

Alcohol-related harm in Europe - Key data

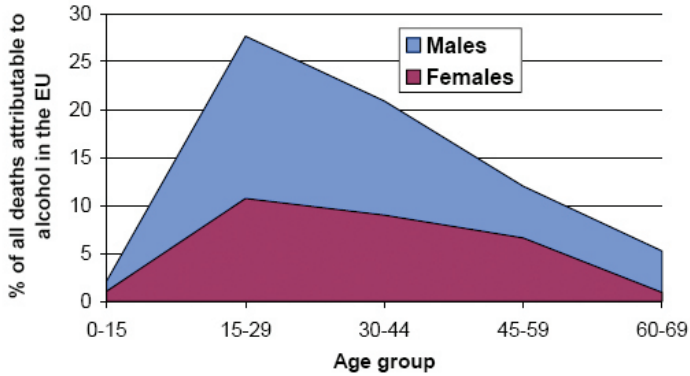
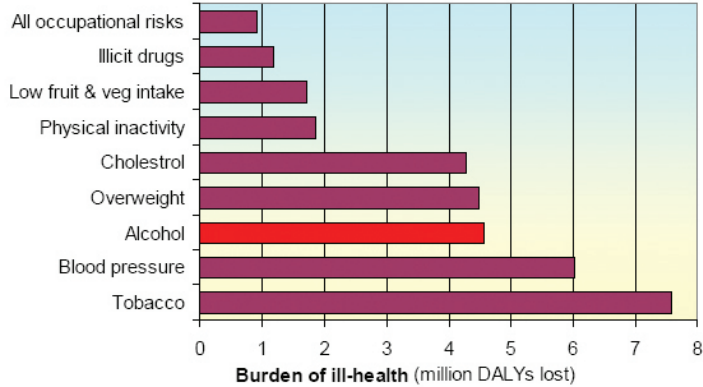
October 2006

ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM IN THE EU

- **55 million adults** are estimated to drink at harmful levels in the EU (more than 40g of alcohol, i.e. 4 drinks a day, for men and over 20g, i.e. 2 drinks a day, by women). Drinking more than this is known to carry a **health risk**¹.
- Harmful alcohol consumption is estimated to be responsible for approximately **195 000** deaths a year in the EU² due to e.g. accidents, liver disease, cancers etc.
- Harmful alcohol use is the **3rd biggest cause of early**

death and illness in the EU, behind tobacco and high blood pressure³.

- **More than 1 in 4 traffic accident deaths** on EU roads is caused by **drink-driving** (approximately 10 000 per year).
- **More than 1 out of every 4 deaths among young men (aged 15-29 years) in the EU is due to alcohol** (often caused by road traffic accidents, homicide, violence, etc) and 1 in every 10 deaths among young women⁴.



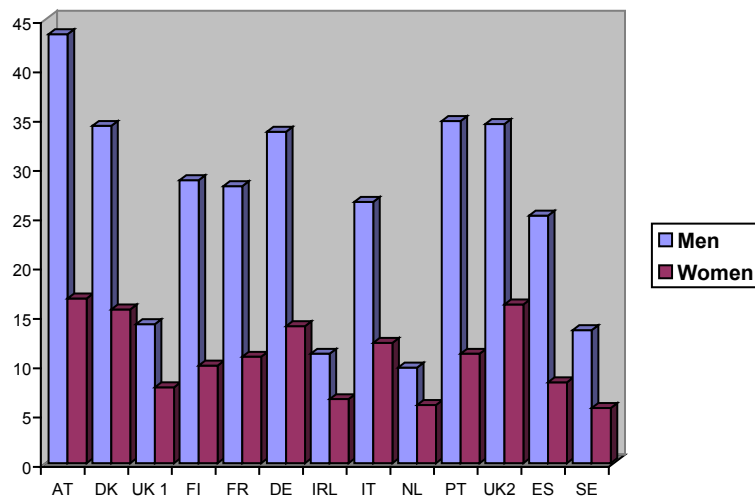
ALCOHOL AND DISEASE

- Harmful alcohol use is a **cause of some 60 different diseases and conditions**, including lung disease, breast cancer, mental and behavioural disorders, gastro-intestinal conditions, cardiovascular problems, and foetal and reproductive disorders⁵.
- **Severe diseases, such as liver cirrhosis**, are growing at an alarming rate and strike younger people than in the past. For instance, in England there has been a ten-

fold increase among women aged 35-44 dying from this disease over the last 30 years⁶.

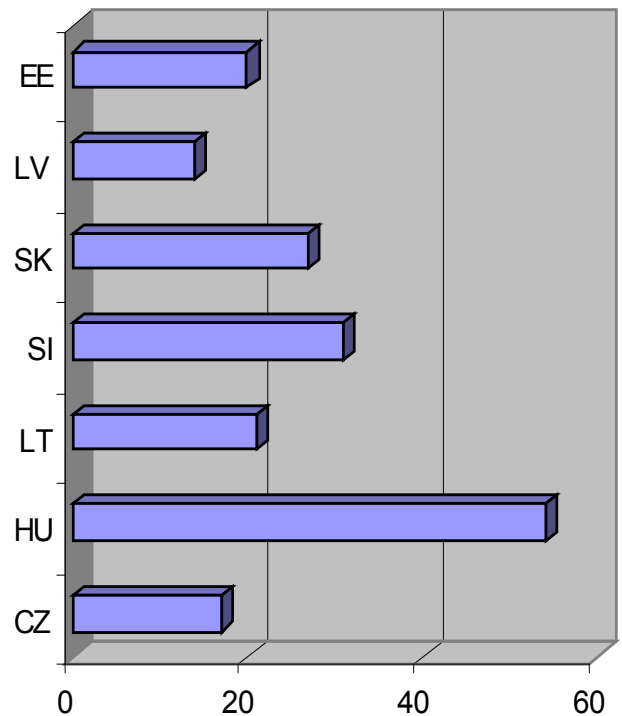
- Exposure to alcohol during pregnancy can **impair babies' brain development**. In France, more than **700 children** were born with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome in 2001, and more than 60,000 people are estimated to be living with this condition⁹.

Death rates from liver cirrhosis at all ages per 100,000. Data collected between 1997-2000, selected EU-15 Member States⁷



Liver cirrhosis is caused by long-term excessive drinking by individuals, regardless of their drinking patterns. These graphs demonstrate that such harm is very significant all across Member States.

Death rates from liver cirrhosis at all ages per 100,000, (2003) selected EU-10 Member States, male and female combined⁸



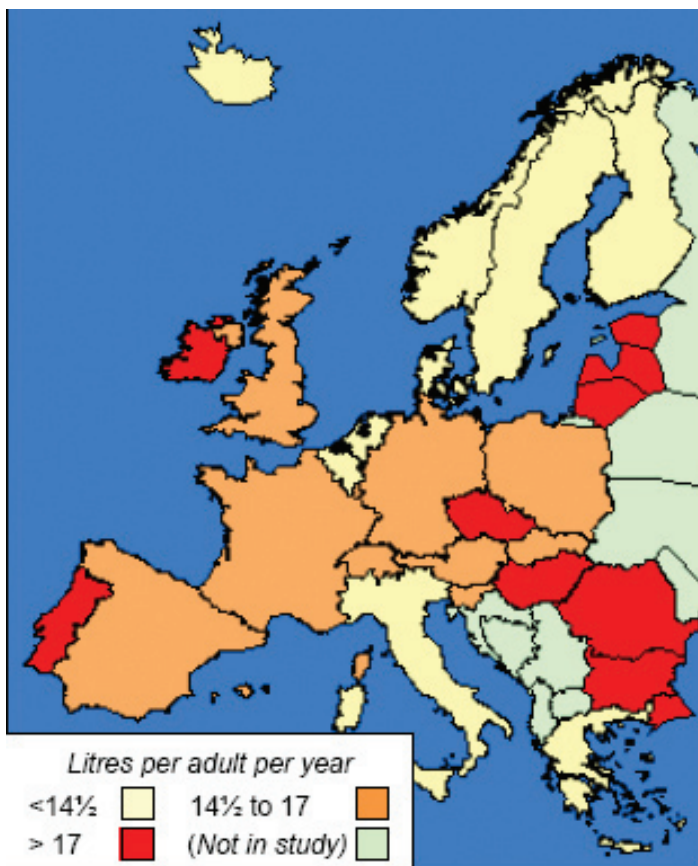
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- The EU is the **heaviest drinking region of the world**¹⁰. Total alcohol consumption in the EU amounts to an average of 11 litres of pure alcohol drunk per adult each year¹¹ (11 litres = 1,400 small beers per person per year)
- The levels reached in the 1970s were even higher (15 litres per adult per year). This decline can be explained by a decline in wine consumption in France and

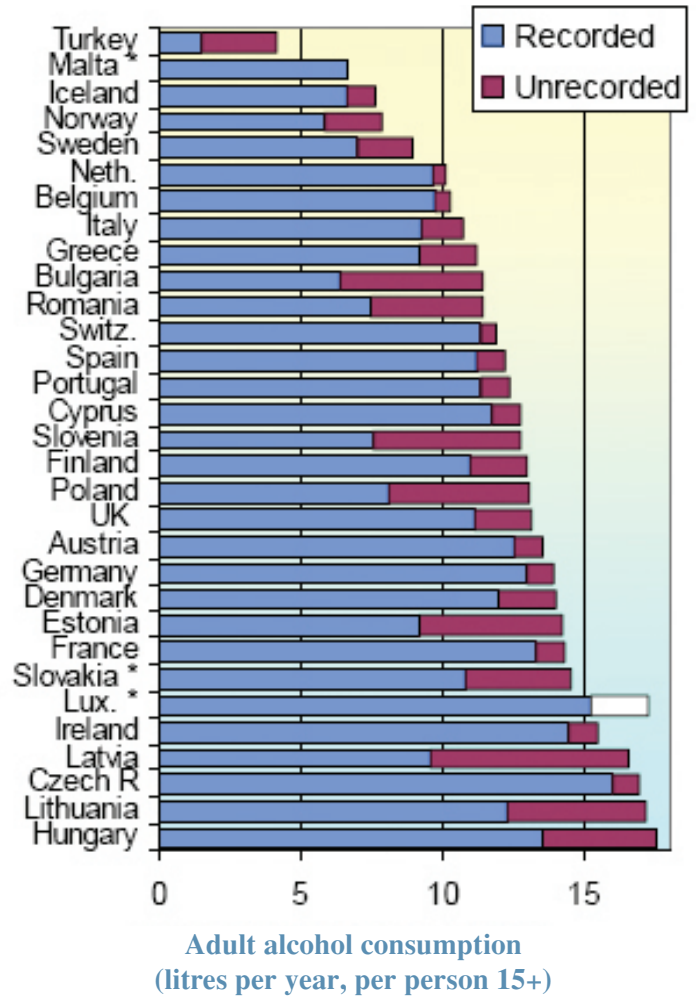
southern Europe in recent decades, partly due to less alcohol being consumed during the working day.

- However, this decline is accompanied by a **rise in harmful drinking patterns** among some 15% of those who do consume alcohol¹³, such as binge drinking (5 or more drinks on one occasion) and under-age drinking.

Total alcohol consumption per drinker in Europe in 2002 ¹²



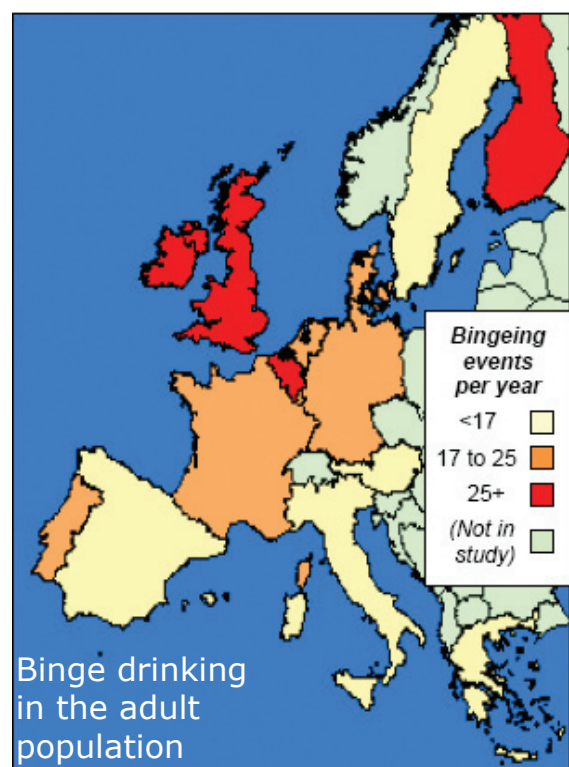
Total alcohol consumption per drinker in Europe in 2002



Adult alcohol consumption (litres per year, per person 15+)

BINGE DRINKING IN THE ADULT POPULATION ¹⁴

- **Binge drinking** has become more widespread throughout Europe, especially in the 10 new EU Member States. For instance, in a 2003 World Health Organisation survey, over 38% of male drinkers in Poland and 30% of male drinkers in Hungary described themselves as weekly binge drinkers. This compares to 24% in the UK and 8.5% in Spain.
- As regards **under-age drinking**, according to the 2003 WHO study on 'Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children', 5% of 11-year olds across the EU, 12% of 13-year olds and **29% of 15-year olds report weekly drinking**.
- The average age of the first time youngsters describe getting **drunk** is **13.6 years** for boys and **13.9 years** for girls.
- In 2003, **23% of 15–16 year old boys** in the EU reported **binge-drinking** at least 3 times in the previous 30 days, according to the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD).

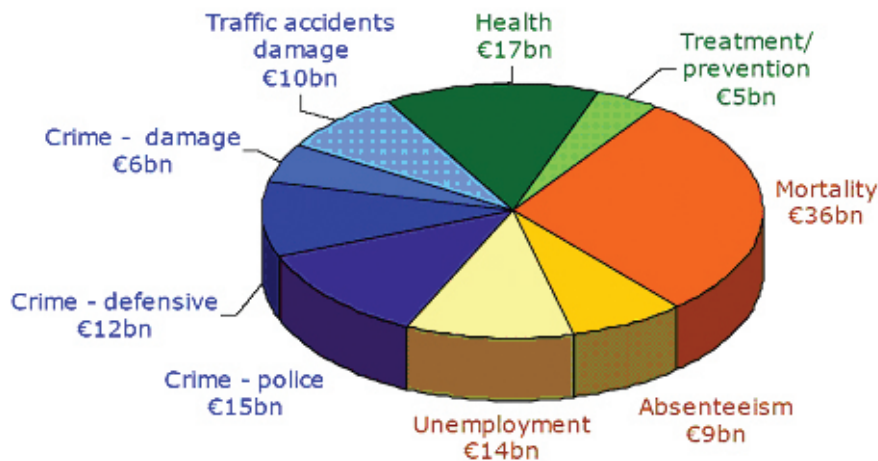


ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM AND THE ECONOMY

■ The **cost of alcohol-related harm** to the EU's economy has been estimated at €125 billion for 2003, equivalent to **1.3% of GDP**. This estimate includes, amongst others, losses due to underperformance at work, work absenteeism and premature death¹⁵.

■ The actual **spending on alcohol-related problems** in the EU is estimated at about **€66 billion**, e.g. on crime, traffic accidents, health, and disease treatment and prevention¹⁶.

The tangible cost of alcohol-related harm by component, 2003¹⁷



Footnotes

- ¹ Source: Global Burden of Disease Project (Rehm et al 2004) adopted for the report Alcohol in Europe, Anderson P, Baumberg B, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK June 2006
- ² Source: Adapted from WHO's Global Burden of Disease study (Rehm et al 2004), Alcohol in Europe Anderson P, Baumberg B, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK June 2006
- ³ Top 9 risk factors for ill-health in the EU, Adapted from WHO's Global Burden of Disease study (Rehm et al 2004 Alcohol in Europe Anderson P, Baumberg B, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK June 2006
- ⁴ The share of deaths attributable to alcohol in the EU citizens younger than age 70 years (year 2000). Source: Global Burden of Disease data (Rehm 2005)
- ⁵ Several sources: Gutjahr et al 2001, English et al. 1995; Ridolfo and Stevenson 2001; Room et al 2005). Alcohol in Europe Anderson P, Baumberg B, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK June 2006
- ⁶ Institute of Alcohol Studies UK 'Alcohol Consumption and Harm in the UK and EU'.
- ⁷ Institute of Alcohol Studies UK 'Alcohol Consumption and Harm in the UK and EU'. ('UK1' denotes England and Wales while 'UK2' denotes Scotland.)
- ⁸ WHO's Global Burden of Disease study (Rehm et al 2004)
- ⁹ (INSERM 2001).
- ¹⁰ Source: WHO, World drink trends
- ¹¹ Alcohol in Europe Anderson P, Baumberg B, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK June 2006 http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/news_alcoholineurope_en.htm
- ¹² 'Recorded' = legal domestic sales. 'Unrecorded' = illegal domestic and private imported sales
- ¹³ Alcohol in Europe A public health perspective, P Anderson and B Baumberg, Institute of Alcohol Studies, UK 2006
- ¹⁴ Eurobarometer Health, Food and Alcohol and Safety, 2003: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/ebs_186_en.pdf
- ¹⁵ Report on Alcohol in Europe (Anderson and Baumberg), June 2006
- ¹⁶ An Ex Ante Assessment of the Economic Impacts of EU Alcohol Policies, (Rand Corporation), July 2006
- ¹⁷ Report on Alcohol in Europe (Anderson and Baumberg), June 2006