



Flash Report
High level meeting of the Committee on
National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA)
Brussels, 17 November 2011

The 9th meeting of the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA) took place on 17 November 2011. For the first time Member States were represented at senior level, in addition to regular CNAPA members. Attendance was very high. The meeting was chaired by Despina Spanou, Principal Advisor with DG Health and Consumers and Chair of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF).

The Director-General for Health and Consumers, Paola Testori Coggi set the scene. She highlighted that it is important to take stock of what has been achieved through the current EU Alcohol Strategy and to start shaping a common vision for the Commission's work on alcohol and health after 2012. She put the work to reduce alcohol related harm in the context of recent developments such as the UN Summit on Non Communicable Diseases in which alcohol was confirmed as one of the four major risk factors. She emphasised the need to protect children and young people. Paola Testori-Coggi concluded by inviting Member States to take an active role in the evaluation of the alcohol strategy, and to provide the necessary political support for work on alcohol related harm after 2012.

Stock take: action at European and National Level

Despina Spanou summarised work and achievements in the framework of the European Alcohol and Health Forum. Krzysztof Brzozka (Poland) informed participants about alcohol related initiatives of the Polish EU Presidency. Maria Renström (Sweden) discussed trends in alcohol policy development in EU Member States. Triinu Täht presented an

overview of the process towards a revision of alcohol policy in Estonia. Finally, Javier Sanchez Mariana informed about the Manifest against alcohol consumption by minors adopted in September 2011 in Spain.

Round table: Added value from EU strategy on alcohol related harm and coordination at EU level

The purpose of the round table discussion was to receive feedback from Member States on the current strategy and its implementation. There was clear consensus that the EU strategy has been a stimulus for enhanced action at national level. The CNAPA was considered to be a useful tool for coordination and exchanges of good practice. It was suggested that further high level meetings should be held. The Forum was also discussed, and some participants felt that economic operators should focus action on areas they can best influence.

The Science Group's opinion on alcohol and the workplace

Peter Anderson, member of the Alcohol and Health Forum's Science Group, presented headline findings from the Science Group's report *Alcohol, Work and Productivity* which summarizes evidence of links between harmful drinking and productivity and employment, and looks at concrete interventions in the workplace. Sandra Dybowski (Germany) presented a brief comment highlighting the report's usefulness for Member States and highlighting the need to integrate alcohol harm prevention into wider workplace health promotion.

Update of the alcohol situation

Lars Møller (WHO) summarised trends in alcohol consumption, harm and policies in EU Member States based on new data collected by a joint WHO/Commission survey. Such cooperation between the Commission and the WHO in this area was considered major progress, and areas for further work were pointed out.

Evaluation of EU Alcohol Strategy

An independent contractor will assess the overall added value of the EU alcohol strategy and its implementation through the EAHF and the CNAPA. The first results will be available for discussion in the next meeting of CNAPA. The conclusions of the evaluation will be available by mid-2012 and will feed into decision-making on EU action after 2012.

Round table: What actions at EU level will support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm after 2012?

The priority themes identified in the current EU alcohol strategy were considered to be still valid. It was stressed that along with a sharpened focus on children and young people work is needed across all relevant target groups. It was generally agreed that the objectives of the current strategy should be continued to be pursued. Work on data and indicators should be expanded and it was suggested to consider targets. The Commission should continue to coordinate actions by Member States and stakeholders. Work towards synergy across other EU actions and policies as considered essential. There was a clear call for a comprehensive new EU strategy on alcohol related harm.

Information on actions at EU level

Priscillia Hunt (RAND Europe) summarised key results of a study on the affordability of alcoholic beverages carried out for the Commission, focussing on the

extent to which changes in excise duties are passed through to consumer prices.

José Fernandez Garcia (DG Mobility and Transport) discussed drink-driving in the context of EU road safety policy, and presented results from the Driving under the Influence of Drugs, Alcohol and Medicines project carried out under the EU Research Framework programme.

Alexandra Nikolakopoulou (DG Health and Consumers) informed about the recently adopted Regulation on Food Information for Consumers and its relevance for labelling alcoholic beverages.

Conclusions by the Chair

There is no doubt about the importance of an EU strategy to support Member States in tackling alcohol related harm. The upcoming evaluation will shed light to the extent the EU strategy has influenced national policies. There is wide support for a comprehensive EU strategy to continue work on the identified priority themes; vies expressed supported the need for attention to more work in certain areas such as the workplace and emerging challenges such as digital marketing. The wider context of political endorsement to harmful alcohol intake as one of the risk factors for Non-Communicable Diseases should also be taken into account. WHO work on alcohol related harm is recognised as an indication of broader evolution in public health policies on alcohol. Monitoring and strengthening the knowledge base is essential and cooperation with WHO in this area should be developed on a structural basis.

The next meeting of the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA) will be on 22 March 2012, and a further High Level meeting is foreseen for later in that year.