



COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ALCOHOL POLICY AND ACTION (CNAPA)

13th Meeting

Luxembourg 4-5 March 2014

Summary Report

The meeting was chaired by **Philippe Roux**, Head of the Health Determinants Unit, DG Health & Consumers.

1. Welcome and introduction

- The Chair welcomed participants.
- The agenda was approved.

2. Draft Action Plan on Alcohol

- The Chair gave a summary of the evolution of the drafting process of the Action Plan and highlighted the valuable contribution of CNAPA to the progress made so far. When describing the role of CNAPA in the process, he referred to its [Mandate](#). He also gave a short report on the work carried out by the drafting group and the two phone conferences.
- Finland suggested dropping the action plan, considering the re-direction of work and develop a SANCO staff working document as a first step towards a five-year action plan to accompany a Commission communication confirming the priority themes and aims of the 2006 alcohol strategy.
- The Chair recalled the agreement on the two-year duration of the Action Plan and its focus on heavy episodic drinking and on youth through that was reached earlier in the process through several commenting rounds, phone conferences and meeting of the drafting group. He also stressed that a staff working document cannot be initiated and adopted during the current College.
- The Chair informed CNAPA that members of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (Forum) were invited to propose concrete actions for the operational objectives defined by CNAPA. Several Forum members sent their comments that were mainly suggesting a better alignment of the wording of the action plan with that of the alcohol

strategy. Comments also highlighted that concrete actions shall be expected after CNAPA defined the definite areas for action and operational objectives.

- The Chair highlighted the importance of the action plan in reaffirming the value of the work in the EU on alcohol related harm and in demonstrating the coordination role of CNAPA in this work.
- CNAPA members agreed to continue providing input to the draft Action Plan but highlighted its necessarily transitory nature. They underlined that the Action Plan cannot be considered as a substitute for a new EU alcohol strategy, which in their view should be an initiative of high priority for the next College. Members highlighted also that the implementation of activities based on the priority themes and objectives of the 2006 alcohol strategy shall continue parallel with the actions of the Action Plan.
- CNAPA members pointed out that the Action Plan was initiated as a Commission document. Some CNAPA members stressed, that no opportunity is seen to take over the ownership of the Action Plan wholly by MS. The Chair stressed the Action Plan, in the form of a non-paper, would provide a reference for Member States and other stakeholders to implement concrete actions on a voluntary basis in a short time.
- CNAPA members decided to replace the first area of action “Enable informed choices” by “Reduce heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking)” and amended the third from “Responsible marketing and advertising” to “Limit exposure of youth to marketing and advertising”. The wording of the six areas for action was, thus, as follows:
 - Reduce heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking)
 - Ensure enforcement of restrictions on availability for youth
 - Limit exposure of youth to alcohol marketing and advertising
 - Protect the unborn child
 - Ensure a healthy and safe environment for children and young people
 - Monitoring and increased research
- The text of the introduction and the latest proposals for amendment were discussed. It was agreed that written contributions for the text of the introduction, including the areas for action and the operational objectives should be submitted by CNAPA members to SANCO by 12 March. Then, SANCO will invite Forum members to propose actions and send the revised Action Plan, including all contributions from CNAPA and Forum, to CNAPA members in April for their further consideration.
- The Chair highlighted the need to revisit the actions in the light of the latest changes in the areas of action and the need for better indicators and data collection methods.
- With reference to the timeline, the Chair stressed that the Action Plan should be finalised before the end of the current Commissioner's mandate. In the next CNAPA meeting on 17-18 June, CNAPA will validate the Action Plan. If necessary, the High Level Meeting set for the 6 October, in Brussels, could discuss and launch the Action Plan.
- To support the further work towards a new strategy in the future, CNAPA agreed on gathering Member States' views and ideas for setting the basis for future policy developments in the field of alcohol harm reduction in the form of a concept paper (see also agenda point 5).

3. Update from the Commission on recent developments related to alcohol

- Members were informed on the recent developments on the 3rd Health Programme, which will help EU countries respond to economic and demographic challenges facing their health systems, improve the health of Union citizens and enable citizens to stay healthy for longer.
- The Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2014 has been submitted for informal consultation to and discussed on 3 March with the Programme Committee of the previous HP 2008-2013. After entry into force of the 3rd Health Programme (foreseen for second half of March after adoption of its legal text by the College), a positive opinion of the new Programme Committee on the AWP is also needed. After this, the College will need to approve the AWP (beginning April). Then, approximately one month is needed for translation. So the publication of the Annual Work Programme and Programme Regulation are expected quasi-simultaneously in late April/early May. The subsequent calls will be published immediately after.
- Members were informed that the calls for proposals will be launched by the Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) and that the new programme will have a budget of € 449.394 million over seven years (2014 to 2020).
- It will be an opportunity to apply for funding, for organisations from EU countries, the European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), European Neighbourhood countries and even Western Balkan countries. The participation is open to a wide range of organisations, including: research institutes and universities, public authorities, non-governmental organisations and commercial companies.
- Members were also informed that the function of the Science Group of the Forum and its possible renewal has been currently under consideration by the Forum members and that they would also be invited to send their comments on the role of the Group.
- The Chair also highlighted that the study on “State of play in the use of alcoholic beverage labels to inform consumers about health aspects” was about to be published. This report will be informative in terms of best practices and recommendations for the alcohol related work at national level.
- The Chair also informed members on the status of the DG CNECT study on the exposure of minors to alcohol advertising on linear and non-linear audio-visual media services. Within 9 months from the start of the work, the contractor shall deliver the draft final study report to the Commission, i.e. end of 2014 – beginning 2015.

4. Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol Related Harm (RARHA)

- The Joint Action coordinator, Ms Patrícia Pissarra updated members on the first steps taken on the Joint Action launched on 31 January 2014.
- The responsibilities and roles of the Joint Action Advisory Group were presented: to oversee the progress being made on crucial issues related to the sustainability of the actions and results, to discuss and advise, in particular, on options for the continuation of common EU alcohol surveys and to provide strategic guidance and support to the Management Group to ensure that the expected results meet the Action’s objectives.

- The Advisory Group comprises CNAPA members plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland and, as observers, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), World Health Organization/ Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD Health Division) and the Pompidou Group.
- The deliverables and the expected outcomes of the three horizontal (coordination, evaluation, dissemination) and three core work packages planned (monitoring on drinking patterns and alcohol related harm, good practice principles in the use of drinking guidelines, good practice tool kit) were also presented.

5. Reflection on the future development of the EU alcohol policy

- In a *tour de table*, members' views were collected for the content of a so-called concept paper, that would compile Member States' views and ideas for setting the basis for the future work to reduce alcohol related harm in the EU. The paper will be channelled into the Commission reflection process on future EU contribution to Member States efforts to reduce alcohol related harm.
- In members' view, the main points to be included in the paper were: the need of a more comprehensive strategy focusing on health in all policies and building on evidence based measures/policies, covering different population groups and also addressing social harm and/or harm to others. Member States' sovereign right to decide on policy and measures was underlined. One Member State also referred to her position on subsidiarity.
- A strong focus on cross-border issues and the need to focus on themes with a clear EU added value was also pointed out as important by several members. The strong link between the implementation of the WHO global strategy and the European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, the process of the Joint Action on Alcohol Related Harm, the work on non-communicable diseases, poly-drug use, communicable diseases and mental health was also raised for inclusion in the concept paper.
- Several members stressed that ensuring funding and research, monitoring and strengthening the knowledge base should also be essential elements of a possible future strategy, and that the cooperation with WHO in this area should be further developed.
- A drafting group for the concept paper was set up with United Kingdom, Belgium and Estonia as voluntary members.
- After this discussion, Ireland presented a comprehensive update on the status of their new national policy initiative on tackling alcohol misuse, which included among others the following measures: minimum unit pricing; regulation of marketing and advertising of alcohol, enforcement powers to be given to environmental health officers in relation to regulations relating to the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol products; structural separation of alcohol from other products in mixed trading outlets; regulation of sports sponsorship; health labelling of alcohol products with health warnings and advice, including the amount of pure alcohol measured in grams and the calorie count.

6. Any other business

- The Chair asked CNAPA members to promote the call and support the possible applications for two Seconded National Expert (SNE) positions in the Health Determinants Unit. The deadline for applications is April 2014.

7. Conclusions and ways forward

The Chair summed up the meeting's discussions, highlighting that:

- The Member States support the continuation of the work on an Action Plan on Youth and on Heavy Episodic Drinking, which should not replace the 2006 EU alcohol strategy the priority themes and objectives of which are still valid. More attention needs now to be given to actions under the operational objectives. Member States will work on the paper supported by SANCO until its validation, foreseen for the next CNAPA meeting on 17-18 June 2014.
- Member States will work further on a CNAPA concept paper focusing on the future EU policy in the field of alcohol harm reduction. The discussion and validation of the final draft is foreseen for the CNAPA High Level meeting of 6 October 2014.
- The Joint Action on Alcohol will also be instrumental for converging priorities for action in the upcoming years.
- Next CNAPA meeting will be on 17-18 June 2014. The main agenda points will consist of discussion and validation of the Action Plan and discussion on the draft concept paper.