



**Finland:**

**Alcohol programme 2004 - 2007**



# Alcohol Programme 2004-2007

- ***Government Resolution on Strategies in Alcohol Policy***  
October 2003 – political commitment and main lines of action
- ***Ministry of Social Affairs and Health***  
responsibility for preparation, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation
- Structure for mobilization:  
Partnership between the government, municipalities, churches, NGOs, social partners and industry organizations



## Background <sup>(1/2)</sup>

### ***1997-1999 The 1st National Alcohol Programme***

- emphasis on the role of NGOs

### ***2000-2003 Alcohol programme for the 2000s***

- emphasis on public policy

Common features:

- drawn up by the Committee on Alcohol, Drugs and Temperance Affairs
- not binding in any way, no clear structure for co-ordination and monitoring



## Background <sup>(2/2)</sup>

A new situation:

- Limitations on alcohol imports from EU Member States lifted as of January 2004
- Lowering of alcohol taxes by 33 % as of March 2004
- Accession of new Member States on May 1<sup>st</sup>
- Triple boost for the trend towards increased consumption of alcoholic beverages



# Partnership in the Alcohol Programme

- ***Partnership agreement*** signed between the Ministry and each participant organization – common ground mapped in preceding negotiations
- Each partner draws up their own action plan = specific objectives, target groups, modes of action
- Self-evaluation » » » feedback for further development, continuous improvement of quality
- Network of partners = new opportunities or co-operation
- Sharing information, expertise, best practices, materials
- Programme logo = symbolic connection between separate activities

[www.alkoholihjelma.fi](http://www.alkoholihjelma.fi)



## June 2004: 85 partners

- 47 NGOs, joined together by the *Alcohol and Drug Programme of NGOs for 2004–2006* – addiction services, drug prevention, health promotion, youth work, traffic safety, sports...
- Evangelic-Lutheran Church, Finnish Orthodox Church, Council of Free Christian Churches
- Professional associations in the health & social sector
- Major social partners, incl. the Finnish Hotel and Restaurant Association and the Service Union United
- 17 municipalities



# Alcohol and Drug Programme of NGOs for 2004–2006

[www.health.fi](http://www.health.fi)

- Launched in September 2003
- Co-ordinated by the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion
- Main goals:
  - Reducing overall consumption of alcohol
  - Preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use by children and young people
  - Promoting equity in health
- Main lines of action:
  - Presence and influence at the grass roots level
  - Development of co-operation
  - Influencing public decision-making
  - Clarification of the nature of alcohol and drug prevention



## Partnership agreements in pipeline:

- Finnish Food Marketing Association, Finnish petrol stations' union, Finnish kiosk traders' union, Federation of Finnish Enterprises  
Unions of employees of Alko, the state-controlled alcohol retail company  
Probation Foundation Finland  
Finnish Boating Association
- Invitation letter sent to all municipalities





# Purpose of alcohol policy: reduction of alcohol related harm

Main goals set in

## *Government Resolution on Strategies in Alcohol Policy*

- Reduction in harm to children, young people and families
- Reduction in short-term and long-term risky drinking and related problems
- Reversing the trend in overall consumption

1968 ~3 litres      »      2003 9,4 litres      »      2004 10-11 litres ?  
recorded + un-recorded consumption per capita, litres of 100% alcohol



## *Alcohol programme 2004-2007*

### *Starting points for co-operation in 2004*

- A publication of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (171 p.)
- Baseline in 2003: trends in consumption, drinking habits and alcohol-related harm
- Evidence of the effectiveness of strategies for reducing alcohol-related harm
- Main goals, objectives, priorities for action
- Sectors of public administration: plans for the next years
- Central role of municipalities – recommendations, examples of action plans
- Other partners: priorities for action stated in the partnership agreement
- Structures for co-ordination; sources of additional funding; suggestions for self-evaluation of performance; outcome indicators to be monitored



## Reversing the trend in overall consumption

- Fairly high alcohol taxation, despite recent lowering
- State-controlled monopoly on retail sale of wine and spirits remains in place
- Licensing and control of bars, restaurants and retailers of beer and cider » » » prevention of disturbance of public order and of harm to the immediate housing environment
- Support for community health promoting activities
- Influencing EU policies on alcohol taxation and the development of EU's public health strategy for alcohol



# Harm to children, young people and families (1/2)

## Prevention of harm from parental alcohol use

- Helping parents raise their children as a core task for agencies and professions that deal with children and young people
- Dissemination of information on alcohol related harm and on where to turn for help
- Prevention of domestic violence
- Ensuring resources for effective child protection



# Harm to children, young people and families *(2/2)*

## Prevention of harm from alcohol use by young people

- Co-operation between parents, the school, youth work, NGOs and businesses
- Enforcement of age limits, combined with supportive activities directed to the young
- Restricting the advertising of alcoholic beverages
- Focusing school-based alcohol education on social norms, social skills and critical thinking about the media



# Short-term risky drinking

Harm arising from single occasions of alcohol use

- Prevention of violence and disturbance of public order
- Enforcement of regulations prohibiting selling and serving to intoxicated patrons
- Development of responsible selling and serving practices
- Promoting responsible hosting in work related and leisure time contexts
- Prevention of drink driving through traffic safety work, enforcement of BAC limits and treatment for repeat offenders
- Prevention of alcohol related home and leisure time accidents



# Long-term risky drinking

## Harm arising from long-term risky drinking

- Assessing risks of alcohol use routinely in all patient contacts involving health status assessment
- Implementing brief intervention for risky drinkers into the routine practice of general and specialist health services
- Ensuring the availability, appropriateness and quality of addiction services
- Dissemination of information on risky drinking and on methods for self-assessment of risk and self-control of drinking



# Towards an integrated and sustainable approach to alcohol problem prevention

- Encouraging co-operation
- Strengthening the structural framework
  - Cross-sectoral work groups at local and regional levels
  - Inter-ministerial information exchange
  - Key organizations in the Alcohol Programme's steering and co-ordination groups
- Promoting a comprehensive approach
- Fostering clear goal setting, evaluation of effectiveness and continuous quality improvement





## Evaluation of the results

- Spring 2006: Interim evaluation to be submitted to Parliament as an integral part of the Government's Social Welfare and Health Report
- Key indicators for the main goals
- Wealth of statistical information provided by expert agencies
- Specific evaluation projects
- Results of partners' self-evaluation



### **An evidence-based approach**

*Emphasis on the more effective strategies.*

*Performance evaluation as a tool for continuous quality improvement.*

### **Co-operation**

*between the government, municipalities, churches, NGOs, social partners and the industry.*



### **Think nationally, act locally**

The best chances for developing environments that foster well-being lie at the local level.

### **Public support**

is essential to the success of any alcohol problem prevention strategy – and can be enhanced by influencing public and media discourse.

