10 **Fourth Round of Discussions**

15:40 **Chair's Summary and Closing Remarks**

15:45 *Networking Reception and Refreshments*

16:45 **Symposium Close**