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# **ALCOHOL IN EUROPE**

## **A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE**

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A report for the European Commission

***Peter Anderson and Ben Baumberg***

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**Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK**  
**June 2006**

**This report has been written by Peter Anderson and Ben Baumberg on behalf of the Institute of Alcohol studies, England.**

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_programme/howtoapply/call\\_096299\\_2003.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_programme/howtoapply/call_096299_2003.htm).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eurocare.org/btg/countryreports/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ias.org.uk>.

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/alcohol/ev\\_20050120\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/ev_20050120_en.htm).

<sup>5</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_information/dissemination/ev\\_20050830\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_information/dissemination/ev_20050830_en.htm).

<sup>6</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/alcohol/ev\\_20050926\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/ev_20050926_en.htm).

<sup>7</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/alcohol/ev\\_20050307\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/ev_20050307_en.htm).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.eurocare.org/btg/apn/minutes0505.html>.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.eurocare.org/btg](http://www.eurocare.org/btg).

## About the authors

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### **Dr. Peter Anderson MD, MPH, PhD**

International public health consultant

[pdanderson@compuserve.com](mailto:pdanderson@compuserve.com)

Dr. Anderson is an international expert on alcohol and tobacco policy. He was trained as a general practitioner and a specialist in public health medicine at the University of Oxford and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in England. His doctoral thesis was on the risk of alcohol. Having worked for eight years as the World Health Organization's European alcohol and tobacco policy adviser between 1992 and 2000, he now works as an international consultant employed on projects financed by the European Commission, the World Health Organization and several national and regional governmental organizations throughout the world. He holds honorary appointments in public health and primary care at the Universities of Oxford in England and Nijmegen in the Netherlands. He is policy adviser to Eurocare, the key European non-governmental organization on alcohol policy. He is the European Editor for the journal *Drug and Alcohol Review*, has over 100 publications in international scientific journals and is the author or editor of 16 books on alcohol and tobacco.

### **Ben Baumberg**

Policy and Research Officer, Institute of Alcohol Studies

[bbaumberg@ias.org.uk](mailto:bbaumberg@ias.org.uk)

Ben Baumberg has been researching alcohol issues and speaking to the media about alcohol for the Institute of Alcohol Studies since 2004. Prior to this he worked on alcohol policy and other issues for various Members of Parliament at Westminster, England. He was originally trained in Social and Political Sciences at Cambridge University, and is currently combining IAS work with continued studies in Social Policy and Research Methods at the London School of Economics. Particular interests in the alcohol field include world and European trade law, economic contributions to policymaking, the interaction of social trends and drinking habits, and socioeconomic differentials in alcohol consumption and harm.



## Preface

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In June 2001, the Council of the European Union, in its Conclusions on a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm, emphasized that a high level of human health protection should be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities, and recognized that alcohol is one of the key health determinants in the European Community.<sup>10</sup>

The Council stressed the desirability of developing a comprehensive Community strategy aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm comprising, in particular, an effective monitoring system on alcohol consumption, alcohol-related harm, and policy measures and their effects in the European Community; and a coordinated range of Community activities in fields such as research, consumer protection, transport, advertising, marketing, sponsoring, excise duties and other internal market issues, while fully respecting Member States' competencies. The Council invited the Commission to put forward proposals for a comprehensive Community strategy aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm, to complement national policies and with a timetable for action.

This public health report on alcohol, requested and financed by the European Commission, will describe the social, health and economic burden that alcohol brings to European citizens, families and to Europe as a whole; this is a burden that increases social marginalization and exclusion and places a strain on the viable, socially responsible and productive Europe, as envisaged by the Lisbon strategy.<sup>11</sup>

Whilst noting that, in the European Union, alcoholic beverages are important economic commodities, the report will note that alcohol-attributable disease, injury and violence cost the health, welfare, employment and criminal justice sectors some €125bn a year. In particular, alcohol-related harm has a negative impact on the competitive position of European businesses, since it lowers productivity, and causes the loss of working life-years, with €59bn of the costs due to alcohol resulting from lost production. The report will also note that alcohol, as an important contributor to health inequalities between and within European Member States, risks damaging social cohesion throughout the Union.

The report will find that, although much has been on alcohol policy in the countries of Europe, much more can still be done to reduce alcohol's burden and to promote individual and European health. The report will note that alcohol policy is everybody's business; it is not only an issue for the health sector, but also for other sectors of public policy, including, amongst others, agriculture, business, criminal justice, education, finance, labour, municipalities, transport, and social welfare.

The report will find that alcohol policy, a global public good and an integral part of the health and well-being of the citizens of Europe, can enhance social cohesion and social capital and improve health and safety in the living environment, thereby contributing to higher productivity and a sustainable economic development in the European Union, in line with the objectives set out in the Lisbon Strategy.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/c\\_175/c\\_17520010620en00010002.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/c_175/c_17520010620en00010002.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Lisbon strategy: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon\\_strategy/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html).

