



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate C - Public Health and Risk Assessment
Unit C4 – Health Determinants

EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM

8th Plenary Meeting

BRUSSELS, 8 APRIL 2011

Summary Report

The meeting was chaired by Despina Spanou, Principal Advisor to the Director General for Health and Consumers.

1. Welcome

- The Chair welcomed all participants (*cf. List in Annex 1*), and started by giving a brief overview of relevant events and developments since the November meeting. In particular, she mentioned that in the European Parliament a round table on alcohol and cancer was held, organised by the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) and hosted by the group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) against Cancer (7 December), as well as a seminar on alcohol labelling, organised by Eurocare and hosted by the Scottish MEP Alyn Smith (17 March). In November last year a National Alcohol and Health Forum was launched in Portugal. She also noted that there is a constant flow of scientific publications on the health consequences of alcohol consumption.
- The Director-General for Health and Consumers Paola Testori Coggi expressed her satisfaction with the programme of the plenary, highlighting the agenda items on alcohol-harm and the workplace as well as labelling. Ms Testori expressed concern about the number of Forum members without an active commitment which continues to be too high: 23, including many for a longer time.
- The Chair said she would not name and shame Forum members but urged all members to have an active commitment by the end of the summer. She noted that fortunately, Forum members' discipline to submit annual monitoring reports is better.
- Another point of concern is the RAYPRO database. The Commission services have developed this web based information source on projects dealing with youth and alcohol at the explicit request of the Forum. However, so far Forum members have not entered information in the database, apart from a few exceptions. Marjatta Montonen, SANCO Unit C4 presented some figures

showing that the RAYPRO database is nevertheless accessed in search of information. The Chair called upon Forum members to look again at how they can feed and use the database; a final decision on continuation of the database will be taken later on.

- A presentation on good practice in alcohol retailing by a representative of the Swedish alcohol retailing monopoly Systembolaget (foreseen as agenda item 4) will have to be postponed. Otherwise the agenda was adopted without modifications.

2. Procedural issues

- The International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IMFSA) had requested for membership of the Forum. A representative of IMFSA, Alexander Papadopoulos, was attending the meeting and briefly presented his organisation. As suggested by the Chair, IMFSA was accepted as member, bringing the number of membership to 65.

3. Alcohol-related harm and the workplace

- Professor Ian Gilmore, Chair of the Forum's Science Group, presented preliminary results of the Science Group's work towards a scientific opinion on reducing the negative impact of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption on the workplace. Professor Gilmore gave an overview of the evidence base and advice for possible action by Forum members in this area.
- Marjana Martinic, a member of the Science Group, presented the "business case" for tackling alcohol related harm in the workplace as well as examples of major alcohol producers' approaches to dealing with alcohol issues among their own employees.
- Two case examples of alcohol producers' approaches were presented. Catherine Templeton, Responsible Consumption and Alcohol Policy Manager with Heineken International, presented Heineken's Cool@Work programme which has also been one of Heineken's commitments under the European Alcohol and Health Forum.
- John Griffiths, Managing Director of work2health Ltd, an international consultancy specialised in the promotion of health and wellbeing, presented the MEPMIS project on alcohol and drugs at the workplace funded under the Leonardo da Vinci programme of the EC Directorate-General for Education and Culture. Work2health is actively involved in the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP)¹ supported by the EC Directorate-General Employment.
- The Chair announced that the reports by the Science Group will be circulated shortly for Forum members to give comments. The reports will also be peer reviewed.

¹ <http://www.enwhp.org>

4. Good practice in server training

- Mia Lund Ørting, project manager with the City of Copenhagen, presented the partnership between Diageo², the International Harm Reduction Association and the City of Copenhagen. The aim of this public-private partnership, "Have fun, be safe", is to contribute towards safer nightlife in Copenhagen. Activities are targeted to bar and pub staff, nightlife guests, and public authorities, organisations and volunteers. Server training has so far been provided to 142 professionals, 20 clubs have been accorded certification for participation, and 315.000 people have been reached through communication activities. Next steps include a revision of the certification scheme and closer cooperation with the police and fire department.
- The presentation generated lively debate. In particular, the Swedish Youth Temperance Association UNF reported that their mystery shopping tests in Copenhagen suggest that in some certified pubs and bars the age limit for serving alcohol is poorly complied with.
- In response Diageo's project leader for the Copenhagen partnership emphasized that it is important in itself that stakeholders are working together in a project to encourage good behaviour. He appreciated the information provided by UNF and said that improvement in this area is apparently needed but stressed that server training is only one element of the project.
- The Chair thanked everybody for a good discussion on this topic, and concluded that this project seems to indicate the right direction, also due to the involvement of public authorities.

5. Supporting risk education through communication activities

- Emma Woodford presented the alcohol-related activities of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL). The aim is to raise awareness on the link between alcohol and cancer – there is a knowledge gap here among the general population – and thus contribute to the prevention of alcohol-related cancers. As the link between alcohol and cancer has been somewhat neglected in the work of cancer leagues work, ECL has carried out as its commitment under the Forum a survey among its members to get an overall picture of current activities. A set of recommendations has been developed for use at national and European level. These recommendations will be on the agenda of ECL's 2011 General Assembly in early November.
- Nick Sheron from the Royal College of Physicians presented briefly new research results on the link between alcohol and cancer, also addressing moderate alcohol consumption and cardiovascular health.

² Diageo has submitted this partnership project as a commitment under the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

6. Health-related information on alcoholic beverage labels: current practices and opportunities for further action

- Michael Hübel, SANCO Unit C4, set the scene by giving an overview of relevant EU and national legislation, including the state of play regarding the Commission's proposal for a regulation on the provision of food information to consumers (COM(2008) 40 final).
- Walter Farke from the Catholic University of Applied Sciences, Nordrhein-Westfalen presented the results of an EU-funded project on alcohol labelling policies to protect young people (PROTECT). The presentation focused on experiences and good practices gathered across the EU.
- Gabor Garamszegi presented SABMiller's Responsibility Message Commitment which involves placing one of three responsibility messages – on alcohol and pregnancy, drink driving, and age limits – on all their product labels and marketing materials.
- Nick Sheron's presentation discussed what health information should be put on alcoholic beverage labels. Information relevant to consumers would include calories, the amount of pure alcohol in a bottle or glass, and major health-risks (liver disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and alcohol dependency) associated with alcohol consumption. Dr Sheron argued that it is confusing to express the alcohol content in grams. His proposal is to express the alcohol content of a bottle or single drink in centilitres of pure alcohol.
- In the discussion following the presentations various positions were taken. Some alcohol producers considered the focus on labelling as a tool for informing consumers simplistic and highlighted the internet as an appropriate tool for presenting complex information. Voluntary labelling initiatives incited some doubts relating to possible lack of consistency in health messages which might confuse consumers, or to limitations regarding the types of health risks (such as cancer) alcohol producers are willing to associate with their products. A question raised concerned why some producers engage in voluntary labelling initiatives, while at the same time blocking legislative initiatives at national and EU level.
- The Chair gauged whether it would be possible for the Forum to achieve a common position on the desirability of one single way of expressing the alcohol content of drinks, as suggested by Mr Sheron. For this reason she invited Forum members to reflect on this in the coming months and give feedback. At the next meeting the topic will be on the agenda again.

7. External evaluation of the European Alcohol and Health Forum

- Michael Hübel, SANCO Unit C4 gave an update on the Commission's plans for an independent evaluation of the EU Alcohol Strategy, including the European Alcohol and Health Forum as one of the structures to support its implementation. Stressing the participatory approach of the evaluation process he invited Forum members who wish to volunteer for a Steering Group for the evaluation of the Forum to express their interest by the end of May.

8. EAHF work plan and timeline

- Pieter de Coninck, SANCO Unit C4 gave a brief update on this year's annual monitoring exercise. By the end of February, 70 reports on the implementation of commitments should have been submitted but some are still awaited. Those Forum members who had not yet fulfilled their monitoring commitment were requested to do so by the end of May as it can not be guaranteed that reports coming in later will be taken account by the contractor who will evaluate the reports.
- The Chair announced that the deadline for the next year's annual monitoring reports will be end of February 2012.
- Pieter de Coninck briefly presented two tendered studies that have recently started. A study dealing with specific aspects of the affordability of alcoholic beverages in the EU is assigned to RAND Europe. The other study, assigned to the HAPI Consortium, will examine the market and regulation of types of alcoholic beverages that may have particular appeal to minors. Both studies are included in the 2010 work plan of the EU Health Programme. The contribution from Forum members to both studies – including providing information in surveys or interviews – would be appreciated.

9. Concluding remarks

- The Chair thanked participants for their active contributions. The next meeting will be on 19 October. Suggestions for the programme – which will have a focus on youth – are welcome.

Annex 1 – List of participants

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
Active - sobriety, friendship and peace ⁶	DUENNBIER	Maik
	KORSE	Tove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Swedish Youth Temperance Association (UNF) 	JÖNSSON	Joachim Book
	THOR	Anna
Advertising Information Group	HANNEMAN	Maryke
Alcohol Policy Youth Network (APYN)	PELOZA	Jan
Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)	WOODFORD	Emma
Association of Television and Radio Sales Houses (Egta)	SBOARINA	Laura
Brewers of Europe	BERGERON	Pierre-Olivier
	SPILLANE	Simon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI) 	LEROY	Steve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAB Miller 	GARAMSZEGI	Gabor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heineken 	TEMPLETON	Catherine
	GOETHART	Rutger
Comité Européen des Entreprises Vin (CEEV)	FERNANDEZ	José Ramon
	FILOPOULOS	Stylios
EUROCARE	SKAR	Mariann
	KACZMAREK	Aleksandra Maria
	BERGLUND	Sten Magne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alcohol Action Ireland 	MURPHY	Cliona
	RYAN	Fiona
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Association Nationale de Prévention en Alcoologie et Addictologie (ANPAA) 	CRAPLET	Michel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS) 	BONNER	Adrian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IOGT-NTO 	HEINE	Sara
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estonian Temperance Union 	BEEKMAN	Llauri
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ German Centre for Addiction Issues 	RAISER	Peter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network (NordAN) 	WARSELL	Leena
EUROCOMMERCE	VALVERDE LOPEZ	Marina

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
▪ Delhaize Belgium	De CUYPER	Vera
	GOFFAUX	Alexandre
European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL)	VALLA	Dominique
European Cider and Fruit Wine Association (AICV)	PRICE	Robert
European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD)	ZWIRN	Gregor
European Mutual Help Network for individuals and families with Alcohol-Related Problems (EMNA)	PALMESINO	Ennio
European Public Health Alliance	FUCHS	Doriane
	BARA	Luiza
▪ Royal College of Physicians, London	SHERON	Nick
	BELCHER	Paul
European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP)	GALVIS	Fanny
European Spirits Organisation (CEPS)	ALEXANDRE	Laure
▪ Bacardi Martini	FRESI	Stefano
	SEARLE	Chris
▪ Brown-Forman	SKELLY	Walsh Kelly
	DARMON	Claire
▪ Diageo	BATYI	Csaba
	HVILAN	Kristian
▪ Pernod-Ricard S.A.	HEMARD	Andre
	RICARD	Sandrine
▪ The Absolutte Company	LUKSEP	Peeter
▪ The Scotch Whisky Association	MEIKLE	Douglas
	EVANS	Campbell
European Sponsorship Association (ESA)	DAY	Helen
European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)	PODA	Francesca
HOTREC	VALLINI	Marco
	WARAVKA	Alexis
▪ British Beer and Pub Association	CATHCART	James
▪ Finnish Hospitality Association (MaRa)	HÄMÄLÄINEN	SAMI
International Center for Alcohol Policies	BINAR	David

ORGANISATION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)	DAS	Sarada
OBSERVERS	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
Catholic University of Applied Sciences, Nordrhein-Westfalen	FARKE	Walter
Centre de Recherche et d'Information des Organisations de Consommateurs (CRIOC)	VEILLARD	Patrick
City of Copenhagen	ØRTING	Mia Lund
International Federation of Medical Students Associations	PAPADOPOULOS	Alexander
Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU	ALVIN	Thomas
Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU	ANCANS	Peteris
Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum	GILMORE	Ian
	MARTINIC	Marjana
UK Department of Health	CARDEN	Matthew
Work2health ltd	GRIFFITHS	John
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	SURNAME	FIRST NAME
DG SANCO	TESTORI COGGI	Paola
DG SANCO	SPANOU	Despina
DG SANCO	HÜBEL	Michael
DG SANCO	GALLO	Giulio
DG SANCO	MONTONEN	Marjatta
DG SANCO	DE CONINCK	Pieter