

First Announcement:

Open Alcohol Forum – Brussels, Thursday 17 April 2008

Within the framework of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, the Commission services will organise an 'Open Forum' on Thursday, 17 April 2008 in Brussels.

The European Alcohol and Health Forum

As one cornerstone for the implementation of the Commission's 2006 Communication on an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm¹, the Commission has established a European Alcohol and Health Forum. The overall objective of the Forum is to provide a common platform for all interested stakeholders at EU level that pledge to step up actions relevant to reducing alcohol-related harm, notably in the following areas:

- strategies aimed at curbing under-age drinking;
- information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking and on responsible patterns of consumption;
- possible development of efficient common approaches throughout the Community to provide adequate consumer information;
- actions to better enforce age limits for selling and serving alcohol;
- interventions promoting effective behavioural change among children and adolescents;
- cooperation to promote responsibility in and prevent irresponsible commercial communication and sales.

Since the Forum was established in June 2007, its more than 50 members – health and consumer NGOs, youth and family organisations, medical professions, alcohol beverage producers, advertisers, retailers, wholesalers, caterers, insurers, broadcasters, publishers and other media ... - have made more than 70 formal commitments to implement meaningful and verifiable actions to reduce alcohol-related harm².

The Open Forum

In order to give interested bodies and organisations from the EU and beyond who are not Forum members an occasion to follow the work of the Forum, and to make their opinions known, the Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum³ foresees that an “Open Forum” will be convened once per year.

The Open Forum will be a platform for general exchange of information and for discussion with a broader range of interested parties; it will also provide networking possibilities between and among the different stakeholders who wish to contribute to the reduction of alcohol-related harm.

Apart from facilitating networking and a general exchange of ideas, the Open Forum will

- present the concept of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, and the concrete actions which it generates;

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/alcohol_com_en.htm

² the individual commitments can be consulted, and more details on the Forum process can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/Forum/alcohol_forum_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/Alcohol_charter2007.pdf

- allow non-members of the European Alcohol and Health Forum to suggest further kinds of action to Forum members;
- provide an update of relevant policy developments at EU, Member State and international level.

The programme of the Open Forum will comprise the following major elements:

- the dimension of alcohol-related harm in Europe, the need for multi-stakeholder action at all levels, and the role of the European Alcohol and Health Forum;
- good practice: examples for effective action to reduce alcohol-related harm with a strong potential for replication in other regions or settings
- policy development: European Union and Member States level
- international perspective: activities of the World Health Organisation to reduce alcohol-related harm

A detailed programme will be posted on the Commission's Public Health website⁴ closer to the event.

Eligibility and Registration

All organisations and individuals with a particular interest in the reduction of alcohol-related harm may participate in the Open Forum.

Previous registration is required; organisations and individuals wishing to participate should register by e-mail (subject: registration Open Forum 17/04/2008) to the following address

SANCO-C4-HEALTH-DETERMINANTS@ec.europa.eu

by 21 March 2008, indicating the name, affiliation (if any) and e-mail address, and describing briefly their interest in the Open Forum.

Registration is free and will be granted on a 'first come, first serve' basis for a maximum of 250 participants.

For a limited number of participants, the Commission can reimburse travel and subsistence costs according to the rules in force; participants requiring reimbursement should state this in the e-mail requiring registration for the Open Forum.

More information

Supplementary information on the European Alcohol and Health Forum is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/Forum/alcohol_forum_en.htm

More general information on the Commission's activities aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/alcohol_en.htm

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm