

EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM

6th Plenary meeting

BRUSSELS, 11 March 2010

SUMMARY REPORT

The meeting was chaired by Robert Madelin, Director General, DG Health and Consumers.

1. Welcome

- The Chair welcomed all participants (*cf. List in Annex 1*). He highlighted that with a new Commissioner in place, alongside a new European Parliament, there would now be a political conversation at EU level that will have implications for public health. The political conversation will revisit issues such as subsidiarity and roles of regulation versus self regulation. He referred also to the current situation of "crisis and austerity" and the need to focus on the essentials rather than the 'nice to haves'.
- He highlighted that an evaluation of the Nutrition Platform is on-going and that there will also be an evaluation of the Alcohol Forum.
- The Chair proposed to reorder the morning's points to take the monitoring and commitments issue first, before moving on to the discussion on the Open Forum.
- The Chair agreed that Members could circulate documents that relate to House of Commons Health Committee report which was circulated as a background report to this meeting.
- With the change in the order of points above, the Agenda was approved.

2. Procedural Issues

a) Member requests

- There were no Member requests ready to announce.

b) Monitoring commitments 2009 & 2010

- The Commission services informed that there were now only 8 organisations without an active commitment (down from 28 in November 2009).
- Commission services had attempted to make contact with all Members to ensure that they were aware of the need to introduce a commitment, and to help solve

any misunderstandings. During this process, it was clear that there was confusion among Members over the need for both commitments and reporting.

- The Forum was informed that
 - Members must have an active commitment as a pre-requisite of Membership to the Forum.
 - Each commitment must be monitored
 - A common annual system of monitoring is now replacing the initial ad-hoc system (as has happened with the Nutrition Platform). The annual approach to monitoring had been presented at the last Forum meeting.
 - Deadline for submitting monitoring reports for the 2010 process will be **end April 2010** and they should be submitted to the following address
SANCO-INDREPORT@ec.europa.eu
 - In future, when submitting new commitments, the common annualised reporting date supercedes the need for individual reporting dates for each commitment.
 - The common monitoring process seeks to assess how well Members monitor their own commitments. It does not look at impact and effectiveness per se, but rather how well Members themselves monitor and assess outcomes of their activities.
 - The Commission services recognised the difficulties that many Members encountered with the commitments database and intend to make improvements to the system over the coming months.
- c) The Chair announced that 2 Members (ReLeaf and the Finnish Hospitality Association) would now be suspended and a further 6 (Royal Ahold, ECYC, FEANTSA, FAEP, British Retail Consortium, ETUC) have until the end of May to introduce a commitment, following which they will also be suspended. Suspension means that organisations will be taken off the distribution list until an active commitment is entered into the database. (This was decision was immediately contested by HOTREC who indicated that the FHO had sent through a commitment already.)

In the discussion, there were calls for greater focus on the effectiveness of the Forum's activities, at the very least to better highlight the Forum's efforts to the outside world. In response, it was highlighted that there was in fact considerable space to do this: for example, in the Open Forum, and through the forthcoming Clearing House and evaluation of the Alcohol Forum itself.

The Chair's conclusion was that Commission services could also make further space on the Forum's web page to showcase its efforts. Otherwise, a key concern was to streamline the commitment administration so as to reduce the process cost to Members. Therefore:

- Members are invited to send ideas to the Commission services about how to improve the functionality of the commitment database by the end of March.
- Commission services will benchmark the Forum against the Nutrition Platform process, will investigate the case of the Finnish Hospitality Organisation commitment¹, and send by e-mail a revised reporting form to Forum members.

¹ FHO (MaRa) introduced a commitment on 11 March 2010 and is immediately reinstated as a full active Member.

3. Open Alcohol Forum

- The Chair thanked the Members who had volunteered and supported the Commission services in the development of the draft programme, for their very helpful co-operation. The Commission services briefly presented the draft programme structure, and the existing suggestion for topics (Social Costs, Consumer Information and Responsible Selling and Serving), and the summary of how to handle them on the day.
- Comments were focussed on improvements to the naming and scope of topics, and suggestions for some additional speakers were given by the participants.

The Chair concluded:

- A revised draft programme structure document would be circulated soon with some re-editing.
- The Commission services would now move forward with the programming under each topic, and this will include the need to ensure that they are balanced and not overloaded. (Any further suggestions for speakers should be sent to the Commission as soon as possible.)
- Forum Members will be sent a link to the registration page (this will start the week beginning March 15) and further information and instructions about the exhibition materials.

4. Science Group

- The Chair made reference to the draft terms of reference for a new task for the Science Group that had been circulated beforehand, and on which the Forum's views were now sought. The Chair noted that healthy workforce occupies an important position in the recently presented Europe 2020 strategy and is an issue of strategic importance for the Commission and for Commissioner Dalli. He then opened the floor for discussion.
 - Points made by the Forum participants included:
 - The complexity of topic (alcohol and the workplace) was highlighted. For example, it is not just a question of alcohol consumption's impact on productivity, but also that the workplace as a setting for alcohol consumption can have an impact on life beyond the workplace (e.g. journeys home)
 - Views differed regarding the adequacy of information available on the impact of alcohol consumption on productivity and whether the estimates presented in the summary produced in 2006² to inform the preparation of the EU Alcohol Strategy could or should be updated.
 - There was an interest among Forum members to develop information relating to effectiveness of workplace-based activities. The focus should be on the workplace as a setting for harm prevention and health

² Anderson P. and Baumberg B. (2006), Alcohol in Europe. A public health perspective. Institute of Alcohol Studies, London.

promotion rather than on wider alcohol policies and their relevance to workplaces.

- It was highlighted that considerable work has already been done to develop interventions and workplace alcohol policies. Reports on evaluated interventions may be hard to find due to language barriers and because alcohol issues may be addressed under broader health promotion or mental health titles. There may be a lack of interventions suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises.
 - Member States regulatory contexts concerning alcohol in the workplace may vary.
- There was a difference of opinion among Forum Members on the need to include an re-assessment of the data on the economic impact of alcohol costs, as well as on the need to assess the legislative framework, and to develop indicators to measure health in the workplace.
- The Chair concluded:
 - Noting that there is a limit to the amount of work the Science group is able to perform within a year. However, at minimum a scan of current knowledge, including an update of the national baselines in Member States, was needed.
 - The Chair invited Forum members to provide to the Commission services by the end of April any relevant new information they might have (e.g. grey literature etc)
 - The task request for the Science Group will be reformulated to address current knowledge on the situation across the EU, picking up differences between large enterprises and SMEs, between sectors and Member States, and including evidence of effectiveness of workplace interventions.
 - The Science Group will be requested to give pointers as to opportunities for action and for additional data gathering. The reformulated task will be circulated to Forum members for comments before being finalised by the Chair.

5. Presentation on the Campaign for Smarter Drinking

Elizabeth Crossick and Richard Evans presented the Campaign for Smarter Drinking, a £100 million industry initiative to promote responsible drinking in the UK. This was the result of a challenge laid down by the UK Prime Minister to the drinks industry to increase its financing of actions to tackle alcohol related harm. They highlighted that industry standards were used to sample the target population and define messages that could reach them, and they presented their results in terms of a sample of the message and marketing tools produced, the campaign's impact on media slots, and resulting consumer awareness of the campaign and its messages. Potential impact on behaviour was also assessed by asking the target audience in a survey whether they had changed their behaviour as a result of the campaign. (70% of those surveyed claimed to have adopted one of the tips provided to minimise the impact of drinking, e.g. eat before you drink.)

The Chair pointed out that few governments had access to such resources, and that other countries might wish to similarly encourage industry stakeholders.

In the debate, points made included:

- While a health body might have used a different message or taken a different approach this initiative was to be congratulated.
- The issue of coherence across the alcohol industry actions was raised: with a comparison of this initiative's budget with the industry's overall budget for the marketing and advertising of alcoholic beverages.
- The trade off between assessing the effectiveness of the campaign before trying to translate to other regions/countries and the value of acting fast.
- These kinds of campaigns are best implemented using public money rather than private, industry funds in order to avoid conflicts of interest.

The presenters called on Forum Participants not to be too critical of this initiative but to take it in the spirit that there is room for a number of different kinds of messages, and these messages were aimed at the 18-30 age group so are not designed to resonate with Forum participants.

In terms of other industry led actions, Drinkaware highlighted its other current and forthcoming actions such as the Resolutions Campaign; a social norming programme taking place in a number of Welsh universities, and an initiative involving the UK National Union of Students. From these actions and others the organisation will attempt to develop an evidence base to guide future initiatives, and to deliver results.

The Chair concluded that the Campaign for Smarter Drinking has been an interesting case study for what happens when governments challenge industry to act. If there are health community concerns about the initiative, the Chair hopes that public health actors will agree to engage with the project. Those who prefer the use of public finances to implement this kind of campaign could seek avenues to promote the prioritisation of public funds in this direction. There will shortly be a reflection to consider what the Community budget should like after 2013 and the end of the current financial perspectives.

6. Digital Media Aspects of Responsible Marketing

The Chair invited four panellists (representing the Commission services – DG INFSO, Diageo, EASA and the European Youth Forum to each present their perspectives on the issue of the marketing of alcoholic beverages on digital media.

The Commission services (DG INFSO) highlighted the work that the Commission is doing to protect children and teenagers online, in the framework of the Safer Internet programme³. It encompasses a wide range of risks linked to harmful content and contact online.

This work includes promoting self-regulation, in particular in the field of Social Networking. A Task Force that brought together the main social networking companies in Europe,

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet>

including Facebook, MySpace, Netlog and Tuenti was convened by the Commission in 2008. These companies signed, in 2009, a set of principles for Safer Social Networking in the EU and published self-declarations on how they implement these principles. Both MySpace and Yahoo! mention in their self-declarations measures related to alcohol related ads.

The Commission is monitoring the implementation of this agreement closely. In February 2010, it published an evaluation report on the implementation of the Principles based on an analysis of the companies' safety policies and testing of the respective sites by independent experts. Overall and individual company reports are available online⁴.

EASA gave an overview of the EASA work regarding the extension of the remit of advertising self regulation to digital marketing communications, linked to the EPC commitment. EASA's actions include guidance on best practice in Digital Marketing Communications (DMC), launched in 2008, and the extent to which this has been taken up by the SROs across the EU. There were some ways in which self regulation in the digital sphere could be easier than traditional media, due to automatic reporting mechanisms.

Diageo informed the Forum that the company approaches the digital space as it does other media: Diageo has developed guidelines (relating to privacy, limiting underage action etc) and have introduced controls to limit under age to particular sites. They apply the 70% rule, i.e. they intend to only advertise on sites that have 70% of the audience over the age of 18. Diageo seeks engagement on these issues with social networking sites, and with governments, and they are still in the process of understanding/improving/developing what is feasible from an IT perspective, such as better controls for age on particular web-pages.

In response to the above, the European Youth Organisation remarked on the sheer volume of alcohol related content on the web that can be found through search engines. Given the extent of the alcohol related harm in the EU, the focus should not be just on the under 18's but also on the age group above that. In terms of self regulation, in some countries such as Estonia this cannot be relied upon because it isn't developed. There are clear weaknesses surrounding age controls: children can easily put in an older age. Media literacy training for children in school would be helpful, so that they could become more sophisticated at interpreting what they find on-line.

In discussion, points raised included:

- There have been concerns that because the media is digital is it somehow considered "underhand".
- The digital media may offer more control than other media to allow companies to focus on people who are "legal targets", i.e. people of legal drinking age in a country.
- The 70% standard widely used by industry was challenged as being too low given the size of the public health problem in the EU.
- It was noted that the 70% rule (75% in the UK) is only used for public access websites, and that in relation to social networking sites, the logic is different because it is possible to know the users' age.
- People worry about the new media because it seems to be all pervasive and they want it to be a force for good.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/social_networking/eu_action/implementation_princip/index_en.htm#final_report

- There is a good media tool called Media-Smart which is used in the UK, but which might translate to other countries.
- It was highlighted that companies cannot control access to the information on fan pages (visible without Membership required) as these can be accessed by people of all ages.
- Companies inform that they make a cross check between their responsible messages from the traditional media to the new, and web-pages may carry warning messages on them indicating that you should not be there if under 18.

There was some discussion on age verification technologies. DG INFSO has a 2008 report on this topic⁵. Many companies offer this technology that seeks to go beyond the simple typing in of a birth-date on a web page and to link it to some reliable 3rd party source providing information about the person. However there are cultural issues regarding the extent to which people are prepared to provide personal information that is needed to make it work (such as social security numbers). It was reiterated that it is very easy for children to give fake ages when asked, and also fairly simple to get past more sophisticated technologies (by borrowing parents credit card details etc). In the US there is a system called Axiom.

7. Forum commitments relating to digital media

The Commission had provided a short background paper outlining those commitments involving the development of websites. Those Members where the website is a significant part of a commitment were invited to present briefly these sites to the Forum, they were: - SabMiller (www.talkingalcohol.com), Eurocare (www.eurocare.org), Diageo (www.DRINKiQ.com), Alcohol Action Ireland (www.alcoholireland.ie/), EFRD (<http://www.responsibledrinking.eu> and <http://www.marketresponsibly.eu/>). EGTA's website is not yet available, but they may present it at a future Forum meeting.

There was an opportunity for targeted peer review of each web-site after its presentation. During the time for questions and discussion, the following points were made:

- There was limited support for the idea that Members could make links to each others websites⁶.
- The EASA website provides links to all the national functioning "complaints" systems regarding advertising/marketing complaints
- Evaluations are largely linked to the number of hits and with on-line surveys to users.

In his conclusions of the digital media session (Agenda points 6 and 7), the Chair considered that a clear step forward has been made, compared to the picture in 2006 when many in the Forum considered that digital issues were out of control. In the Chair's view there is no obvious policy angle with which to pursue the digital issue as a separate topic: no reason to treat digital media differently from the traditional media. He noted that controls on this media seemed to be adequate (compare to other forms of media) and that the Commission services would keep watching the situation. He therefore foresaw no obvious follow up. On

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/pub_consult_age_rating_sns/reportageverification.pdf

⁶ The Commission has now placed links to these web-sites on its Forum Library page.

the topic of the websites, the Chair indicated that it would be good to identify stronger indicators of performance, and a way to build on the critical mass of activity already carried out.

8. Forum timeline, next meetings

- 22 April 2010 - Open Forum
- 18 November 2010 – Forum Plenary

Annex 1 – List of participants

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	
Advertising Information Group (AIG) - ZWA/WKO	RAMACH	Tamara	
	BUSSE	Julia	
	EUSTACE	Sue	
Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland	GARTH	Rosemary	
Alcohol Policy Youth Network – APYN	RODRÍGUEZ MCCULLOUGH	Nathalie A.	
	PELOZA	Jan	
Association of Commercial TV	HANK	Maxlu	
Association of European Cancer Leagues – ECL	TSE YARED	Wendy	
Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses - EGTA	SBOARINA	Laura	
Brewers of Europe	SPILLANE	Simon	
	▪ Anheuser Busch InBev	GALLAGHER	Aiofe
	▪ Heineken International	GOETHART	Rutger
▪ SABMiller	AGOCS	Monika	
	GARAMSZEGI	Gabor	
Comité Européen des Entreprises Vin - CEEV	FERNANDEZ	José Ramón	
▪ Deutsche Weinakademie	FRADERA	Ursula	
EUROCARE	SKAR	Mariann	
▪ Alcohol Action Ireland	MURPHY	Cliona	

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association Nationale en Alcoologie et Addictologie ANPAA 	CRAPLET	Michel
	RIVIERE	Claude
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutsche Hauptstelle für Suchtfragen DHS 	BARTSCH	Gabriele
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonian Temperance Union 	BEEKMANN	Lauri
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUROCARE - Italia 	CODENOTTI	Tiziana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute for Alcohol Studies 	MC NEILL	Andrew
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUROCARE-IOGT-NTO 	CARLSSON	Sven-Olov
	AHO	Emenie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network 	OJALA	Outi
EUROCOMMERCE	VALVERDE LOPEZ	Marina
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUROCOMMERCE-Royal Ahold 	BOGAERS	Karine
European Association for the Study of the Liver - EASL	VALLA	Dominique
European Association of Communication Agencies - EACA	LYLE	Dominic
European Cider and Fruit Wine Associations - AICV	PRICE	Robert
European Federation of Associations of Beer and Beverages Wholesalers - CEGROBB	DE BRUYN	Kim
European Federation of Magazine Publishers - FAEP	VON ABENDROTH	Max
European Forum for Responsible Drinking - EFRD	ZWIRN	Gregor
European Forum for Responsible Drinking - EFRD	BRIGAUDEAU	Carole
European Mutual Help Network for Individuals and Families with Alcohol-Related Problems - EMNA	PALMESINO	Ennio
European Public Health Alliance - EPHA	JEWELL	Jo
	KOSINSKA	Monika
	PRICKETT	Linda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Public Health Alliance - Royal College of Physicians, London - RCP 	BELCHER	Paul
	SHERON	Nick
European Publishers Council (EPC)	MOSCHAKIS	Nikolas
European Social Insurance Platform ESIP-REIF	GOUËLLO	Martine
European Spirits Organisations - CEPS	FORTESCUE	Jamie

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
	ROSE	Lisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations - CEPS Bacardi-Martini Limited 	GILLIARD	Catherine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations - CEPS Brown-Forman - The Absolut Company 	LUKSEP	Peeter
	DARMON	Claire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations – CEPS DIAGEO 	BATYI	Csaba
	LUPPINO	Joseph
	EVRARD	Tom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations - CEPS Pernod Ricard 	RICARD	Sandrine
	HEMARD	André
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations – CEPS Moët Hennessy 	DE GUITAUT	Guillaume
	VAES	Eric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Spirits Organisations – The Scotch Whisky Association 	MEIKLE	Douglas
European Sponsorship Association - ESA	DAY	Helen
European Transport Safety Council - ETSC	EKSLER	Vojtech
European Youth Forum	VANEM	Kadri
HOTREC	SEQUARIS	Marguerite
	VALLINI	Marco
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associazione Italiana Imprese di Intrattenimento da Ballo e di Spettacolo 	FLAMINI	Antonio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Beer and Pub Association 	RAWLINGS	Martin
Institut de Recherches Scientifiques sur les boissons alcoolisées - IREB	LEYMARIE	Nicole
International Center for Alcohol Policies - ICAP	KRYGIEL-NAEL	Aleksandra
Standing Committee of European Doctors - CPME	RIBON	Sandra
Word Federation of Advisers (WFA)	RENALDI	Rocco
OBSERVERS (MEMBER STATES)	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
Department of Health UK	NICOL	Jean
Institute on Drug and Drug Adiction Portugal	CARDOSO	Manuel
State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol-Related Problems - PL	PIETRUSZKA	Magdalena

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
Swedish Permanent Representation	MOEN	Fredrik
OBSERVERS	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
European Advertising Standards Alliance EASA	ALEXANDRE	Laure
	GRAY	Oliver
World Health Organization WHO	BIJU DUVAL	Bertrand
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
DG SANCO C4	MADELIN	Robert
DG SANCO C4	THOMPSON	Ceri
DG SANCO C4	MONTONEN	Marjatta
DG INFSO E6	KORMANN	Christine
SPEAKERS		
Campaign for Smarter Drinking	CROSSICK	Elizabeth
	EVANS	Richard