



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Public Health  
**Health Determinants**

**EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting**  
**LUXEMBOURG, 6 NOVEMBER 2014**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. Opening by the Acting Director for Public Health**

- *John F. Ryan* welcomed the participants and opened the meeting, co-chaired by *Philippe Roux*, Head of Unit, C4 - Health Determinants, by announcing the following:
  - Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis is the new Commissioner for Health and Food Safety.
  - The entire Commission was officially elected on 22 October and began its work on 1 November.
  - There will be important changes in the Commission's structure and working methods. There are now six Vice-Presidents, each leading a project team and acting as real deputies to the President.
  - Each Commissioner-designate has received a mission letter highlighting inter alia the importance of the Political Guidelines that Mr Juncker presented to the Parliament.
  - The Commissioner for Health and Food Safety is not among the Vice-presidents, and it remains to be seen where alcohol policy will fit in the different project teams.
  - The project team of the Vice-President for "Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness" will be important to the alcohol harm file.
  - Members will be informed about the approach of the EU alcohol policy as soon as the detailed priorities of the new Commissioner are known.
  - For the time being, the existing goals and objectives of the alcohol strategy remain valid.
  - However, it should also be considered whether alcohol policy should form part of a more general reinforced approach to strengthen health systems and reduce the burden of chronic diseases.
  - Involvement of stakeholders in the work to reduce alcohol related harm (multi-stakeholder approach) is likely to be maintained. Therefore, the Forum needs to continue its work and set up strong, tangible commitments in this interim period.
  
- The agenda was approved without any modifications.

## **2. Highlights by Commission Services**

- The Chair gave an update on the recent developments in the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA):
  - Preparation and finalisation in December of a scoping paper to inform the Commission of CNAPA's willingness to contribute to the development of the future EU alcohol policy;
  - Starting work on a two year work plan for CNAPA.
- A brief progress report on the Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol Related Harm focused mainly on dissemination activities. A website has been launched ([www.rarha.eu](http://www.rarha.eu)) including a newsletter providing latest news about the Joint Action and identifying the main actors, their roles and the next steps forward. (<http://www.rarha.pt/NewsEvents/Newsletters/Pages/default.aspx>). The Chair suggested dedicating a regular agenda point to the Joint Action in future Forum meetings.

### **ACTION PLAN ON YOUTH DRINKING AND ON HEAVY EPISODIC DRINKING**

- DG SANTE gave a presentation on the Action Plan on Youth Drinking and on Heavy Episodic Drinking (binge drinking) endorsed by the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA) on 16<sup>th</sup> September.
- This two-year Action Plan is not intended to replace an EU Strategy but rather builds on and complements some objectives of the existing strategy. By having a targeted scope and a limited time frame, it ensures that all actors contributing to reducing alcohol related harm deliver concrete and measurable outcomes on a voluntary basis.
- DG SANTE plans the monitoring of the Action Plan in cooperation with World Health Organisation.
- CNAPA members wish to see stakeholders action in specific areas related to their core businesses. Indeed, they would like industry to play a role in preventing alcohol related harm and to contribute to the Action Plan.

### **REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP OF THE FORUM**

- At the last plenary meeting , it has been decided that a Working Group consisting of volunteering Forum members will be established, to look mainly at the following questions:
  - i. what can be appropriate input/output indicators, e.g. financial and human resources of commitments;
  - ii. how governance of the Forum in relation to the obligation of Forum members to introduce at least one active commitment can be improved;
  - iii. how to meet the specific needs of the commitments of low-resource organisations;
  - iv. how expired commitments can best be resubmitted or continuous commitments repeated in the database.
- 15 Forum members volunteered for the Working Group with a balanced representation of the whole Forum.
- DG SANTE reported on two Working Group meetings (10 July and 6 October). The document prepared by the Working Group with the main operational conclusions -

largely supported by Forum members in the meeting - focussed in the framework of the above mentioned questions on the following:

- better complying with the Charter's principles on committing and reporting;
  - improving the quality of commitments;
  - better organising the work of the Forum;
  - improving the link between the Forum and Public Health Authorities orientations;
  - finding new ways for Forum's research and science related needs.
- The deadline for annual reporting on commitments was agreed for 31 January, same as for the Platform for action on diet, physical activity and health.
  - It was also agreed that the Governance Working Group will consider how to encourage joint commitments and facilitate exchanges between Forum members when needed and how members can challenge and scrutinise other members' commitments - constructively and in good faith - based on the Charter's principles.
  - DG SANTE will explore how JRC and EMCDDA can contribute to the Forum's needs for research and science related work. DG SANTE will look at the role of the Science Group members regarding a future mechanism that would give scientific support to the Forum.
  - It was agreed to prolong the mandate of the Governance Working Group and to include the issue of commitments.
  - Forum members have been invited to send their comments on the conclusions within three weeks.
  - The document with the main operational conclusions will be published on the SANTE website after consolidation and approval by the Forum.
  - Forum members agreed that the Commission will prepare a work plan for the Forum to be examined by the Governance Working Group early next year.

### **3. 2014 assessment of monitoring and evaluation of Forum commitments**

- Milieu Ltd presented the preliminary results of the 2014 assessment of EAHF monitoring activities.
- The results and potential changes of the content of the final assessment report were discussed.
- Since 2011, the number of Forum members that submitted commitment monitoring reports has gradually fallen from 44 in 2011, to 37 in 2012 and to 29 in 2013. In 2014, however, that number slightly increased again to 33.
- In terms of quality assessment, Forum members are encouraged to
  - submit monitoring reports each year to track their progress;
  - take into account recommendations from the previous year and learn from their own and other members' experience when reporting.
- The 2014 Annual Report will include concrete recommendations to
  - improve the monitoring framework as a tool to measure the commitments and progress and achievements;
  - potentially adjust overlapping priority areas/types of activity.
- To improve the quality and content of commitments, a practical 'User Guide' on how to better plan, monitor, evaluate and report on commitments for members will be prepared by Milieu Ltd. A draft will be discussed at the next meeting of the Governance Working Group.

- The 2014 Annual Report will be shared with Forum members before finalisation. The final Report and the User Guide is planned to be published in the first half of 2015.

#### **4. Status report on Forum commitments and monitoring reports**

- DG SANTE presented the status of commitments and monitoring reports as of 6 November comparing the situation between now and at the time of the previous meeting. With 61% of members active - compared to 52% in April - the situation appears to have improved. However, a significant number of commitments will expire by the end of the year (14%).
- From the currently sixty active commitments, eight are joint commitments; two out of this eight is co-owned by research institutes and sales organisations.
- Lists of members with expired commitments or overdue reports were shared with Forum members.
- The Chair invited by the end of 2014:
  - members without any active commitment to submit new commitments;
  - members with overdue intermediate reports for active commitments (started at least one year ago) to send reports;
  - members with recently completed commitments to send final reports.
- Furthermore, members with commitments expiring by the end of the year were invited to commit again before February 2015 and to send final reports before April 2015.
- To save meeting time, a list of the organisations with expired commitments or overdue reports will be annexed to the agendas of future meetings.

#### **5. Membership requests**

- Membership requests from two organisations were considered by the Forum:
  - European Liver Patients Association;
  - Carlsberg Group.
- The Chair emphasised that all applying organisations must fulfil the membership criteria set out in the Charter.
- Representatives of the organisations gave brief presentations of their activities envisaged as commitments for the Forum. Forum members accepted their membership applications and welcomed them to the Forum. The Forum will now have 66 members.

#### **6. New commitments**

- EUROCARE presented its new commitments including :
  - organization of the 6th European Alcohol Policy Conference in Brussels on 27-28 November 2014;
  - Raising awareness of drinking alcohol while pregnant;
  - Labelling of alcoholic beverages;
  - Cooperation with relevant partners and dissemination of information concerning minimum unit pricing on alcohol;
  - Raising awareness on the use of advertising and sponsorship in sports;
  - Raising awareness on the link between alcohol and cancer.

- Presenting new commitments in future Forum meetings was considered as a good practice to develop more effective exchange of views between stakeholders and thus to improve the quality of the commitments.
- In response to a question of a Forum member, the Chair confirmed that advocacy related activities that contribute to reducing alcohol related harm are considered as valid commitments in the Forum.

## **7. Responsible Marketing Pact – recent developments**

- The World Federation of Advertisers presented the preparatory work carried out so far for the Responsible Marketing Pact entering into force on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015. (<http://www.wfanet.org/en/advocacy/responsible-marketing-pact>). In the pact, eight global leading alcohol producers commit to implement standards for responsible advertising.

## **8. Digital Guiding Principles and the Global Commitments to reduce harmful drinking - recent developments**

- The International Center for Alcohol Policies informed Forum members about the progress with the global commitment to reduce harmful drinking. One of the accomplishments in 2014 was the launch of Digital Guiding Principles to apply the same high standards of social responsibility to online marketing as to traditional offline marketing activities. (<http://icap.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7uwGKiNrcIQ%3D&tabid=71>).

## **9. Study on "Health related information on alcoholic beverage labels – State of play in the use of alcoholic beverages labels to inform consumers about health"**

- The above study was carried out by GfK Belgium and funded by the Health Programme. A short presentation was followed by further discussion on the methodology and conclusions.
- SpiritsEUROPE argued that the study does not provide an accurate picture on the volume of the use of alcoholic beverage labels in the EU and claimed that the chosen methodology is unsuitable to draw policy recommendations.
- DG SANTE will look carefully into the issues concerned.

## **10. Final results of the project "European Workplace and Alcohol"**

- The main objectives and results of the project ([http://www.eurocare.org/eu\\_projects/ewa](http://www.eurocare.org/eu_projects/ewa)) co-financed by the Health Programme was outlined. The tool kit for alcohol related interventions at the workplace as well as policy recommendations at EU and national level were presented. The need for solid monitoring of the impact on absenteeism as well as for more research on efficacy and cost-effectiveness of alcohol specific preventive interventions was emphasised.

## 11. Any other business

None.

## 12. Conclusions by the Chair

- Members will be informed about the future of the EU alcohol policy in due time. For the time being, the existing strategic goals and objectives of the alcohol strategy remain valid. Involvement of stakeholders in the work to reduce alcohol related harm (multi-stakeholder approach) is likely to be maintained. Therefore, the Forum needs to continue its work and set up strong, tangible commitments in this interim period.
- The mandate of the Governance Working Group will be prolonged. Forum members have been invited to send their comments to the conclusions of the Working Group within three weeks.  
The full document will be published on the website of DG SANTE after consolidation and approval by the Forum.
- The two-year Action Plan on Youth Drinking and on Heavy Episodic Drinking published on the Commission's website is an informal document. It provides a reference for implementing actions by all actors targeting “youth drinking” and “heavy episodic drinking”, on a voluntary basis. Forum members are encouraged to consider operational actions supporting the Action Plan.
- All members must have at least one active commitment to fulfil the membership requirements set out in the Forum Charter and keep up with their reporting. Currently there are 30 members without active commitment (the two members which joined the Forum at this meeting not included).
- The deadlines for submission of new commitments and monitoring reports will remain the same as presented at the previous Forum meeting:
  - By 31 December 2014:
    - Members without any active commitment should enter a new commitment
    - Members who have not sent any intermediate reports for active commitments started at least one year ago should send intermediate reports.
    - Members with recently completed commitments should send final reports.
  - By 31 January 2015: Members with commitments to expire at the end of the year should commit again.
  - By 31 March 2015: Final monitoring reports should be sent for commitments that will expire at the end of 2014.
- The Forum has now 66 members after two new members joined the Forum: European Liver Patients Association and Carlsberg Group.

- DG SANTE appreciates the new commitments and recent developments on active commitments as shared by their owners.
- The Chair invited Forum members to participate in the Third plenary meeting of the Community of Practice on Better Self- and Co-regulation chaired by Mr Robert Madelin to be held on 24 November in Brussels.
- The next plenary meeting of the Forum is planned for 29 April 2015 in Brussels.

*30 November 2014, Luxembourg*