



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



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EUROCARE conference, Slovenia 2005

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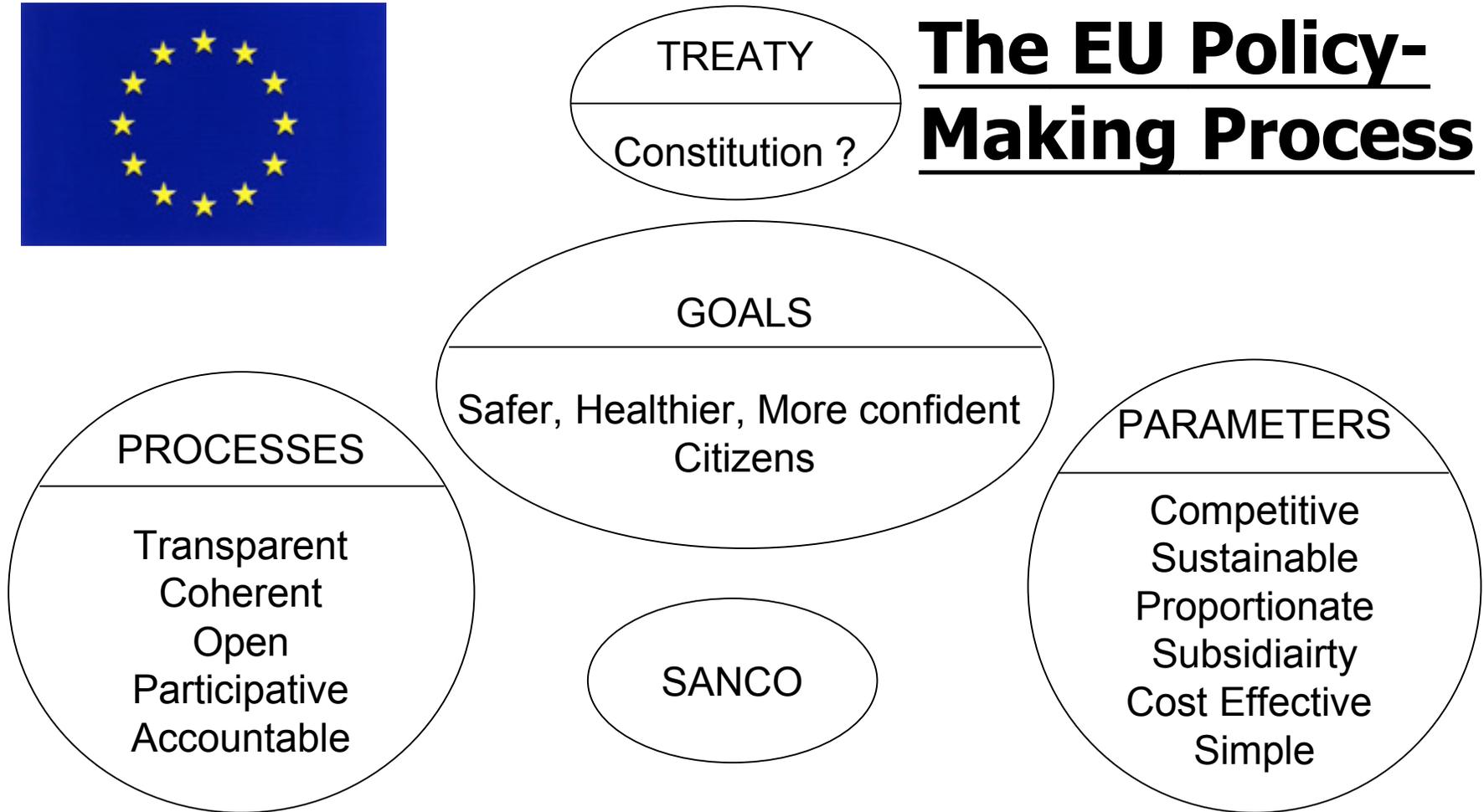
Bridging the Gap Project

■ Our goals:

- Set up network to support implementation of EU Recommendation on alcohol and young people
- Contribute to development of EU alcohol strategy
- Promote involvement of young people in development of alcohol policies / initiatives
- Successful conference today !



The EU Policy-Making Process



Court	Parliament	Council	College	Services	World	Civil Society	Economic Operators	Agencies
Courts	Parliaments	Member States, Regions	Commissioners	DGs, Colleagues	Countries, WTO, WHO	NGOs, Academics	Companies	Experts



EU's Powers on Public Health

■ As a general rule...

→ EU Treaty excludes binding legislation on public health (see Art 152)

■ ...but there are exceptions, e.g.

- Tobacco control laws (passed using EU's internal market powers)
- Laws on safety of blood, human tissues, cells (exception provided by Art 152 itself)



EU Constitutional Treaty

- **Will expand scope of Public Health mandate...**
 - Public Health section directly refers to tobacco and abuse of alcohol
(see Article III-278 (5))
 - Context still “soft law” rather than regulation



Key EU policy documents on alcohol

- Council Recommendation of 5 June 2001 on the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents
 - MS' concern for "alcopops" initiated
- Council Conclusions of 5 June 2001 on a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm
 - Invites the Commission to draft a proposal for a comprehensive community strategy. Recalled in June 2004 "at an early stage"



Main areas

- Research, consumer protection, transport, excise duties and other internal market issues
- Strengthened cooperation between MS and international cooperation/WHO

Guiding principle....

- Respect the cultural, social and economic differences between MS



Work in progress

- Alcohol and Health WP; 2 annual meetings
- Public Health Programme
 - ECAS: European Comparative Alcohol Study on the MS alcohol policies from 1950 to 2000
 - Report the social, economic and health impact of alcohol
 - Bridging the Gap – network
 - Roundtables with stakeholders



« Anderson Report »

- **Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK** awarded contract to write report on health social and economic impact of alcohol in EU
 - **Dr. Peter Anderson** leading study team
 - Workshop with the industry held in Luxembourg 20 January 2005
 - Alcohol industry still eager to debate and review findings
- Final report due September 2005**



Draft Working Paper on Tackling Alcohol Related Harm

■ Contents

■ Policy Context

- Health, social and economic impact, EU's policy competence, need for a comprehensive EU approach

■ Seven key areas for action:

1. Drinking and Driving
 2. Under-age drinking
 3. Commercial communication
 4. Consumer information
 5. Availability of alcohol
 6. Protection of third parties, esp. families and children
 7. Exchange of information, data and research
- (Treatment was added as the eight area after the consultations)

→ *Circulated to MSs and stakeholders in July 2004*



Review of EU minimum rates of excise on alcohol

- Commission report on excise duties on alcohol adopted in spring 2004
- EU finance ministers requested the Commission to prepare a proposal to raise the minimum rates in line with the inflation (o-rate for wine a problem) and to define « alcopops »
- A decision expected in autumn
- The report: not many MS take into account health aspects in defining the policy on alcohol taxes



Partners

- What can the Commission do for us?
- What can we do for the Commission?
- Industry is a player
 - To what extent are we willing to cooperate?
 - What do we see as their role?



Generation Europe Project

- A report on the workshop organised by TAG and Generation Europe in Oct 2004
- An innovative approach:
 - young people themselves discuss TAG codes;
 - young people's perception of acceptable and unacceptable marketing
- Clearly more than just "bar room" conversation
- A benchmark more widely?



Effective policies?

- Is the priority:
 - ***Different rules? Or more effective enforcement?***
 - ***Rules and principles? Or attitudes and behaviour?***
- Can results be achieved in "Brussels"? Or is it the local level that counts?
- Do high taxes work or not? Where is the evidence?
- Do supply reductions work? What is the optimal degree? From a sales monopoly to age limits?
- Does information work?



Timetable 2005 - 2006

2005

- January – workshop on the « Anderson » report
- March – Meeting with MS experts on alcohol strategy
- Summer – 6 June and 6 July the stakeholders roundtable on the strategy principles
- September – publication of « Anderson » report
- Autumn – meetings with MS experts
- November – final meeting of the roundtable

2006

- Commission adopts its Communication on EU alcohol strategy
- Parliament and Council debate the Communication