

Alcohol policy and young people in EU

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On the way to community alcohol policy

- EU has no practice of any coherent preventive alcohol policy
- Before the 1980s, alcoholic beverages were regarded as normal commodities.
- Alcohol was mostly discussed from the perspective of the common agricultural policy or as a tax harmonisation issue.
- Council resolution in 1986 stated that the increase in alcohol abuse is causing serious concern for public health and social welfare (Official Journal C 184/02, 29.05.1986).
- A Commission proposal for a Council directive on BAC limits was presented in 1988, but it was stalemated in the Council.

On the way to community alcohol policy

- Public Health unit established within the Commission in the late 1980s.
- In 1996, the Commission established a working group on alcohol.
- Alcohol was largely handled within the unit of health promotion, health monitoring and injury prevention within DG V.
- Since 1999 alcohol is mostly handled in Unit G 3 Health promotion, health monitoring and injury prevention within DG Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO).

Age limits in off- and on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages in current EU member states, EU applicant states and EEA-countries

Country	Off-premise			On-premise		
	Beer	Wine	Spirits	Beer	Wine	Spirits
Austria	16	16	18	16	16	18
Belgium	-	-	18	16	16	18
Bulgaria	18	18	18	18	18	18
Cyprus	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Czech Republic	18	18	18	18	18	18
Denmark	16	16	16	18	18	18
Estonia	18	18	18	18	18	18
Finland	18	18	20	18	18	18
France	16	16	16	16	16	16
Germany	16	16	18	16	16	18
Greece	-	-	18	-	-	18
Hungary	18	18	18	18	18	18
Iceland	20	20	20	20	20	20
Ireland	18	18	18	18	18	18
Italy	16	16	16	16	16	16
Latvia	18	18	18	18	18	18
Lithuania	18	18	18	18	18	18
Luxembourg	-	-	-	18	18	18
Malta	16	16	16	-	-	-
Netherlands	16	16	18	16	16	18
Norway	18	18	20	18	18	20
Poland	18	18	18	18	18	18
Portugal	16	16	16	16	16	16
Romania	18	18	18	18	18	18
Slovakia	18	18	18	18	18	18
Slovenia	15	15	15	15	15	15
Spain	16	16	16	16	16	16
Sweden	18	20	20	18	18	18
Switzerland	16	16	18	16	16	18
Turkey	18	18	18	18	18	18
United Kingdom	18	18	18	16	16	18

”Television without frontiers” directive

Article 15 in the directive states that advertising for alcoholic beverages shall comply with the following criteria:

- it may not be aimed specifically at minors or, in particular, depict minors consuming these beverages,
- it shall not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced physical performance or to driving,
- it shall not create the impression that the consumption of alcohol contributes towards social or sexual success,
- it shall not claim that alcohol has therapeutic qualities or that it is a stimulant, a sedative or a means of resolving personal conflicts,
- it shall not encourage immoderate consumption of alcohol or present abstinence or moderation in a negative light, and
- it shall not place emphasis on high alcoholic content as being a positive quality of the beverages.

Alcohol policy as a part of the EU's public health policy

- The case of “alcopops” in the late 1990s.
- Council recommendation (2001/458/EC) was accepted on June 5, 2001.
- The Council recommendation dealt with the drinking of alcohol by young people, in particular children and adolescents, and encouraged member states to foster a multi-sectoral approach to educate young people about alcohol and to increase young people's involvement in health-related policies and actions.

Alcohol policy as a part of the EU's public health policy

Conclusion on a Community Strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm (Council Conclusion 2001/C 175/01).

The conclusion includes a.o. the following elements:

- Further development of comparative and comprehensive information together with relevant high-quality research, and an effective monitoring system.
- A co-ordinated range of Community activities in all relevant policy areas.
- Strengthened co-operation and exchange of knowledge between Member States.
- International co-operation, in particular with and within the WHO

(Council Conclusion 2001/C 175/01).

Alcohol policy as a part of the EU's public health policy

A programme of community action in the field of public health for the years 2003-2008. The general objectives of the programme are:

- to improve information and knowledge for the development of public health,
- to enhance the capability of responding rapidly and in a coordinated fashion to health treats, and
- to promote health and prevent disease through addressing health determinant across all policies and activities.