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The European Commission
DG Health and Consumer Affairs
A Reflection Process for a New EU Health Strategy
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium
e-mail : Reflection-health-strategy@cec.eu.int

Re: Stakeholder consultation on “Enabling good health for all: a reflection process for a new EU health strategy”

Dear Commissioner Byrne,

Thank you for your invitation to participate in your reflection process on a new EU Health Strategy.

Anheuser-Busch welcomes the opportunity to share its views on those aspects of the debate that in some way affect our company, notably the discussion of alcohol abuse. Even though we have a relatively small presence in the European market, Anheuser-Busch is one of the world’s largest brewers and produces over 30 different brands, including our flagship brand, Budweiser. Perhaps equally important in this context, Anheuser-Busch is the global leader among all alcohol beverage companies in promoting responsible drinking.

Our commitment to fighting alcohol abuse dates back to the turn of the 20th century when we began our campaign “Budweiser Means Moderation.” In 1982, our company began its *Know When To Say When* campaign, and we were the first in the alcohol-beverage industry to run a responsible drinking campaign on network television. Those commercials debuted in 1985 in the United States and continue today.

Over the years, we have used various taglines, and most recently in January 2004, we introduced our *Responsibility Matters* campaign, which now serves as the umbrella theme for our alcohol abuse prevention efforts. Our commitment to responsibility is also carried out in our work in the EU – primarily in the United Kingdom, where Anheuser-Busch operates the Stag brewery and where Budweiser is the number two premium packaged lager.

Using our *Responsibility Matters* theme, we promote responsibility in the UK at venues and activities Budweiser sponsors, such as Manchester United, Manchester City, and Chelsea Football Club matches, as well as the Glastonbury and V2003 music festivals. Our responsible drinking message also appears on Budweiser point-of-sale marketing materials and select advertising.

Since 2000, we have partnered with the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) on its successful City Centre Safe initiative that has helped reduce irresponsible and abusive consumption. In addition, Budweiser is the presenting sponsor of the annual “Best Bar None” awards program organized by the GMP to recognize responsible bar management, as well as the Croydon “Best Bar None” program. In addition, we sponsor the Scooterman safe-ride home program in London and Manchester.

We have also hosted seminars in Dublin, London and Edinburgh over the past two years to highlight the “social norms” marketing approach to addressing alcohol abuse issues. This approach promotes the positive and true norm that, in fact, the majority of individuals who drink do so responsibly and without harm to themselves or others. These seminars, featuring Michael Haines, who is considered the father of the social norms marketing movement, discuss how this approach is being successfully used in the college and high-school settings in the United States and has helped reduce underage and abusive consumption on college campuses. The Greater Manchester Police also presented their application of the social norms theory in their City Centre Safe campaign during the seminar.

In addition, we have actively shared our views and experience with EU policymakers. For example, we shared our views and information on our programs with the European Commission during the preparation of its policy recommendations on Alcohol and Young People.

We believe that the policy recommendations on alcohol and young people put forth by the Commission by and large take the right approach. The Commission recognized abuse – not use – as the problem, prevention as important, and recommended a number of specific implementing measures emphasizing the importance of education – such as encouraging the production of advisory materials for parents to help them discuss alcohol issues with their children, something we have been doing since 1990.

Regardless of the country where we use our programs, our philosophy has always been to partner with a variety of organizations, both governmental and non-profit. We recognize that tackling the problems of abuse requires a team approach that involves parents, teachers, community organizations, law enforcement officials, the alcohol beverage industry, treatment and prevention authorities, the entertainment industry and many others. Since 1982, Anheuser-Busch and its distributors in the United States have invested nearly \$500 million in these efforts. More information on all of our responsibility programs is available on our web site www.beeresponsible.com.

General Observations on the Paper “*Enabling Good Health for All*”

1. We strongly support the EU’s comprehensive approach to a new health strategy – one that changes the emphasis “from treating ill health to promoting good health” and one that emphasizes that “[g]ood health is a shared responsibility.” We also strongly support your vision of the importance of health in European society and the European economy.
2. With respect to the issues more directly related to our business, we agree that an individual’s health is determined by the decisions they make regarding what they eat, drink and do, so enabling consumers to make the right choices *is* indispensable (p. 3). In our case, encouraging responsible choices is essential to the responsible consumption of

alcohol by adults. And while adult consumers should be encouraged to make the right choices, children need to be taught to do so.

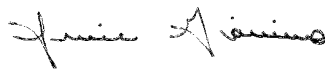
3. As stated above, that is why our approach focuses on reinforcing personal responsibility through education and awareness efforts. Through many years of experience we have learned that tackling alcohol abuse issues requires a team approach that involves parents, teachers, community organizations, law enforcement officials, the alcohol beverage industry, treatment and prevention authorities and many others. Successfully combating the problems associated with alcohol abuse also requires targeted solutions aimed at specific problems, such as drunk driving or underage drinking.
4. Our message to you, therefore, is that you enable consumers to make the right choices by investing in effective, proven educational programs and that you encourage the development of the community partnerships that help to make them a success. At the same time, we encourage you to avoid other approaches that do not respond to the specific problems of abuse but instead penalize even responsible consumption.

Conclusion

Anheuser-Busch has a long-standing commitment to promoting responsible consumption of our products and a demonstrated commitment to working with government and non-governmental entities alike. We are aware that the services of DG SANCO are working on new ideas on a broader set of issues to address the problems associated with the abuse of alcohol. We would appreciate the opportunity to further contribute our experience and ideas to that process.

Please feel free to contact me directly at +1 314 577 2301 or amie.gianino@anheuser-busch.com should you have any questions.

With regards,



Amie Gianino

Director, International Affairs

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