

EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM

TASK FORCE ON YOUTH-SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF ALCOHOL

3rd Meeting – Thursday 18 September 2008 (10h00 – 17h00)

Jean Monnet Building – Room M1
rue A. de Gasperi, Luxembourg-Kirchberg

SUMMARY REPORT

- 1) Welcome, adoption of draft agenda, setting the scene for the meeting
 - The agenda was adopted with minor adaptations (*to take account of speakers' travel schedules*)
 - The Chair (*Michael Hübel, Commission services*) summarised the work of the Task Force so far, focussing on the principles that were agreed in the previous meetings (contribute to making under-age and binge drinking socially unacceptable; involving young people in work; roll out / upscale existing good practice; no "one-size-fits-all" solution; need for monitoring, indicators, effectiveness; need to further develop evidence base).
- 2) "Trends and drivers in drinking habits of young people and of the alcohol-related harm they suffer" (based on the ESPAD project); presentation¹ by Björn Hibell (ESPAD)
 - The presentation used ESPAD 2003 data to illustrate drinking behaviour, and attitudes towards alcohol, of pupils aged 16. As regards drinking behaviour, the analysis shows that
 - alcohol consumption was most frequent in southern and north-western Europe;
 - intoxication rates were stable in most countries (16) and increased in 9 (7 of which situated in eastern Europe);
 - drunkenness and binge drinking were most frequent in the British Isles and northern Europe;
 - binge drinking was stable in most countries (11) and increased in 9 (7 of which situated in eastern Europe).

¹ all presentations made at this meeting can be viewed at the Commission's public health web site

As regards harm, the study shows a strong correlation between drunkenness and alcohol related problems, in particular regretted sex, unprotected sex, trouble with the police.

3) Involving youth:

a) "Teenagers' views on solutions to alcohol misuse. Report on a national consultation, Ireland"; presentation by Anne O'Donnell (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs) and Niamh Chapman (17, participated in the consultation)

- The presentation described the Irish National Children's Strategy and the role of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It focussed i. a. on the structures and procedures which allow active participation of young people in the process and presented the main recommendations made by young people in order to reduce alcohol-related harm (better enforce legal age, increase price of cheap alcohol, create alcohol-free youth facilities, implement age-specific education programmes...).
- The principle of active youth involvement was illustrated by the active – and much acclaimed - participation of a 17-year old youth in the presentation.
- The Chair underlined that other Member states might find it interesting to replicate this type of consultation exercise.

b) Alcohol Policy Youth Network (APYN): presentation of the APYN commitment made within the Forum framework by João Salviano

- The presentation described the new Alcohol Policy Youth Network, which was established with financial support from the Commission. The commitment made by the APYN as a member of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, in partnership with EURO CARE and the European Youth Forum, aims at developing information and education programmes, promoting effective behavioural change among children and adolescents, and developing a strategy aimed at curbing under-age drinking. 30 youth organisations from across Europe will be involved in the project.

c) Young people's perception of responsible selling and serving of alcohol to young people; presentation by Nathalie Rodriguez Mc Cullough (APYN)

- The presentation identified five areas which are of particular concern to young people: age (stronger enforcement of legal age); price (happy hours, loss-leaders, price of non-alcoholic drinks...); design, presentation and labelling (pre-mixed drinks, exotic/attractive flavours, indication of units of alcohol, issue of shot blister packs...); availability / opening hours (24 hour selling in certain shops, bars and petrol stations...) and marketing (portraying alcohol as youthful and fun-bringing, sponsorship of cultural and sports events, alcohol not separate from other products in stores...).

4) Clearing House: presentation of paper by Elizabeth Crossick (Brown-Forman), João Salviano (APYN) and Commission services

- As discussed at the Task Force meeting of 20-21 February, the purpose of the 'clearing house' could be to

- Help partnerships develop
 - Broker specific advice
 - Share/disseminate good practice
 - Help on evaluation/monitoring
 - Collect/disseminate evidence of effectiveness
- Elizabeth Crossick (Brown-Forman) and João Salviano (APYN), with inputs from the commission services, submitted a draft concept paper to the Task Force which further developed the potential design of such a scheme. The Clearing House would be linked to the European Alcohol and Health Forum and would involve interested stakeholders participating in the creation of a database of current activity and good practice, projects and programmes. It would enable the exchange of views and the sharing of good practice in an open and transparent way.
- The paper suggests that the clearing house could include:
- A European on-line database of good practice, indicators, evaluation methodologies, scientific research data to reduce alcohol related harm among young people, with the potential of expanding it to the broader alcohol policy field in the long term;
 - Templates for effective programmes;
 - Templates for measurement & evaluation methodologies to reach comparable data to assess effectiveness and impact on alcohol-related harm on the short, medium and long terms to be developed in partnership with the Science group of AHF;
 - Enable those conceiving and leading projects to open up for broader help and participation
 - evaluation mechanisms;
 - Sustainable measured and evaluated prevention programmes developed by stakeholders at local/regional, national and EU level.
- A first discussion of the paper in the Task Force showed broad support in principle for the scheme; some Task Force members would however wish the scheme to go beyond a mere data base, and to be used to develop joint projects. The discussions gave also rise to the following comments:
- while the clearing house would be clearly linked to the Forum, the content of the data base should be public;
 - the 'good practice' that gets into the data base would need to comply with certain requirements - a steering group could be set up to decide;
 - the clearing house should start with youth-related good practice, and could then be developed further to include other areas related to the prevention of alcohol harm;

- not only success stories should be in the data base, but also failures, in order to avoid making the same mistakes twice;
 - the Commission should provide some start-up funding for the scheme.
- The Chair invited the Task Force members to submit further comments on the draft document by the end of September. The Chair and the authors will then finalise the paper, in view of its submission to the next Forum plenary meeting.
- 5) Protection of young people from alcohol-related harm caused by others (violence, neglect etc.); presentation by Fiona Ryan (Alcohol Action Ireland)²
- The presentation described the alcohol-related harm suffered by children in Ireland. It underlined that in Ireland – which has among the highest per capita consumption of alcohol in Europe - one in ten children are estimated to suffer from parental alcohol misuse. The authors were particularly concerned about the relative statistical invisibility of children suffering alcohol related harm, and about the lack of specialised services for children affected by parental drinking: Alcohol Treatment Services focus on individual adult drinkers.
 - The Chair underlined that harm suffered by children because of irresponsible alcohol use in their environment is an extremely important issue, which will need to be pursued particularly at Member State level.
- 6) Report from Commission services on the 3rd Meeting of the Task Force on Marketing Communication (16 July 2008)
- The Commission services gave a brief summary of those issues discussed at the 3rd Meeting of the Task Force on Marketing Communication which are of particular interest for the Task Force on youth-specific aspects of alcohol (involvement of young people in self-regulation organisations, issue of 'not targeting youth' in advertising); a full report of the meeting is available at the Commission's public health web site.
- 7) Conclusions, next steps and any other business
- The Chair's main conclusions referred to the clearing house scheme, which he expects to be this Task Force's main input into the Forum process.
 - The Chair suggested that interesting projects implemented in Member States could be presented at future meetings of the Task Force.
 - The next meeting (date yet to be announced) should also include a presentation of the "Swimming with Crocodiles" project by ICAP.

² *Michael Klein of ENCARE who was also scheduled for a presentation on this issue had sent his apologies for not being able to participate due to illness*