

MIDDAY EXPRESS

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Alcohol abuse: Commissioner John Dalli urges stakeholders to strengthen efforts to protect young people from alcohol-related harm

Today, **John Dalli**, the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, will address the 9th plenary meeting of the **European Alcohol and Health Forum** in Brussels. The members of the Forum include over 60 industry and trade associations and non-governmental organisations committed to reducing alcohol-related harm. Commissioner Dalli will appeal to industry, civil society and the public health community to strengthen efforts to protect young people from alcohol-related harm. According to the most recent European surveys, half of school children aged 15 to 16 years have drunk alcohol in the past month - despite the minimum drinking age being 18 in most EU countries. The Commissioner will stress the need to step up action, especially when it concerns young people. This includes marketing and advertising exposure. The **European Alcohol and Health Forum** was set up by the European Commission in 2007 in the context of the EU Strategy on Alcohol, to mobilise action across society to reduce alcohol related harm. This **Strategy** – which dates back to 2006 aims at protecting children and young people from alcohol related harm, reducing injuries and deaths from alcohol-related road accidents, and preventing harm among adults including reducing negative impact at work. In September 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, for the first time, a political declaration for the prevention and control on non-communicable diseases. **Alcohol abuse is one of the 4 risk factors** for developing non-communicable diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. EU action, including initiatives by the Alcohol and Health Forum on harmful alcohol consumption, will help to implement further this so-called New York agenda.

The Commissioner's speech will be available at around 6 pm at:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/dalli/index_en.htm

For more information please visit:

The Alcohol and Health Forum:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/forum/forum_details/index_en.htm

First progress report on the implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy, 2009:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/alcohol_progress.pdf

EU alcohol policy and action:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/policy/index_en.htm