



**European
Commission**



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

The EU Alcohol Strategy

Dr. Pieter de Coninck
DG Health and Consumers,
Unit C4
European Commission, Luxembourg

Budapest
3 December 2009



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Structure of presentation

- **Background**
- **The EU alcohol strategy (2006)**
- **Implementation**
- **1st progress report on the implementation of the EU alcohol strategy (2009)**
- **Latest developments and outlook**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Background



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

EU Alcohol Strategy timeline

- **Council Recommendation 2001: alcohol and young people, examples of good practice**
- **Council Conclusions 2001, 2004: invite Commission to put forward a comprehensive strategy**
- **Report “Alcohol in Europe” 2006**
- **Impact Assessments 2006: health and economic aspects**
- **Adoption of the EU Alcohol Strategy (24 October 2006)**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Challenge across the EU

- **Europe is heaviest drinking region of the world**
- **Alcohol consumption levels in EU Member States are mostly stable - increase in some, decrease in few**
- **Most EU countries face similar problems (“convergence of harm”): youth (binge) drinking, drink-driving etc.**

- **Alcohol accounts for 7,5% of ill health and early death in EU (2006):**
 - **195,000 alcohol-related deaths per year**
 - **27 000 deaths from alcohol related accidents: – 25% of road deaths due to drink-driving**
 - **50 000 cancer deaths**

- **Harm to the drinker**
- **Harm to others – family, workplace, community**

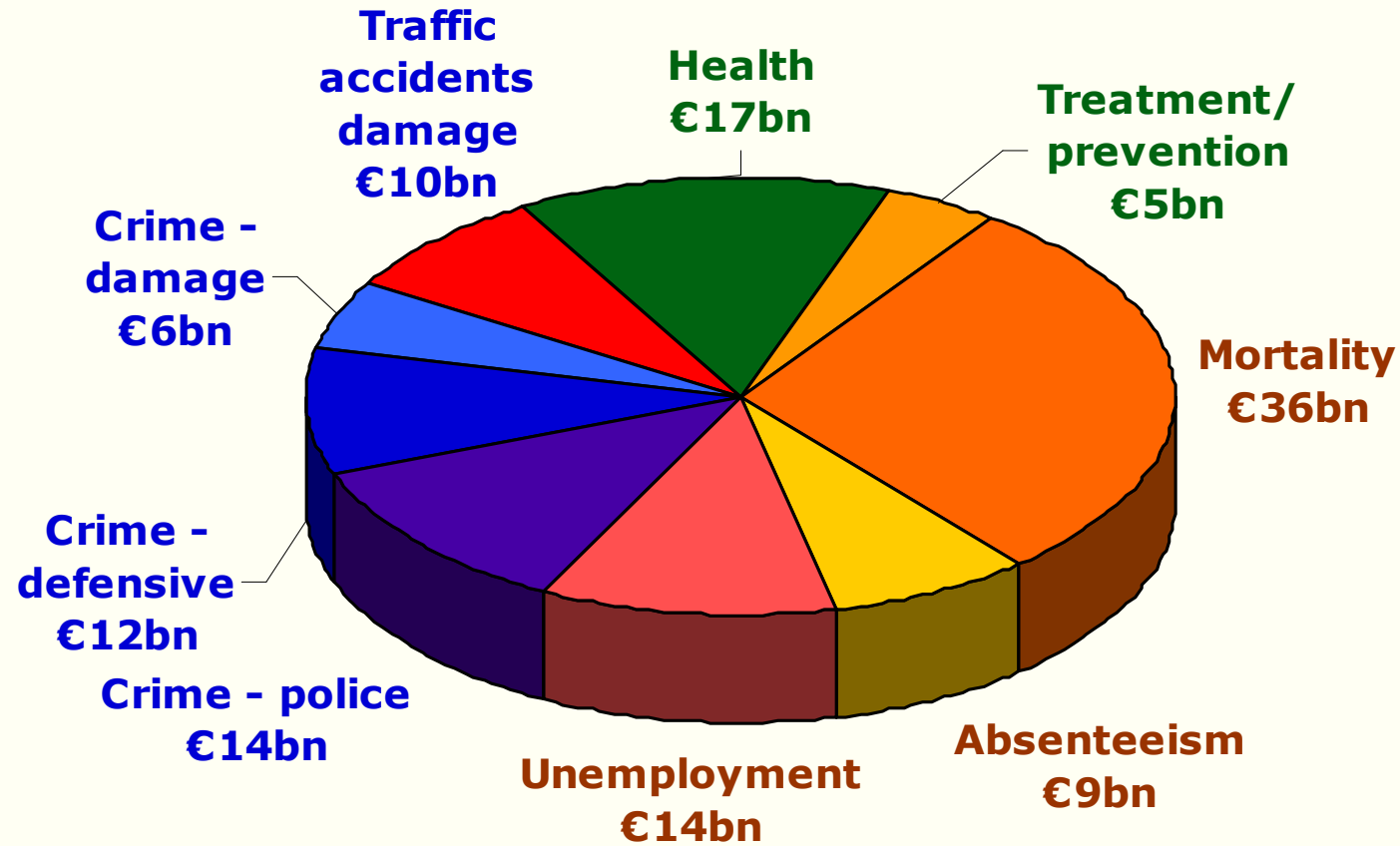


European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

economic cost of alcohol in Europe



total tangible costs – €125bn

6 of 30

from: P. Anderson, B. Baumberg: *Alcohol in Europe*, 2006



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

***Commission Communication (on)
an EU strategy to support
Member States in reducing
alcohol related harm (24 October
2006)***



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

EU Alcohol Strategy (1)

- **Communication from the Commission to the other EU institutions (Council, EP, EESC and CoR)**
- **Soft law**
- **No intention “to propose the development of harmonised legislation in the field of the prevention of alcohol-related harm”**
- **No intention “to substitute Community action to national policies”**
- **“With this Communication the Commission [...] presents a comprehensive strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm in Europe until the end of 2012”**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

EU alcohol strategy (2)

- **Five priority themes, which are relevant in all Member States and for which Community action in complement to national policies and coordination of national actions has an added value:**
 - 1) Protect **young people**, children and the unborn child
 - 2) Reduce injuries and deaths from alcohol-related **road traffic** accidents
 - 3) Prevent alcohol-related harm among **adults** and reduce the negative impact on the **workplace**
 - 4) Inform, **educate** and raise awareness on the impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, and on appropriate consumption patterns
 - 5) Develop, support and maintain a common **evidence base**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Implementation



European
Commission

Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Implementing structures

Implementing the Commission Communication

**European
Alcohol
and
Health
Forum**

**Committee
on
National
Alcohol
Policy and
Action**

**Committee
on
Data
Collection,
Indicators
and
Definitions**

**Health in
all
policies**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

European Alcohol and Health Forum



*Charter establishing
the European Alcohol
and Health Forum*



European Commission



European
Commission
Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

European Alcohol and Health Forum

- **overall objective:**
 - “to provide a common platform for all interested stakeholders at EU level willing to step up actions aimed at reducing alcohol harm”
- **main areas to be addressed via “commitments” (to concrete action):**
 - under age drinking
 - information on effect of harmful drinking
 - responsible drinking/promote behavioural changes
 - consumer information
 - commercial communication



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

European Alcohol and Health Forum

- **Currently the Forum has 65 members:**
 - **NGOs and medical professions**
 - **Producers, retailers and wholesalers of alcoholic beverages + hospitality sector**
 - **Advertising, marketing, media and sponsorship organisations**
 - **Research institutes and others**

- **116 commitments in data base**

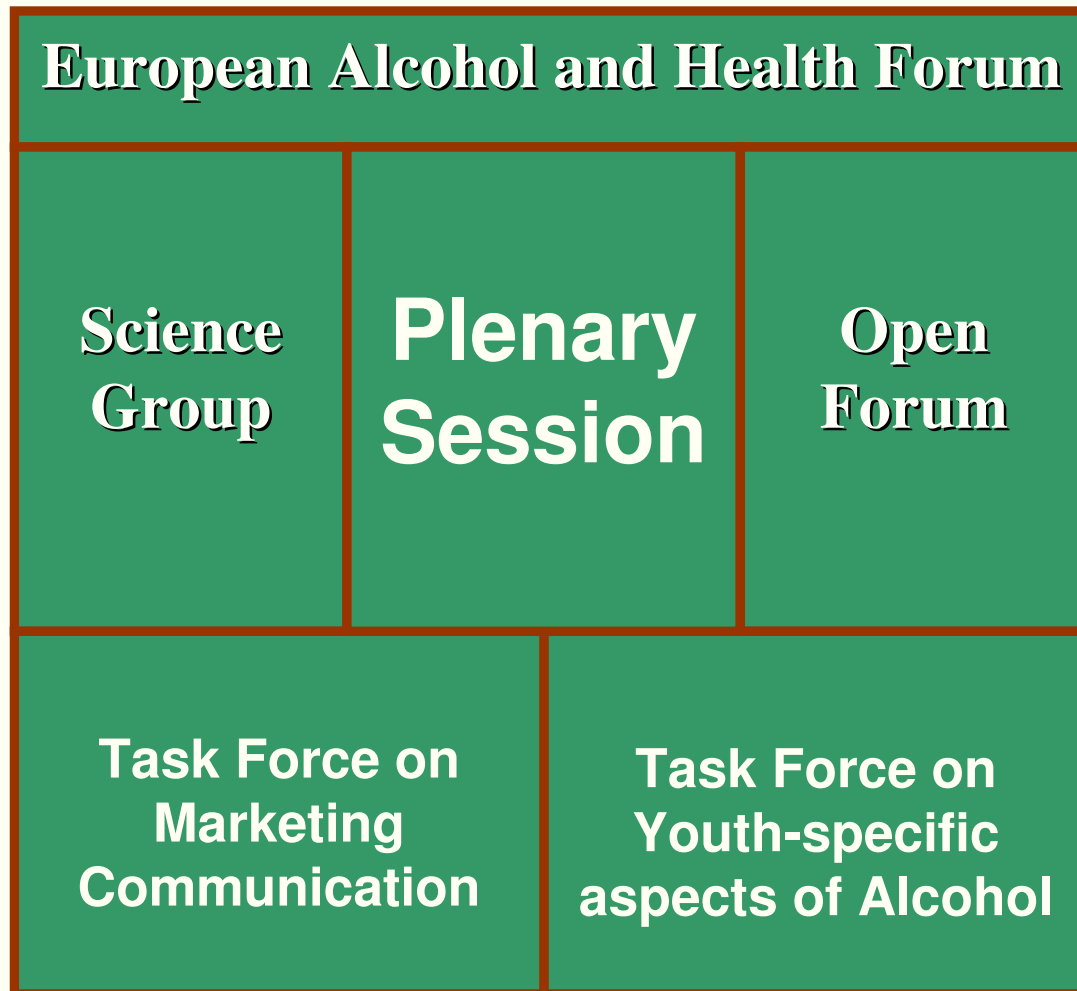


European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

The Forum structure





European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

CNAPA (1)

- **Mandate, Rules of Procedure and Work Plan:**
 - **Main objective: “further coordinate government-driven policies aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm at national and local level, building inter alia upon the examples of good practice identified in the strategy” (no decision making committee)**
 - **The Committee is composed of delegates of MS, and includes observers from EFTA and EU candidate countries, as well as of the WHO**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

CNAPA (2)

■ **Activities:**

- **Presentations from MS on developments in their countries**
- **In-depth discussions on topical or controversial issues, e.g. labelling of alcoholic beverages, (minimum) pricing and affordability, drinking limits and their communication to the population**
- **Update on relevant developments in the Commission, the European Alcohol and Health Forum, the Committee on Data Collection, Indicators and Definitions etc.**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

First Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Progress Report

- **“The Commission will report regularly on the implementation of measures to tackle harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, as described in this Communication; this will be based on regular reporting from the Member States on the implementation of the relevant measures”**
- **Council Conclusions (2006) invited the Commission “to report regularly, starting from the year 2008, on the progress of Commission activities to implement the EU alcohol strategy and on activities reported by Member States, including an assessment of the response from different stakeholders”**
- **First progress report presented at the Expert Conference on Alcohol and Health, organized by the Swedish EU Presidency, Stockholm 21-22 September 2009**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Information sources

- **Inputs from across the Commission**
- **Two surveys of alcohol policy in Member States**
 - **EC baseline (2007)**
 - **WHO/EC survey (2008)**
- **National updates in CNAPA**
- **Outputs of the EA&H Forum and its sub bodies (taskforces and Science Group)**
- **Projects funded under the Health Programme**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

The situation in 2009

- **No new health outcome data**
- **Trends show alcohol consumption largely stable, though upward trend in 8 countries**
- **New information on**
 - **Attitudes (Eurobarometer survey 2007)**
 - **Behaviours (e.g. ESPAD study shows changes to consumption patterns in EU, e.g. binge drinking increasing in some countries among young women)**
 - **Extent of health inequalities between MS**
 - **The role of affordability and pricing policy (RAND)**
 - **The impact of marketing communication on volume and pattern of alcohol consumption, especially by young people (opinion of Forum's Science Group)**



European
Commission

Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Progress by Member States (1)

- **National strategies**
 - **Consolidation and revision of national strategies**
- **Protecting children, young people and unborn child**
 - **Trend towards age limit of 18 years for selling and serving alcohol (in more than half of MS now)**
 - **More widespread awareness raising for alcohol in pregnancy**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Progress by Member States (2)

- **Reduce injuries and road deaths from alcohol related road traffic accidents**
 - Substantial progress in drink-driving measures
 - Much more widespread awareness raising activities
 - More random breath testing, and use of alcolocks
 - Trend towards lower limits for blood alcohol concentration

But relatively little progress observable on

- **Preventing alcohol use among adults generally, and in particular in relation to the workplace**
- **Reducing harm to children from adult's alcohol use**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Working with stakeholders (the Forum)

- **Forum established and Membership growing**
 - To date: 61 members and 115 commitments
 - Publicly accessible database of commitments and monitoring reports
- **Two Taskforces: Marketing Communication and Youth-related aspects of alcohol**
 - Mapping reports & the Clearing House
- **Science Group opinion: impact of marketing communication on volume and pattern of alcohol consumption**
- **Generating interest and activity for public health**
 - E.g. Pernod Ricard to introduce French Pictogram pregnancy warning on all its spirits and wine brands



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Health in all Community policies

- **Research**
- **Transport and road safety**
- **Information society**
- **Youth**
- **Taxation**
- **Employment**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Developing the evidence base

- **Joint WHO/EC initiative to develop the European Information System on Alcohol and Health (EISAH)**
- **Committee on Data Collection, Indicators, and Definitions**
- **Health Programme**
- **RTD 6th and 7th Framework Programme**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Conclusions

- **Broad EU consensus for action**
- **Structures set up and operational**
- **Steady convergence of MS actions (age limits increasing, BAC limits lowering, regulation of marketing) but still several differences**
- **Stakeholder action being generated at EU and national level**
- **Stronger evidence base, e.g. around role of marketing and advertising**
 - **Closer analysis of structures for SR at national level**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Latest developments and outlook



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

- **Swedish EU Presidency (2nd half 2009):**
 - **Expert Conference on Alcohol & Health, Stockholm 21-22 September**
 - **Adoption of Opinion on alcohol-related harm by EESC, 30 September 2009**
 - **Adoption of Council Conclusions, 1 December 2009: commitment to keep alcohol high on the political agenda**
- **Current EU Alcohol Strategy “valid” until the end of 2012**
- **2nd Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy foreseen in 2012**
- **New College of Commissioners**
- **.....**



European
Commission



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers

Thank you