

# The Commission Communication and the Alcohol and Health Forum: A Eurocare perspective

*Tiziana Codenotti*

Building Capacity First Meeting of Network  
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# Overview

- Eurocare history and developments in relation to its role in pressing for an alcohol communication
- Eurocare reactions to Commission Communication and to the Alcohol Forum
- Final remarks and conclusions

- Network of voluntary organisations and NGOs concerned with the need for the development of alcohol policy in the EU
- Founded in 1990, it developed into the main NGO /public health orientated advocacy group concerned with alcohol policy issues in the EU.
- Specific identity: counterbalancing the alcohol industry ( title of a 1995 Eurocare publication).
- **Eurocare main objective: the adoption of a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reducing alcohol harm at EU level .**

Eurocare has hence pursued a wide range of policy issues

- alcohol taxation
  - commercial communication
  - alcohol and young people
  - drink driving
  - alcohol and the workplace
  - alcohol and the family
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- 1995: Eurocare opened a Liaison Office in Brussels to facilitate the work with Commission institutions and the Parliament.

## EUROCARE press release on the EU Communication

*Eurocare welcomes the strategy and announces that it will continue to support DG SANCO in its efforts to reduce the harm done by alcohol in Europe. We would also like to congratulate DG SANCO on its first draft which would have had an impact in reducing the harm done by alcohol.*

*We are sad to see that despite the efforts of the European Health Community and DG SANCO to protect the health and wellbeing of European citizens, in the end, the alcohol industry and other parts of the commission have ensured that the strategy reflects the undue influence of the alcohol industry, which has been responsible for one of the most intensive lobbying campaigns ever known in regard to public health policy.*

**EUROCARE SEMINAR  
AN ALCOHOL STRATEGY FOR EUROPE?  
European Parliament – Brussels  
Wednesday, 31 January 2007**



## EUROCARE press release on the Alcohol Forum

*Eurocare welcomes the action oriented remit of the Forum,..... We hope that all European alcohol producers and retailers will participate in the Forum, and commit to evidence based actions, thus explicitly recognising their responsibilities towards curbing alcohol related harm in Europe, in particular among young people.....We welcome the presence of a Science Group, to ensure that industry commitments are evidence based and relevant...we are pleased to see a clear separation between the Forum as a platform for action, and the Committee on National Policy and Action as one for policy discussion among Member States: we believe public health policies on alcohol should be formulated without the interference of commercial interests.*

# Launch of the Forum in Brussels, 7 June 2007



## EUROCARE as 'Founding Member' of the Forum

National organizations as 'Affiliated Members'

- ❖ Alcohol Action Ireland
- ❖ Association Nationale de Prévention en Alcoologie et Addictologie (ANPAA)
- ❖ Eurocare Italia
- ❖ Estonian Temperance Union
- ❖ German Centre for Addiction Studies (DHS)
- ❖ Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS)
- ❖ IOGT-NTO
- ❖ National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention (STAP)

## Final remarks

- Eurocare is aware of the limitations of the Communication and the dangers of the Forum
- Alternative: probably no Communication at all.
- It is a Commission Communication, not just a DG Sanco Communication and is therefore inevitably and necessarily subject to conflicting pressures.

- Eurocare involvement in the Forum is consistent with its policy: not entering into bilateral talks with the industry or to participate in any joint projects , but dealing with it in the context of a Forum convened by and held under the auspices of the Commission.

- Alcohol Forum: lessons learned from the Diet and Nutrition Platform.
- Much clearer and tougher protocols in regard to the relevance and evaluation of commitments, and the role of the science group will be very important in this connection.
- The main role of NGOs such as Eurocare in the Forum is precisely to help ensure the quality of monitoring and evaluation, to provide the guarantee that the Forum cannot be abused and exploited for purposes other than those for which it is intended.

# Conclusions

- Strong yet also critical support to the Communication and the Forum.
- Communication as the beginning, not the end of a long, necessarily political process of building support for effective policies to reduce alcohol-related harm
- Forum as a potentially useful means of holding the alcohol industry to account in relation to those areas of policy where it is necessarily involved.
- Forum as a way to keep alcohol high on the political agenda and as an opportunity to address other issues

*Thank you for your attention*