



Luxembourg, 22 February 2005
SANCO C2/JFR/cs D(2005)320016

Summary record of discussion between stakeholders about a draft report on alcohol and health, Luxembourg 20.1.2005 10-16.30h

1. At the invitation of the Commission Services, a group of stakeholders (see attendance list attached) participated in a meeting to discuss a draft report being prepared (on the basis of a tender) by the Institute of Alcohol Studies UK. The reference to the contract is SI2 378841. The report is entitled "Reporting and analysis of public health issues: health social and economic impact of alcohol". It is due for completion and submission to the Commission Services by the Institute by March 2005. Following contacts between representatives of the alcohol producers and the Director General, an instruction was given to organise this meeting in order to allow the contractor to outline the main aspects of the report, and stakeholders the opportunity to express their views.
2. The Commission Services introduced the agenda for the meeting (attached). The process for granting the contract for preparation of the report on the basis of a call for tenders published in the Official Journal was outlined. (Invitation to tender SANCO/G/3//2003/06).
3. The contractor presented a series of slides (attached) outlining some of the main points contained in the draft report. The following points were addressed in detail:
 - Public health purpose of alcohol policy
 - Terminology
 - Alcohol consumption in Europe
 - What determines young peoples drinking
 - The individual harm done by alcohol
 - Disability free life years
 - A populations level of drinking
 - Violence to families, women and children
 - The impact of school based education
 - Brief interventions for hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption
 - Choosing different policy options

4. In reaction, stakeholders (Brewers of Europe and Comité du Vin) referred to a letter sent to Mr. Madelin criticizing the alleged lack of independence and bias of Dr. Anderson, one of the contracting authors of the report. Dr. Anderson was given a copy of the letter concerned in the meeting, but declined to comment. Several stakeholders asked that they be involved in determining policy and asked to be given copies of the draft report on alcohol. Some asked for a further meeting before the report was finalised.
5. Stakeholders then made a series of remarks on the slides presented by the contractor: In particular, Comité du Vin intervened to point out that they produce specific drink products and not pure alcohol. They asked that the various products containing alcohol be distinguished in the report. A discussion took place on the need for targeted strategies addressed at problem drinkers or general population strategies. Several persons raised the need to distinguish between various age groups (children, adolescents, under 25's). The importance of recognising cultural differences in approaches to alcohol consumption was repeated by several participants. The contribution of the alcohol industry to entertainment and cultural events was mentioned. The effects of alcohol in criminality were discussed, with Comité de Vin calling for a reinforcement of measures to repress drunkenness. Several participants criticised the methodology suggested by the contractor for calculating alcohol related harm in drafting the report: this was particularly the case as regards the ECAS study ("European Comparative Alcohol Study" published in 2002 and partly financed by the Commission), where a series of remarks were made on the approximate nature of some data. An offer was made by one participant to provide relevant national data (Professor Tempesta).
6. The Chairman proposed that, in order to ensure that the views of all participants were correctly and fully represented, each participant who so desired should send to the Commission Services by 3 February a list of points which should be recorded in the summary record of the meeting. This was agreed by participants as being a fair procedure.
7. The meeting itself took place in a calm and constructive atmosphere. It should be noted that since the departure of Mr. Antonio Doronzo there is no longer any official dealing with the alcohol report file in Unit C2 until his replacement.

John F. Ryan
Head of Unit
(Signed)

Enclosure:
Agenda, List of Participants, Slides of contractor:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/ev_20050120_en.htm

c.c.: Messrs R. Madelin, F. Sauer, M. Rajala, E. Erginel, A. Doronzo,
K. Paaso, C2

Annexes

Annexes are available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/ev_20050120_en.htm#1

Annex 1 :

Comments by Prof. Ian Gilmore - Liverpool University

Annex 2:

Comments by Prof. Enrico Tempesta - Osservatorio Permanente sui Giovani e l'Alcool

Annex 3:

Comments by Mr Hemut B. Wagner – Amsterdam Group

Annex 4:

Comments by Mr Pierre-Olivier Bergeron – The Brewers of Europe

Annex 5:

Comments by Dr Peter Anderson - Public Health Consultant

Annex 6:

Comments by Mr Jamie Fortescue - CEPS - The European Spirits Organisation

Annex 7:

Comments by Nina Schmidt-Petersen – Comité Vins

Annex 8:

Comments by Dr Rudolph Nickenig – COPA-COGEMA