Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum
Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for any use that might be made of the following information.

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union

Freephone number*:
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

* Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00800 numbers or may charge for these calls.

Online information about the European Union in 23 languages is available at: http://europa.eu

Further information on the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007


© European Communities, 2007
Reproduction is authorised, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium
Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum
In October 2006 the Commission adopted an EU Alcohol Strategy. This marked an important starting point of a long and hard effort to reduce alcohol-related harm in the EU.

One of the cornerstones to implement the EU strategy will be stakeholders’ actions. On 7 June 2007, 50 European non-governmental organisations and businesses, met in Brussels to sign the Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

The Forum is a common platform for action. Its members are economic operators and Non-Governmental Organisations that are willing to devote time and resources to adopt meaningful actions to prevent alcohol-related harm. EU Member States, European Institutions, the World Health Organisation and the International Organisation of Vine and Wine participate as observers.

My expectations from this Forum are high. I would like to see meaningful actions taken forward that can contribute towards the protection of our citizens, and especially our young people, from alcohol-related harm. I hope that the Forum will show that providing a common platform for stakeholder cooperation will be a “winning concept”.

Markos Kyprianou,
Commissioner for Health
1. The Issue

Harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption is a key health determinant and one of the main causes of premature death and avoidable disease. It is a net cause of 7.4% of all ill-health and early death in the European Union, and has a negative impact on labour and productivity.

There are different cultural habits related to alcohol consumption in various Member States. While most adults consume alcohol responsibly, harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption hurts people. It also harms economic development and society as a whole, and generates costs to the health and social systems, law enforcement and public order.

Average alcohol consumption has been decreasing in the EU. But the proportion of children, adolescents and young adults with harmful and hazardous consumption patterns has increased in many Member States over the last ten years. Harmful drinking patterns in many parts of the EU, including increasing trends in under-age “binge-drinking” and the rising frequency of under-age drinking in many European countries have long-term adverse health effects and increase the risk of social harm.

Young people are particularly at risk, as hazardous alcohol consumption drives over 10% of EU female mortality and around 25% of male mortality in the 15–29 age group.

The harmful and hazardous consumption of alcohol has effects not only on those who drink, but also on others and on society. Harmful effects of alcohol tend to be greater in less advantaged social groups, and therefore contribute to inequalities in health.

Policies aimed at the prevention and treatment of harmful and hazardous consumption as well as appropriate information on responsible patterns of consumption have important benefits for individuals and families, but also address social costs and the labour market, and will contribute to fostering competitiveness in line with the Lisbon objectives, and with the objective of more Healthy Life Years for all.

The Commission adopted in 2006 an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm. The Strategy addresses the adverse health effects related to harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, as well as the related social and economic consequences.

With this objective, the Commission has identified five priority themes, which are relevant in all Member States and for which Community action as a complement to national policies has an added value:

- Protect young people, children and the unborn child;
- Reduce injuries and death from alcohol-related road accidents;
- Prevent alcohol-related harm among adults and reduce the negative impact on the workplace;
- Inform, educate and raise awareness on the impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption, and on appropriate consumption patterns;
- Develop and maintain a common evidence base at EU level.
2. A Forum for Action

As one cornerstone for the implementation of this Strategy, the signatories of this Charter have agreed to establish 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.

There are a number of activities linked to alcohol-related harm that have been carried out over the last years in fields such as road safety, commercial communication, consumer and agricultural policy, and data collection at local, national or EU level. The Forum is not designed to replace or subsume all existing activities. Those who participate in the Forum may engage outside its auspices in other actions designed to reduce alcohol harm. Nor can a multi-stakeholder voluntary framework encompass all current fields of action around alcohol. But the Forum can, as appropriate, seek close coordination with all other actors, so that successful endeavours can be more promptly shared with potential partners and emulators across the European Union as a whole.

The Chair will regularly inform the participants of the Forum of ongoing work that could have an impact on alcohol-related harm, including relevant activities within the EU Institutions and the bodies described in Annex 1. The Forum process will be open for development as new evidence and good practices emerge. The results of work inspired by participation in the Forum can provide input for further policy development in this area.
3. Operation

The Chair shall organise the work of the Forum in a transparent manner, and may consult participants as it sees fit, including by the establishment of a balanced group of participants able to advise on issues of process.

**PLENARY MEETINGS**

The Forum will meet two times per year.

The Forum will be chaired by the Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission. The Chair will ensure that a cooperative and action-oriented approach is respected, and that the activities of the Forum are in line with this Charter and with EU established policies.

**OPEN FORUM**

In order to give interested non-member bodies and organisations from the EU and beyond an occasion to follow the work of the Forum, and make their opinions known, an “Open Forum” will be convened once per year.

**SCIENCE GROUP**

A Science Group will be established by the Forum. At the request of participants, the Group provides scientific advice and guidance on matters under discussion by the Forum.

**TASK FORCES**

The Forum can establish Task Forces, normally not more than two in operation at any time, which will work towards agreed objectives on the basis of specified mandates. Task Forces report to the Forum.
4. **Commitments**

The members of the Forum subscribe to the following principles:

- Members agree to the process and objectives set out in this Charter.

- Members will provide detailed information on the commitments they make towards reducing alcohol-related harm, in the form of an action plan. Commitments will be defined by each actor, reflecting each organisation’s objectives and resources.

- For each commitment, this action plan will indicate the level of relevant current activities in 2005/2006, as a baseline. The aim is that going forward Forum members agree to devote an increasing level of effort, beyond these baselines, to the implementation of these commitments. It is understood that each participant’s commitments will reflect and respect their specific and essential values, such as the pursuit of public health improvement, media editorial independence, or the cultural contexts of producer traditions.

- These action plans will indicate measurable objectives, who the owners of the commitments are, how the proposed action would contribute to reducing alcohol-related harm (relevance), the resources allocated to each commitment, a timetable for the implementation, and the dissemination approach.

- These action plans are made public on the Commission’s websites, and in publications.

- Commitments from umbrella organisations at European level may include actions taken by all or part of their membership. Commitments for action at European level made within the Forum process may need to be implemented in agreement with national or local stakeholders, and in varying ways at national and sub-national level.

- In line with the annexed Monitoring Commitment, all members of the Forum agree to report on the input, output and outcomes of the commitments, which will be presented at a website set up for this purpose. The Forum will review reported data at regular intervals. The results of these reviews will provide input for the further development of the Forum process, and for the individual action plans of the Forum’s members.

- Periodic reports will be published on the Commission’s website, consulting the Forum, to give a synopsis and evaluation of progress. The Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection will take steps under the Public Health Programme to facilitate the independent study of performance of at least some of the commitments implemented within the Forum process.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ACTIONS**

The members of the Forum subscribe to the following approach to monitoring and evaluation:

- All members of the Forum agree to monitor and evaluate the performance of their commitments in a transparent, participative and accountable way, so that there is sufficient outside involvement in reviewing progress and outcomes to create trust in the process. All members of the Forum agree to present a monitoring and evaluation plan for each commitment. For this purpose, they agree to adhere to the Monitoring Commitment which is annexed to the present Charter.
5. Membership

Forum members should be umbrella organisations operating at a European level, capable of playing an active role in reducing alcohol-related harm in the EU, and willing to engage in concrete and verifiable commitments towards this end. Organisations operating at national or sub-national level, or individual companies, can also be members of the Forum, if they are willing to engage in concrete and verifiable commitments under the Forum process and if their European-level umbrella organisation or federation is a member of the Forum.

Where commitments are being delivered by such individual members of broader organisations, these members attend Forum meetings under the aegis of their umbrella organisation.

At launch, the Forum does not yet incorporate all possible members. Further organisations may apply to become members of the Forum if they subscribe to the working methods and objectives set out in this Charter and its annexes, and fulfil the requirements mentioned therein. Decisions on membership are taken by the Forum, on a proposal by the Chair.

The founding members of the Forum are:

- Advertising Information Group (Zentralverband der deutschen Werbewirtschaft and Fachverband Werbung und Marktkommunikation Österreich)
- Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
- Association of small and independent breweries in Europe (SIB)
- Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses (Egta)
- Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins (CEEV)
- Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the EU – General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the EU (COPA-COECECA)
- EUROCARE including as owners of specific commitments:
  - Alcohol Action Ireland
  - Association Nationale de Prévention en Alcoologie et Addictologie (ANPAA)
  - EUROCARE Italia
  - Estonian Temperance Union
  - German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS)
  - Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS)
  - IOGT-NTO
  - National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention (STAP)
- EUROCOMMERCE including as owners of specific commitments:
  - British Retail Consortium
  - Delhaize Group
  - Royal Ahold
- European Association of Communications Agencies
- European Federation of Associations of Beers and Beverages Wholesalers (CEGROBB)
- European Federation of Magazine Publishers (FAEP)
- European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)
- European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD)
- European Midwives Association (EMA)
- European Mutual Help Network for individuals and families with Alcohol Related Problems (EMNA)
- European Public Health Alliance including as owners of specific commitments:
  - Royal College of Physicians, London
- European Publishers Council (EPC)
- European Sponsorship Association (ESA)
• European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)

• European Youth Forum
  including as owners of specific commitments:
  • National Youth Council of Ireland

• Institut de Recherches Scientifiques sur les boissons alcoolisées (IREB)

• International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP)

• ReLeaf (European Young Persons’ Network for Drug and Alcohol Health Promotion)

• Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)

• The Brewers of Europe
  including as owners of specific commitments:
  • Heineken (International)
  • INBEV
  • SABMiller

• The European Spirits Organisation (CEPS)
  including as owners of specific commitments:
  • Bacardi Martini
  • Brown-Forman
  • Diageo
  • Moët Hennessy
  • Pernod Ricard S.A.
  • The Scotch Whisky Association
  • V&S Group

• World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)

**Observers**

Moreover, representatives of public institutions at global, European and national level committed to supporting the work of the Forum and actively participating in its meetings take part in the work of the Forum as observers.

Observers of the Forum are:

• The European Parliament

• EU Member States

• The Economic and Social Committee

• The Committee of the Regions

• The World Health Organization, represented by Headquarters and the Regional Office for Europe, contributes to the Forum in relevant technical areas

• The International Organisation of Vine and Wine contributes to the Forum in relevant technical areas

1. Other relevant international organisations may become observers of the Forum upon request.
Signatures of Founding Members

Advertising Information Group
(Zentralverband der deutschen Werbewirtschaft and Fachverband Werbung und Marktkommunikation Österreich)

Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

Association of small and independent breweries in Europe (SIB)

Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses (Egta)

Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins (CEEV)

Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the EU – General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the EU (COPA-COGECA)

EUROCARE

- Alcohol Action Ireland

- Association Nationale de Prévention en Alcoologie et Addictologie (ANPAA)
- EUROCARE Italia
- Estonian Temperance Union
- German Centre for Addiction Issues (DHS)
- Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS)

- IOGT-NTO
- National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention (STAP)
- British Retail Consortium

- Delhaize Group
- Royal Ahold

EUROCOMMERCE
European Association of Communications Agencies
European Federation of Associations of Beers and Beverages Wholesalers (CEGROBB)
European Federation of Magazine Publishers (FAEP)

European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)

European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD)

European Midwives Association (EMA)

European Mutual Help Network for individuals and families with Alcohol Related Problems (EMNA)

European Public Health Alliance

- Royal College of Physicians, London

- National Youth Council of Ireland

European Sponsorship Association (ESA)

European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)

European Youth Forum

- National Youth Council of Ireland

European Publishers Council (EPC)

- Royal College of Physicians, London

- National Youth Council of Ireland

Maggie Cunningham
Institut de Recherches Scientifiques sur les boissons alcoolisées (IREB)

International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP)

ReLeaf (European Young Persons’ Network for Drug and Alcohol Health Promotion)

Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)

The Brewers of Europe

The European Spirits Organisation (CEPS)

Heineken (International)

INBEV

SABMiller

Bacardi Martini

Brown-Forman

Diageo
- Moët Hennessy

- Pernod Ricard S.A.

- The Scotch Whisky Association

- V&S Group

World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)
Note: The Charter signed on 7 June 2007 contains the following annexes, which are not reproduced here:

- Annex 1: Forum Relations with other Structures
- Annex 2: Monitoring Commitment
- Annex 3: Mandate of Science Group
- Annex 4: Decision establishing Task Forces

These annexes, together with further information on the Forum process, can be consulted at the following web site:
European Commission

Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2007 — 18 pp. — 29.7 x 21.0 cm

Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum