



## **TITHE AN OIREACHTAIS**

### **AN COMHCHOISTE UM GHNÓTHAÍ EALAÍON, SPÓIRT, TURASÓIREACHTA, POBAIL, TUAITHE AGUS GAELTACHTA**

#### **An Tríú Tuarascáil Déag**

**An gaol idir mí-úsáid alcóil agus coimircíocht an tionscail deochanna ar  
ghníomhaíochtaí spóirt.**

**Márta 2007**

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## **HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS**

### **JOINT COMMITTEE ON ARTS, SPORT, TOURISM, COMMUNITY, RURAL AND GAELTACHT AFFAIRS**

#### **Thirteenth Report**

**The relationship between alcohol misuse and the drinks industry  
sponsorship of sporting activities.**

**March 2007**



## **CONTENTS**

Foreword by the Chairman.....	5
Recommendations of the Joint Committee.....	7
Appendix 1: The relationship between alcohol misuse and the drinks industry sponsorship of sporting activities (Report of Mr. James Breen T.D., in consultation with Turas Counselling).....	9
Appendix 2: Membership of the Joint Committee.....	43
Appendix 3: Orders of Reference of the Joint Committee.....	45



## **Foreword by the Chairman**

The links between the alcohol industry and sport in this country and indeed in Europe are undeniable. Anybody attending the recent RBS 6 nations championship matches in Croke Park cannot not but have been dazzled by the plethora of signs highlighting Guinness. Also you will have noticed that Munster won the “Heineken” Cup last year, rather than the European Rugby Championship. This Report shows the insidious role that alcohol and its advertising and promotion plays in our national lifestyle and this Report is but one of many crying stop. How many more tragedies and ruined lives do we need?

Cecilia Keaveney T.D.,  
Chairman of the Joint Committee,  
March 2007.





## **Recommendations of the Joint Committee**

- The Joint Committee recommends that the government acknowledges the extent of the problem of alcohol abuse in the country and the underlying role that drinks sponsorship and promotion plays in it.
- The Joint Committee recommends that policy measures are required which will change the environment and culture surrounding alcohol.
- The Joint Committee recommends that these policies must be implemented at both national and community levels and be age related.
- The Joint Committee recommends that the best practice for the foundation of a comprehensive alcohol policy should combine the limiting of access, taxation measures, the enforcement of alcohol legislation and intervention with the high risk cohort and strongly recommends the implementation of such a comprehensive policy.
- The Joint Committee recommends the sourcing of sponsorship for sport outside of the alcohol industry: the correlation between the onset of drinks sponsorship and the rapid rise in alcohol consumption in this country is too strong to be ignored.
- The Joint Committee recommends further examinations of what measures might be effective in reducing the consumption of alcohol in clubhouses where young people are present to play games such as football, hurling, soccer and rugby.
- The Joint Committee recommends examining how to break the link between healthy sports activities and high-risk binge-drinking by members of clubs and by those taking an active part in sport.
- The Joint Committee recommends that the government be aware of international agreements and EU Directives/Regulations on alcohol taxation, alcohol promotion or sponsorship which may impinge on the government's ability to reduce alcohol related harm.
- The Joint Committee recommends the government to take cognisance of the World Health Organisation's European Charter on Alcohol. This Charter specifies the importance of the following areas:

1. Availability.
  2. Control of promotion of alcohol.
  3. The enhancement of society's capacity to respond to alcohol related harm.
  4. The protecting of public, private and working environments.
  5. The responsibilities of the alcohol beverage industry.
  6. The provision of information and education.
  7. The provision of effective treatment services.
  8. Support for non-governmental organisations.
  9. Ongoing research and monitoring.
  10. The role played by alcohol in road accidents.
- In its ongoing work over the last four years on drug and alcohol abuse the Joint Committee has always been conscious of the importance of treatment and rehabilitation of the victims given that the therapeutic support for victims and their families comes under the umbrella of the Mental Health Services and given the consistent underfunding of these services the Joint Committee again supports the health professionals and voluntary groups who are continually demanding appropriate resources for those services.



## Appendix 1

# ***The Relationship between alcohol misuse and the drinks industry sponsorship of sporting activities.***

***A Report to the Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism,  
Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs***

***By***

***James Breen T.D.***

***in consultation with***

***Turas Counselling***



# Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2. Ireland &amp; Alcohol – A brief profile</b>	
2.1 Social & Cultural environment	15
2.2 Approach to Alcohol Policy	16
2.3 Alcohol Consumption	16
2.4 Consumption and Harm	18
2.5 Drinking Patterns	19
2.6 Adults	19
2.7 Young People	21
2.8 Youth Drinking and Harm	22
<b>3. The Promotion of Alcohol</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 Alcohol Advertising	27
3.2 Sponsorship	29
<b>4. Alcohol Policy Recommendations</b>	
4.1 Research Evidence	31
4.2 Public Attitudes to Alcohol Policy	32
4.3 STFA 2004 Recommendations	33
4.4 Alcohol & Sports	34
4.5 Conclusion	38
<b>5. List of References</b>	<b>41</b>



# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to explore the links between sponsorship of sports by alcohol companies and the risk to people, especially young people, through misuse of alcohol. The report attempts to assess the effectiveness of a ban on such sponsorship and explores the related issues.

The first chapter sets the context for the discussion and offers a brief profile in relation to use of alcohol in Ireland. The main research used comes from the work of the Health Promotion Unit, National Youth Council of Ireland, and Ann Hope, M.Sc. PhD National Alcohol Policy Advisor, Department of Health, Ireland. The chapter offers information on the social and cultural context of alcohol in Ireland, along with alcohol consumption patterns and effects in relation to adults and young people.

The next section deals with issues relating to the advertising of alcohol and the sponsorship of various events and sports organisations by alcohol companies. It draws on the work of several authors in this field of work to discuss the effects of such advertising on the use and possible misuse of such alcoholic products.

The final section offers views on the various recommendations made by Government bodies, the Drinks Industry, and various authors on the subject. In trying to assess the public attitudes and responses to such recommendations the report offers an analysis of the views expressed by the various parties to the discussion and offers conclusions based on the research undertaken.



James Breen T.D.



## **2. Ireland and Alcohol – A Brief Profile**

### **2.1 Social and cultural environment**

Ireland has had a long love affair with alcohol throughout its history and the use (and sometimes over-use) of alcohol is linked to many of our cultural events and lifestyle. Nearly all of our major steps in life, from the cradle to the grave, are marked by the use of alcohol. It has become one of the most socially accepted drugs in Ireland and is seen to be important in our sense of “Irishness”. For decades we have promoted alcoholic products such as Guinness in our tourist promotions. There is even an entire range of Guinness souvenirs that are sold in virtually every tourist and craft shop in the country. Aside from the obvious profits from such sales of branded products there is also the enormous gain from the free advertising this brings throughout the country and abroad. Guinness as a brand has become a national symbol – it even uses the reversed harp as its logo. Ask anyone where Guinness comes from they will tell you it’s from Ireland – ask people what symbols they associate with Ireland and you can be sure that Guinness will feature highly along with shamrocks, music, pubs, and sports. It is no wonder that alcohol is so strongly linked to our culture and way of life when it is being constantly promoted within our tourist, economic, historical and social sectors.

According to NYCI (2005), Ireland already has an adequate supply of licensed premises to meet demand, except in a very small number of areas. According to a survey conducted by the ESRI in 2000 and commissioned by the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland, Ireland has a total of 11,559 fully licensed premises in Ireland. This equates to a pub licence for every 339 persons in the population, a pub license for every 250 adults (aged 18+) and compared to the U.K, almost 3 times as many pubs per thousand of the population (2000). Furthermore there was a substantial increase of 2,971 other licences (Special Restaurant licence, Beer off-licence, Wine off-licence) in the period 1993 – 2002. The number of alcohol outlets is equal to four times the number of general retail stores, eight times the number of clothes shops and twenty four times the number of electrical stores.

Irish society has experienced major changes over the last decade with rapid economic growth, increased employment opportunities attracting many young adults back home, more young people with part-time jobs, heightened interest in recreational, leisure and sporting activities and changing attitudes to lifestyle issues. The link of alcohol use with all forms of leisure, sport and entertainment, gives a clear message to young people – ‘to have enjoyment and to make friends you need alcohol’. Against this backdrop, the rise in alcohol consumption has been dramatic and the rise in harm alarming (Hope, 2004).

## **2.2 Approach to Alcohol Policy.**

According to the Health Promotion Unit (2004), the public health approach to alcohol policy has emerged over the last three decades because of the weight of evidence-based scientific research. This approach, endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), recognises that alcohol contributes to a range of health, social and behavioural problems – in terms of its toxicity, its potential to create dependency and its negative impact on human behaviour. The WHO European Action Plan 2000-2005 has as its aim to prevent and reduce the harm done by alcohol throughout the European Region. The WHO aim, is reflected in the Member States individual alcohol strategies or action plans, including Ireland’s National Alcohol Policy (Hope, 2004). The overall level of alcohol consumption and the predominant pattern of drinking in the population, are predictive of the incidence and prevalence of alcohol problems in any given society. Therefore, alcohol policy must take into account the total drinking population when defining the scope of public health action as well as targeting high-risk groups and individual high-risk drinkers.

## **2.3 Alcohol consumption**

Ireland continues to be amongst the highest consumers of alcohol in the world. In the new enlarged European Union, Ireland ranked second after Luxembourg for alcohol consumption in 2001. The overall per capita consumption (per head of the total population) ranges from a low of 5.39 litres in Malta to a high of 14.4 in Luxembourg (Figure 1).



Alcohol consumption **per capita** is used for international comparisons. To establish a more accurate figure for the consumption rate in Ireland, given that alcohol is mainly consumed by adults, those under 15 years (representing 21% of the population) are excluded from the **per adult** consumption rate. Therefore, the alcohol consumption rate per adult is always higher than the per capita rate and is a more accurate reflection of the consumption rate in the country.

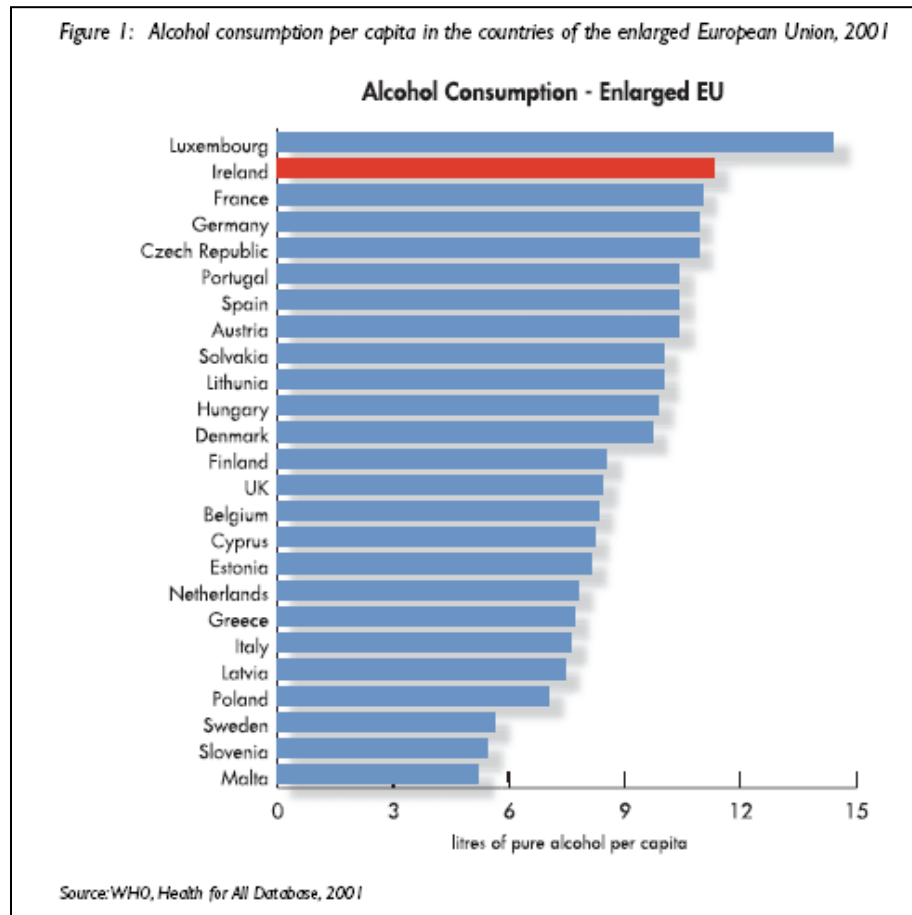
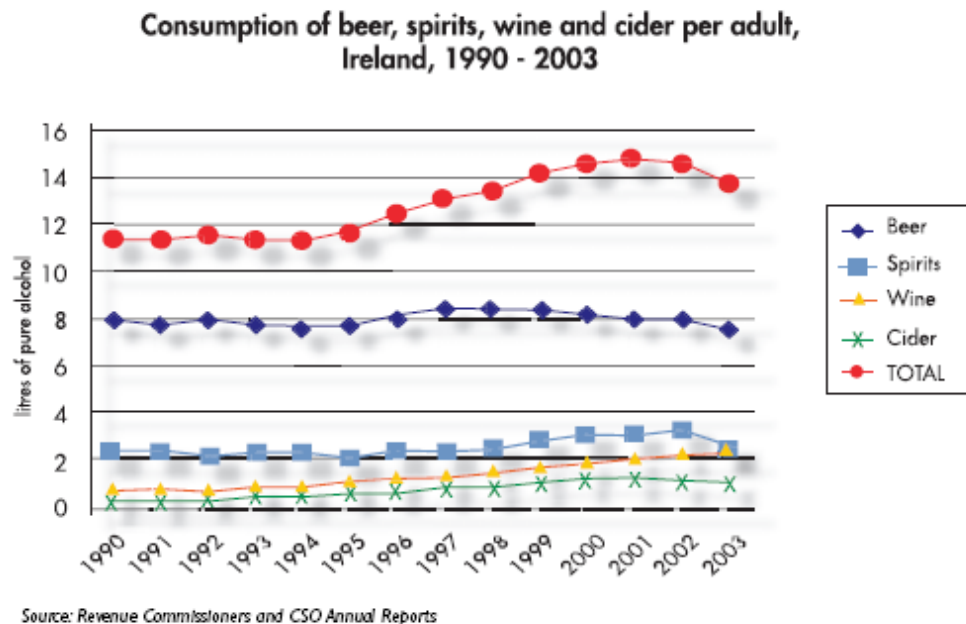


Figure 1: Alcohol consumption per capita in the countries of the enlarged European Union, 2001. Source: WHO, Health for All Database, 2001

Alcohol consumption in Ireland peaked in 2001 at 14.4 litres of pure alcohol per adult, aged 15 years and over (Figure 2). In 2003, alcohol consumption in Ireland showed a decline for the first time in over sixteen years. The overall decrease in 2003 (-6%) was mainly due to a large drop in spirit sales and to a lesser extent a drop in beer sales during the year. One of the main reasons for this decline was an increase in excise duty on

spirits. In 2003, alcohol consumption per adult was 13.5 litres of pure alcohol (Health Promotion Unit , 2004).

Figure 2: Alcohol consumption per adult (aged 15 and over), Ireland 1990-2003



## 2.4 Consumption and harm

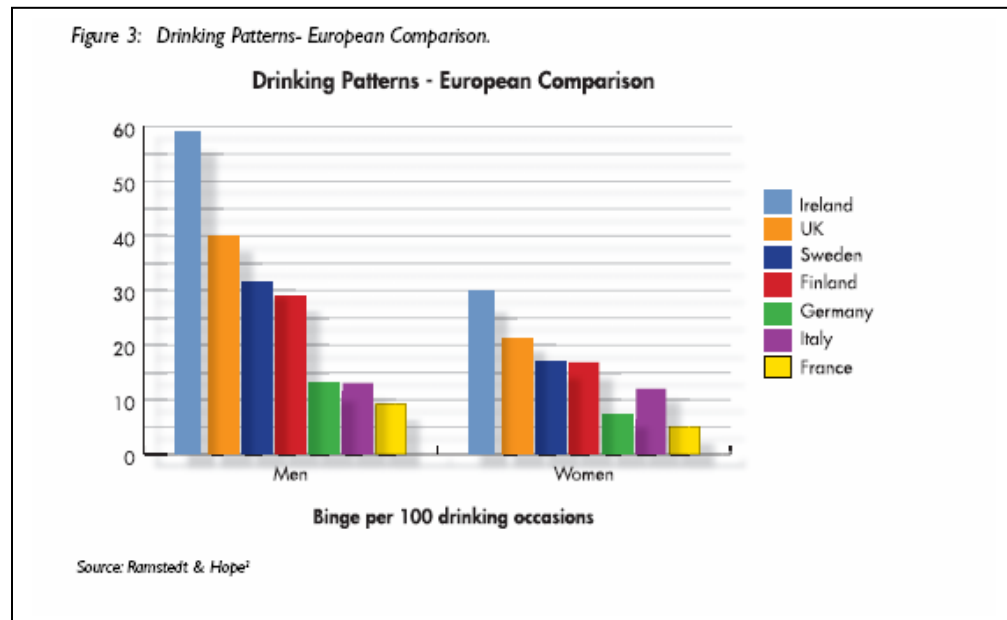
According to Hope, 2004, between 1990 and 2002, alcohol consumption per capita increased by **41%**, the highest rate of increase in Europe (Revenue Commissioners and CSO). Alcohol harm is visible on our streets, in our courts, hospitals, workplaces, schools and homes. The vast majority of alcohol harm occurs among the adult population. Alcohol related mortality increased significantly during the same time period. The number of people who died (rate per 100,000) from alcohol abuse/dependency increased by a factor of four, cirrhosis doubled and alcohol poisoning almost doubled. High profile cases involving alcohol and violence have grabbed media headlines, but are only the tip of the iceberg. Since 1996, public order offences increased by 247%, assaults by 82% and drink driving offences by 125% (CSO). One in four attending the hospital emergency room are alcohol related (Hope, 2004).

## 2.5 Drinking Patterns

The amount of alcohol consumed per occasion, the frequency and circumstances of drinking reflect drinking patterns. High risk drinking is the type of drinking that is likely to increase the risk of harm for the drinker or for others, such as binge drinking, drinking to intoxication and regular heavy drinking. Binge drinking is a term used to describe a single occasion of excessive drinking, defined by the WHO as six or more standard drinks (60 grams of pure alcohol). Binge drinking and drinking to intoxication is particularly linked to an increased risk of short-term (acute) harm such as accidents, injuries, violence and poisoning. Drinking above the guidelines of more than 14 standard drinks per week for women and 21 for men is linked to increased risk of long-term (chronic) harm, such as high blood pressure, cancers, cirrhosis, and alcohol abuse (Health Promotion Unit, 2004).

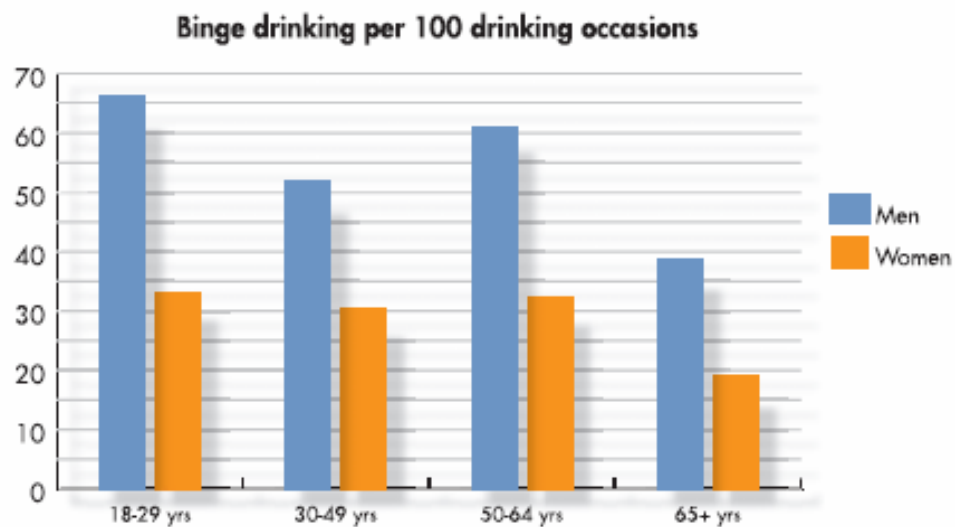
## 2.6 Adults

A recent study showed that adults in Ireland had the highest reported consumption per drinker and the highest level of binge drinking in comparison to adults in other European countries (Figure 3).



The study showed that binge drinking is the norm among Irish men; out of every 100 drinking occasions, 58 end up in binge drinking. Among women, 30 occasions out of 100 end up in binge drinking. Binge drinking was conservatively defined in this study as drinking at least one bottle of wine, or 7 measures of spirits, or 4 pints of beer or more, during one drinking occasion (75/80 grams of pure alcohol). While young Irish men (18-29 age group) reported the highest consumption of alcohol and had more binge drinkers than any other group in the population, binge drinking was common in all age groups up to 64 years (Figure 4) (Health Promotion Unit, 2004).

Figure 4: Binge drinking across age groups and sex



Source: Ramstedt & Hope<sup>2</sup>

## **2.7 Young People**

‘Young people and alcohol’, a phrase often used to imply that alcohol is a problem for young people only, especially those under age. It also implies that the rest of adult society has no problem with alcohol which belies the facts and figures. NYCI (2005) contends that young people are often unfairly depicted as the perpetrators of alcohol misuse rather than the victims. Such a portrayal fails to consider that alcohol misuse is prevalent throughout Irish society and does not discriminate against age. It also fails to consider that often the attitudes young people hold towards alcohol and drinking behaviour are inherited from adults. At the 1995 Dáil na nÓg the young delegates levelled considerable criticism at adults for creating and passing on to their generation the problems related to alcohol. According to Hope, 2004, teenagers and children tend to follow similar drinking patterns to adults, although at a lesser magnitude.

The international survey data (HBSC, ESPAD) show that children do experiment with alcohol at very early ages, some regularly consume alcohol and a proportion are involved in high risk drinking (binge drinking and drunkenness). For the most part, alcohol use and abuse increases with age and is higher among boys than girls with wide variation between countries. The critical age for accelerated alcohol use and abuse is between 13 and 15 years of age in many countries. At 16 years, about one in four boys in 9 of the EU countries are regular binge drinkers. For girls, one in five are regular binge drinkers in 6 of the EU Member States at age 16 years. Given that alcohol use poses serious risks for children and teenagers still developing and maturing, the main focus is to keep children alcohol-free. Some factors identified in the HBSC survey associated with staying alcohol-free were - spending fewer evenings with friends; liking school and good attendance. For girls, being able to communicate well with their father was important. There was also a strong line between not smoking and not drinking. The consequences of alcohol use by teenagers reported in ESPAD include a range of problems affecting their performance at school, being in accidents, difficulties in relationships with others, unwanted sexual experiences, fights and trouble with the police.

## Drinking patterns among children (11, 13 years) and teenagers (16 years) in the Enlarged European Union

	HBSC 1998 At 11 years drunk twice or more often		HBSC 1998 At 13 years drunk twice or more often		ESPAD 1999 At 16 years Drunk 10 times or more during last year		ESPAS 1999 At 16 years Binge drinking 3 times or more during last 30 days	
Country	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %
Austria	4	2	13	7				
Belgium**	6	1	11	6				
Cyprus					4	0	18	6
Czech Rep.	6	2	14	6	19	9	25	11
Denmark	6	3	25	21	43	35	37	22
Estonia	2	1	15	4	15	7	18	12
Finland	4	1	16	18	29	28	21	15
France*	1	0.4	8	5	6	1	16	7
Germany*	2	0.3	10	7				
Greece	5	1	9	5	4	1	13	5
Hungary	3	1	9	4	9	2	18	8
Ireland	7	1	15	8	28	25	32	32
Italy					4	1	na	na
Latvia	4	0.4	15	8	11	6	19	9
Lithuania	6	1	15	6	15	5	12	5
Malta					5	3	25	18
Poland	4	1	14	6	13	5	41	23
Portugal	4	1	10	5	6	1	10	5
Slovakia	16	8	23	13	9	5	12	7
Slovenia					14	9	29	19
Sweden	1	0.3	8	6	21	16	22	13
UK*	9	3	25	22	30	26	33	27

\* HBSC data for France and Germany represents regions. UK data is for England \*\* Belgium (Flemish); Spain, Netherlands, and Luxembourg were not involved in the surveys.  
Sources: WHO-HBSC, 2000<sup>4</sup>; ESPAD 1999 Report<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.8 Youth drinking and harm

In 2002, fewer children under 15 years, reported experimenting with alcohol, drinking on a regular basis or getting drunk, in comparison to 1998 (Health Promotion Unit 2003). However, for those 15-17 years there was no reported change in the overall pattern of drinking, where about half of the boys and girls were regular drinkers and drunkenness was prevalent. Among 16 year olds, one in three were regular binge drinkers and one in four reported being drunk ten or more times in the last year (Hibell et al, 2000). In 2002, alcopops was the most popular drink among girls while beer continued to be the most popular drink among boys (Health Promotion Unit 2003). The significant role alcohol contributes to harm among Irish young people such as unsafe sex, alcohol overdose, accidents, assaults, suicide and poor school performance has been previously documented (Dept of Health and Children, 2002). A glimpse of the problems experienced by young

people can be seen in the work of the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme. Between 1997 and 2002, there was a 185% increase in juvenile alcohol related offences (An Garda Síochána). Of particular concern is the increase in '*intoxication in public places*' among teenagers which increased from 550 offences in 1997 to 1,898 offences in 2002, an increase of 245%. However, the figure for the same offence, *intoxication in a public place*, among adults was 22,701 in 2002, up 194% since 1997.





### 3. The Promotion of Alcohol

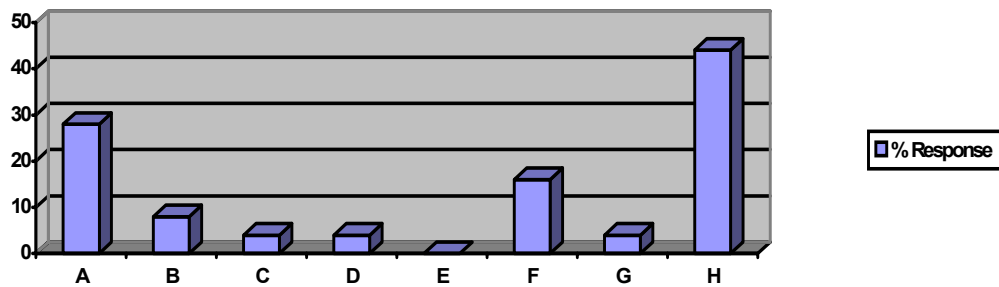
Alcohol marketing is sophisticated in its methods, exceptionally well funded and powerful in its impact on young people including young adults, adolescents and those who have not yet tried alcohol (Jackson et al., 2000. Jernigan, 2001). Alcohol marketing places alcohol as a defining feature of youth culture, linking alcohol with social and sexual success. Alcohol marketing also undermines efforts to communicate health promotion messages to young people (Hope, 2004). In the wider environment, alcohol marketing affects social norms about drinking throughout society (WHO, 2003). Young people are influenced by exposure to repeated high-level **alcohol promotions** inculcating pro-drinking attitudes which increases the likelihood of heavier drinking (Babor et al, 2003). Alcohol advertising promotes and reinforces positive attitudes about drinking and portrays drinking as fun, glamorous and risk free. In Ireland, research showed that children were strongly attracted to alcohol advertising and that young people believed that advertisements were targeted at their age group (Dring and Hope, 2001).

In a survey carried out by Turas (2006) the following findings emerged:

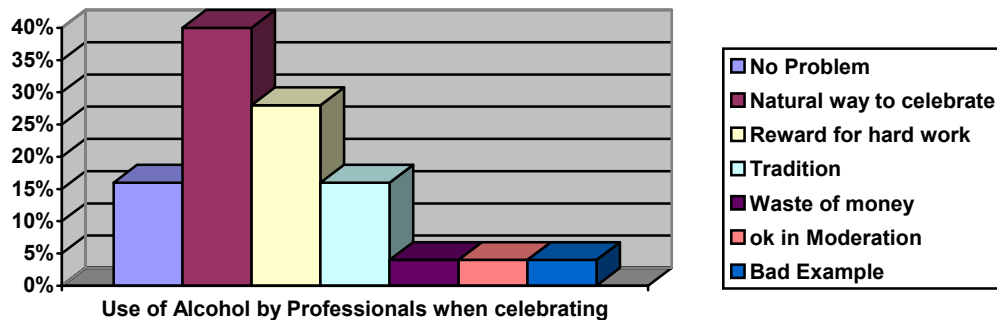
The following responses were given to the question “Does alcohol advertising....

- a. Encourage you to try that drink the next time you are out – 28%
- b. Make you try that drink to be like the celebrity in the advert – 8%
- c. Lead you to believe that everyone drinks alcohol – 4%
- d. Lead you to believe that alcohol is cool – 4%
- e. Make you think that drinking is cool – 0%
- f. Encourage people to drink under the legal age limit – 16%
- g. Make you want to go to the pub/off licence – 4%
- h. None of the above – 44%

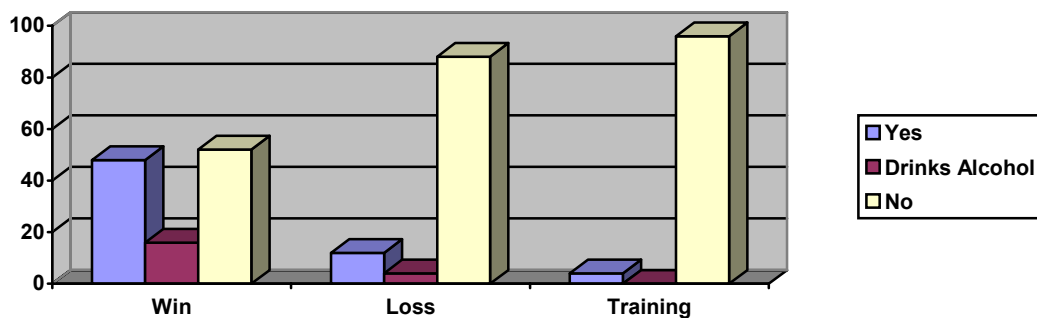
Of the 28% that stated they were encouraged to try the particular drink the next time they were out, all of the respondents were aged between 14 and 17 years.



When asked their opinion on the use of alcohol by professionals/teams when celebrating a win, 16% indicated they had no problem with it, 40% felt it was a natural way to celebrate, 28% saw it as a reward for hard work, 16% felt it was part of our tradition and was the normal way to celebrate, 4% thought it was a waste of money, 4% felt it was ok in moderation, and 4% felt alcohol was over used and gave a bad example to young people.



Of the people that participate in a sport 48% stated that they go to a pub after a win and of those 33% said they drank alcohol on such occasions. 12% said they go to the pub after a loss and again 33% of those drank alcohol. Only 4% go to the pub after training and none of those drank alcohol.



(Turas, 2006).

### 3.1 Alcohol advertising:

In Ireland, alcohol advertising is governed by voluntary codes or self-regulation. The codes of advertising all set down certain guidelines to protect young people. However, during the last decade alcohol advertising has increased in volume, as reflected in the advertising spend, from €25.8 million in 1996 to €43.2 million in 2002 (Association of Advertisers of Ireland, 2004). The greatest increase happened in spirits advertisements between 1996 and 2000, coinciding with the introduction to the market of the new spirits based alcopops - Television (+228%), Outdoors (+136%), Cinema (+116%) and press (83%) and radio (-62%). The introduction of alcopops, with a strong sweet taste, disguising the taste of alcohol, attracted many young people into alcohol. The more recent new alcohol products with high alcohol content (shooter, shots) provide for a quick and easy 'fix' of alcohol for those who are interested in getting drunk fast. Drink combinations such as 'vodka and red bull' allow the drinker to consume large quantities of alcohol which the body otherwise could not normally tolerate, this is due to the stimulant affect of red bull. Alcohol promotions such as free alcohol, cheap alcohol and strong alcohol encourage high risk drinking which contributes to increased risk of alcohol related problems (Hope, 2003).

Alcohol advertising also extended its scope by advertising alcopops products on television, despite the voluntary code that spirits drinks would not be advertised on television. A study was undertaken in 2000 asking young people how they perceived alcohol advertisements and whether the advertisements were in compliance with the

codes. The results suggest that alcohol advertisements did infringe the codes in a number of ways. These include linking alcohol use with social or sexual success, depiction of immoderate drinking, use of characters that appear to be under 25 years, implying that alcohol had therapeutic effects or improved physical performance and alcohol advertisements targeted at young people (Dring and Hope, 2001). In 2003 the Drinks Industry Group established a Central Copy Clearance company to vet alcohol advertising prior to launch to ensure compliance with the voluntary code. However, despite the CCC role, alcohol advertisements continue to breach the code, illustrating the deficiencies of the self-regulation system (Kenny, 2004).

Behavioural studies in the UK on the effects of advertising on the individual show that advertising has negative effects on young people.

- • 88% of 10-13-year olds and 96% of 14-17-year olds were aware of alcohol advertising and 76% of these (across the whole age range) could identify 3 or more adverts when the brand name was masked.
- • Young people, even 10-12-year olds, were adept at interpreting the messages, images and targeting of alcohol advertisements, in the same way as adults.
- • 86% enjoyed alcohol advertisements, particularly when shown examples and rated them as being funny, lively, stylish with good music. Proportionately more drinkers than non-drinkers had seen alcohol advertisements and appreciated them. (Alcohol Concern, 2004).

While there is some evidence that bans on alcohol advertising decrease alcohol consumption (Saffer and Dave, 2002) the other promotional activities, often using the largest part of the marketing budget, also need to be regulated (Jernigan, 2001). Such activities include sponsorship, product placement and special alcohol promotions, which especially appeal to young males, the groups mostly likely to be high risk and heavy drinkers (Babor et al, 2003).

More recent research reports that **alcohol sports sponsorship** has an effect similar to alcohol advertising. As noted by Babor et al.(2003), alcohol sports sponsorship links

masculinity, alcohol and sport and provides promotional opportunities that go beyond passive images of alcohol advertisements. This serves to embed alcohol products into the everyday activities of the consumer through title name, sports results, commentary and discussions of the sporting events which in turn taps into and reinforces cultural identity.

### **3.2 Sponsorship:**

Corporate sponsorship of special events is well recognized in the marketing literature as an important component of product promotion. Sports sponsorship in particular is an important and effective promotional tool (Gardener (1987), Mescon (1987), Ukman (1984), Abratt(1987). In the marketing literature, the primary reason given for corporations to undertake sports sponsorships is to achieve television exposure for their companies or brands. Among the established techniques for evaluating the effect of sports sponsorships is studying the extent of media coverage, including the dollar equivalent of free advertising achieved (Abratt & Grobler , 1989). The *Sponsors Report*, based in Ann Arbor, Mich (1998), specializes in valuing motor sports sponsorships by analyzing televised events and quantifying the amount of in-focus exposure time and number of verbal mentions for each company and brand sponsor. Multiplying the infocus exposure time by the individual broadcast's commercial advertising rate yields a dollar value for the television advertising each sponsor achieves. *Sponsors Report* clients use this information to evaluate the effect of their sponsorships (Siegel, 2001).

By the early 1990's the drinks industry had developed sponsorship deals with many musical and cultural events around Ireland. According to Hope (2004) the current high visibility alcohol sport sponsorships in sports with the highest youth participation (gaelic football, rugby and soccer) began in 1994 with the Guinness All Ireland Hurling Championship and symbolised a major social shift in a community rich in tradition and culture. The GAA sponsorship deal was followed by the Heineken Cup (rugby) and the Carlsberg League (soccer). Sponsorship deals of this type give in-depth exposure through event naming, product placement, sport commentary and discussions of the sporting events and embed the alcohol product into the daily lives of people. Alcohol sports

sponsorship, linking alcohol, masculinity and sport, attracts young males; the groups mostly likely to be high risk and heavy drinkers (Babor et al., 2003).

According to McCaughren (2007), The Rugby World Cup, landmark new GAA deals and major sports events such as the World Rally Championships are set to push sponsorship spending in Ireland to over €100m in 2007. This marks a 12pc increase on last year, with several new deals on the cards in the coming months, according to a new report by consultancy Onside Sponsorship. Among the highlights for 2007 is the renewal of the GAA Championships sponsorship agreements, with football and hurling reportedly being merged into a single sponsorship property. Research just released by Onside shows that almost €6 in every €10 spent on sponsorship in Ireland is invested in sports-related sponsorships, such as GAA, rugby and soccer.

## 4. Alcohol Policy - Recommendations

According to Hope (2004), the research evidence is very clear on a number of key issues in relation to alcohol policy. Firstly, not all alcohol policy measures are equally effective. Secondly, policy measures that influence and change the physical, social and cultural environment around alcohol are more effective in preventing and reducing alcohol related harm, than measures targeted at the individual drinker. Thirdly, policies exclusively targeted at young people, while ignoring the wider adult population, are doomed to failure. Fourthly, while education programmes can influence beliefs and attitudes about alcohol, the overwhelming weight of the international evidence, across several contexts and settings including schools, colleges and communities concludes that educational strategies show little or no effect in reducing alcohol consumption or related harm. The most recent global review of alcohol policy supported by WHO clearly shows that the ‘best value’ for an effective alcohol policy response should combine measures targeted at the general population (taxes, controlling access to alcohol, RBT, Lower BAC), at high-risk groups (minimum age, enforcement of on-premise alcohol laws, community mobilisation) and at high-risk drinkers (brief intervention) (Babor et al, 2003).

### 4.1 Research Evidence

In the latest comprehensive global review of alcohol policy (published in 2003), sponsored by the World Health Organisation, the researchers conclude that *“opportunities for evidence-based alcohol policies that better serve the public good are more available than ever before, as a result of accumulated knowledge on which strategies work and how to make them work”* (Babor et al, 2003). To protect the public health of the community, Babor and his research colleagues assert that:

- alcohol is no ordinary commodity and its harmful properties result in a wide range of problems.
- the public health precautionary principle should apply to alcohol policy – take preventative action in the face of uncertainty, shift the burden of proof to the proponents of a potentially harmful activity and be guided by the likely risk rather than by potential profit.

- an overall alcohol policy should have a set of integrated and mutually supportive strategies.
- alcohol policies should be implemented at both national and community levels and should target three groups - the general population, high risk drinkers and people already experiencing alcohol related problems.
- the best practice for the foundation of a comprehensive alcohol policy should combine measures targeted at the general population (taxes, limiting access, RBT, lower BAC), high risk groups (minimum age, enforcement of alcohol laws) and high risk drinkers (brief intervention).

## 4.2 Public Attitudes to Alcohol Policy

The Strategic Task Force on Alcohol (STFA), set up by the Minister of Health in 2002, was asked to bring forward specific measures to Government based on sound scientific evidence to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm in Ireland. The STFA first Interim Report recommended specific measures for action including an increase in alcohol taxes, the introduction of random breath testing, lower BAC, prohibition of service to drunk customers, restrictions on high risk sales promotions and reduced exposure of children to alcohol marketing.

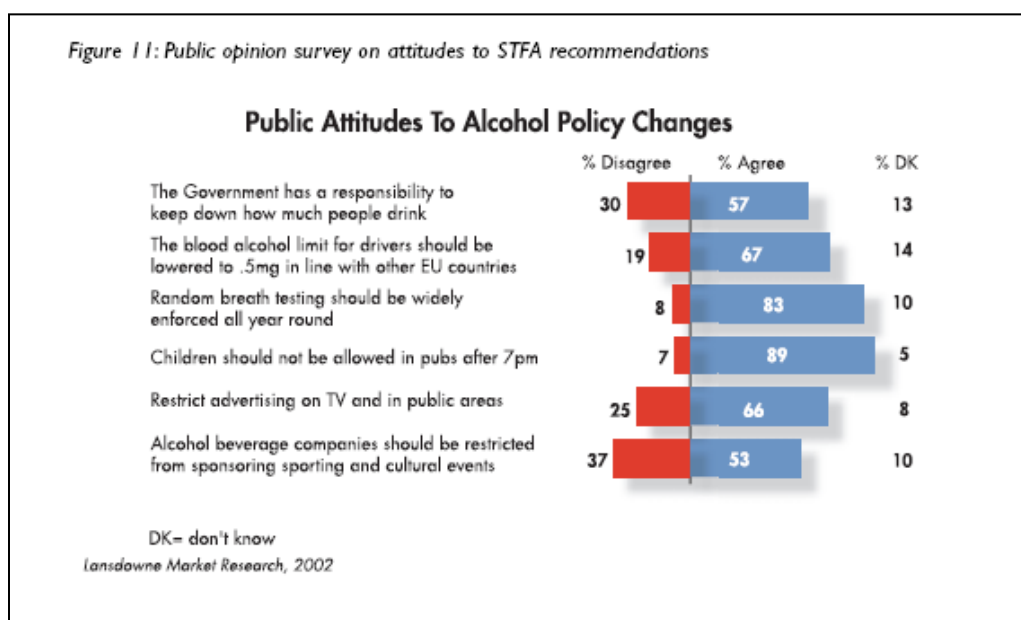
Following the publication of the STFA Interim Report 2002, the Health Promotion Unit commissioned a national survey to evaluate **Public Attitudes To Alcohol Policy Changes**. Overall, 83% of people believed that alcohol related problems in Ireland had increased over the past five years. At a national level teenage drinking was perceived as the most serious problem (70%), followed by alcohol related street violence (62%), drinking and driving (61%) and drunkenness in public places (53%). There was strong support for alcohol policy measures in the following areas;

- protecting children (no children in pubs after 7 pm),
- limit alcohol advertising/sponsorship),
- reducing drinking and driving (RBT, Lower BAC)



- and limiting harm in the drinking environment (enforce laws to prevent drunkenness) (Figure 11).

Over two-thirds of people were in favour of health warning labels. There was little support for greater availability with only 8% wanting longer opening hours. Only one in four (23%) were in favour of lower taxes and about one in three (31%) were in favour of an increase in the number of outlets where alcohol can be bought for take away. Drinking patterns influenced the level of support for some policy measures, in that regular binge drinkers were less supportive of stricter drink driving measures, restricting the promotion of alcohol or health board intervention (Health Promotion Unit 2004).



### 4.3 STFA 2004 Recommendations

The recommendations of the Strategic Task Force on Alcohol 2004 Report are framed, as in the last report, using the ten strategy areas for alcohol action which were outlined in the WHO European Charter on Alcohol. Given that no additional recommendations are being proposed by the STFA to reduce drink driving, (these measures were provided in the first report and included random breath testing, lower BAC to .50mg %, near zero BAC for inexperienced drivers), this strategy area will not be repeated. The Strategy areas used to frame the recommendations are:

- **S1. Regulate availability**

- **S2. Control promotion of alcohol**
- **S3. Enhance society's capacity to respond to alcohol related harm**
- **S4. Protect public, private and working environments**
- **S5. Responsibility of the alcohol beverage industry**
- **S6. Provide information and education**
- **S7. Put in place effective treatment services**
- **S8. Support non-governmental organisations**
- **S9. Research and monitor progress**
- **S10. Drink Driving - Recommendations in Interim Report 2002**

As this report concerns itself with the relationship between sponsorship of sports by Alcohol Producers we list the following recommendations given in respect of this area.

- **R2.1** Ensure the proposed legislation to reduce the exposure of children to alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotions is enacted without delay.
- **R2.2** Recommend national sporting bodies, with high youth participation, to develop a proactive strategy to find an alternative to alcohol sponsorship.
- **R2.3** Ensure international agreements and EU Directives / Regulations on alcohol taxation, alcohol related promotions or sponsorship do not impinge on the Government's ability to reduce alcohol related harm. (Health Promotion Unit 2004)

#### **4.4 Alcohol & Sports**

According to the ESRI report on the social and economic value of sport in Ireland:

“While the social aspects of sport in Ireland are generally positive, there is cause for concern about their link with alcohol. The social aspects of sport for players, volunteers, club members, those who attend sports events are often associated with alcohol consumption and give rise to risks of excess drinking. Both sports policy and health promotion policy should be aware of this link and where possible should seek to weaken the link between sport and alcohol.”

A Bill was proposed in the Dail which would authorise the Minister for Health & Children to make regulations restricting alcohol advertising, sponsorship and sales promotions, particularly those which target children and underage drinkers. In November 2003 the then Minister for Health & Children, Michael Martin, stated it would provide for a ban on alcohol-related sponsorship of sports or activities involving participants under 18. It was also expected to limit the times and places where alcohol advertising may be shown, for example, introducing a watershed on television, radio, and in cinemas.

The Government decided to shelve the Bill in favour of the implementation of a voluntary advertising code which it has agreed with the advertising and drinks industries. The code will introduce among other things, a system of audience profiling. This will mean that alcohol advertising will not be allowed in any programme where more than 33% of the audience is under the age of 18 years. In addition, no advertising of alcohol will be placed in any programme specifically aimed at children or young people. This applies to television, radio and cinema. As regards outdoor advertising, the code includes a restriction that alcohol advertising will not be placed within 100 metres of schools and buses, and bus shelters will not contain wraparound alcohol advertisements.

According to Furlong and Rochford (2005), in a recent Dáil debate about the Bill, Minister for State Sean Power justified the decision to shelve the Bill on the grounds that the envisaged ban on alcohol advertising was "totally impossible". The experience in France appears to be that although a general ban is workable it is very difficult to prevent alcohol companies from indirectly advertising their products. In France there is a general ban on televising alcohol advertising. French television channels have bound themselves to a code of conduct implementing this ban. As part of this French broadcasters who are broadcasting bi-national sporting events involving French teams in other EU Member States and who do not control the filming conditions must use all available means to prevent the appearance of alcohol advertising on their channels. In practice this means the French broadcasters must:

- inform the foreign broadcaster of the requirements of the French law & code of conduct;

- enquire prior to the event about the advertisements which will be displayed;
- use all technical means available to avoid showing hoardings advertising alcohol.

The French approach does not banish alcohol from the sports arena outright. Stadia in which untelevised games are played are free to advertise alcohol. Alcohol advertising is permissible in the press, on the radio (except at certain times), and in the form of posters and advertising hoardings. At the other end of the scale, there is no restriction on French broadcasters' ability to televise multinational events held abroad involving alcohol advertising such as the World Cup as these are effectively out of their control.

According to Dorozynski (1995) the Evin law, named after Claude Evin, who was Minister of Health in 1991, has been causing trouble since its adoption. One of its immediate effects was to deprive the press of about one fifth of its advertising revenue. It then became evident that tobacco and alcohol sponsorship of sports events created far more revenue than had been estimated. Tobacco sponsorship of motor racing and other "mechanical sports" turned out to be about Fr 500m (about pounds sterling62m) annually, and the state chipped in Fr 450m (pounds sterling56m) to compensate for the loss. Parliament then passed an amendment authorising the transmission on television of mechanical sports events taking place in countries where tobacco advertising is authorised. As a result French advertisers now tend to buy space in events taking place abroad when they know that these events will be broadcast on French television. Paradoxically, while television can show cars with adjacent tobacco advertisements, newspapers cannot publish photographs in which such advertisements appear. The situation regarding alcohol is even more unsettled. An amendment has been passed authorising billboard advertisements for alcohol, even in sports stadiums and clubs, where they had previously been banned for 20 years. But a television station broadcasting an event sponsored in France by an alcoholic beverage can be condemned for "indirect advertising".

The French experience has shown that alcohol advertisers are still able to indirectly advertise their product. The Welsh rugby team for last year's Six Nations was sponsored by the SA Brains Brewery and displayed the logo 'Brains' on their jerseys for all but one

of their Six Nations games. When playing France in Paris on 26 February this year, Brains reworked the logo to read 'Brawn', while otherwise maintaining the distinctive qualities of the original logo's design. The result: compliance with French law and the successful marketing of Brains' product.

According to DMI (2006) their member companies devote considerable resources towards attracting consumers to choose their brand and to enjoy it in a moderate, responsible way. It is in nobody's interest to promote excessive consumption of alcohol. Neither manufacturers, retailers nor society benefit from this in the long-term. Manufacturers wish people to enjoy and appreciate their product in a moderate and responsible way. Personal responsibility is of paramount importance when consuming alcohol and the industry is developing a range of communications that challenge individuals to think about their consumption patterns.

As previously mentioned, some people believe that restricting advertising/introducing watersheds is an effective means of reducing alcohol consumption. This suggests that the advertising of alcoholic beverages has a major effect on the drinking behaviour of young people. While the research in this area is considerable, the evidence indicates that there is no causal link between alcohol advertising and individual drinking levels (*Simpson et al., 1985; Fisher, 1993; Young, 1993; Calfee & Scheraga, 1994; Fisher & Cook, 1995; Nelson, 2001*), with advertising being at most a weak influence when compared with other factors, such as peers, family, personality and the environment (*Bourgeois & Barnes, 1979; Johnson, 1985; Duffy, 1991; Fisher, 1993; Calfee & Scheraga, 1994; Unger et al., 1995; Milgram, 2001; Stockdale, 2001; Furnham, 2002*). The example of the wine sector which receives the least amount of advertising yet has experienced the most growth in recent years, is further evidence of this point.

It is important to note that the evidence indicates that while advertising does not have an effect on overall consumption, it does have a measurable effect on market share for individual brands (*Bourgeois & Barnes, 1979; Johnson, 1985; Lee & Tremblay, 1992; Gius, 1996; Nelson, 1997*). The drinks industry operates within a highly competitive

market similar to other branded goods industries; the advertising of products to legitimate consumers, over the minimum purchasing age, reflects this. Further confirmation of the lack of correlation of advertising on general consumption levels can be found in a number of studies, which have shown that when a total ban on advertising has been both introduced and removed, alcohol consumption has remained the same (*Calfee & Scheraga, 1994; Smart & Cutler, 1976; Makowsky & Whitehead, 1991*). A further analysis of 17 countries concluded that advertising bans have not reduced alcohol consumption or alcohol abuse (*Nelson and Young (2001)*).

Indeed one of Europe's most comprehensive government sponsored strategies on alcohol reduction, the UK's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy of 2003, failed to find a convincing argument for introducing a ban on alcohol advertising:

*"There is no clear case on the effect of advertising on behaviour. One recent study suggests that such an effect may exist, but is contradicted by others which find no such case. So the evidence is not sufficiently strong to suggest that measures, such as a ban on advertising or tightening existing restrictions about scheduling, should be imposed by regulation."* (DMI, 2006).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

We have seen from this report that Ireland and Irish people have a very strong cultural and social link with the use (and sometimes misuse) of alcohol. Down through history it has become synonymous with Irish culture and lifestyle. We have presented research undertaken which shows Irish people to be amongst the highest consumers of alcohol in the world. We have seen that young people are often unfairly depicted as the perpetrators of alcohol misuse rather than the victims. Such a portrayal fails to consider that alcohol misuse is prevalent throughout Irish society and does not discriminate against age. It also fails to consider that often the attitudes young people hold towards alcohol and drinking behaviour are inherited from adults. We have explored research which indicates that alcohol sports sponsorship links masculinity, alcohol and sport and provides promotional opportunities that go beyond passive images of alcohol advertisements. This serves to embed alcohol products into the everyday activities of the consumer, through title name,

sports results, commentary and discussions of the sporting events, which in turn taps into and reinforces cultural identity. Other research has shown that there is no causal link between alcohol advertising and individual drinking levels, and that while advertising does not have an effect on overall consumption, it does have a measurable effect on market share for individual brands. We have seen that results from various bans on alcohol advertising and sponsorship in other countries have offered conflicting results as to their effectiveness.

Bearing the above in mind it is important to note that tackling individual aspects of alcohol policy on a piecemeal basis is not an effective way of dealing with the associated problems and changing drinking patterns to a significant degree. If the Government are serious about tackling this issue it must be done on a partnership basis with the relevant authorities, and both the consumers and suppliers of alcoholic products. What is needed is a change in our cultural perception of the use of alcohol along with education regarding safe usage and a protection package to prevent exploitation, particularly of young people. A ban on the advertising and sponsorship by alcohol companies on its own will not achieve the desired results and could indeed be counter productive if the other measures are not implemented. There are also wider issues regarding advertising and sponsorship which are not dealt with in this report, but which must be taken into consideration when formulating current policy. These issues include advertising and sponsorship by such companies as fast food producers, soft drinks providers, the National Lottery and online casinos to name but a few. The misuse of products produced by such companies can lead to obesity and gambling problems to name but two, which are as dangerous to Irish society as the current situation regarding abuse of alcohol. If there is a total ban on advertising and sponsorship by alcohol companies there is the real danger that they will be replaced in the market by companies promoting products which are equally as dangerous if misused. The onus therefore is on the Government to take a stronger role in relation to overall health promotion, rather than merely targeting issues on a piecemeal basis as current practice suggests.





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## Appendix 2

### Membership of the Joint Committee

**An Comhchoiste um Ghnóthaí Ealaíon,  
Spóirt, Turasóireachta, Pobail, Tuaithe  
agus Gaeltachta.**

Teach Laighean  
Baile Átha Cliath 2



**Joint Committee on Arts, Sport,  
Tourism, Community, Rural and  
Gaeltacht Affairs.**

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#### **Deputies:**

Martin Brady (FF)  
James Breen (Ind)  
Michael Collins (Ind)  
Jimmy Deenihan (FG)  
Jim Glennon (FF) [Vice-Chairman]  
Cecilia Keaveney (FF) [Chairman]  
Peter Kelly (FF)  
Dinny McGinley (FG)  
Brian O'Shea (Lab)  
Jack Wall (Lab)  
G.V. Wright (FF)

#### **Senators:**

Brendan Daly (FF)  
Frank Feighan (FG)  
Joe McHugh (FG)  
Labhrás Ó Murchú (FF)  
Joe O'Toole (Ind)  
Kieran Phelan (FF)



## Appendix 3

### Orders of Reference

#### **Dáil Éireann on 16 October 2002 *ordered:***

“(1) (a) That a Select Committee, which shall be called the Select Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, consisting of 11 members of Dáil Éireann (of whom 4 shall constitute a quorum), be appointed to consider -

(i) such Bills the statute law in respect of which is dealt with by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs;

(ii) such Estimates for Public Services within the aegis of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; and

(iii) such proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 157 concerning the approval by the Dáil of international agreements involving a charge on public funds,

as shall be referred to it by Dáil Éireann from time to time.

(b) For the purpose of its consideration of Bills and proposals under paragraphs (1)(a)(i) and (iii), the Select Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 81(1), (2) and (3).

- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, by virtue of his or her *ex officio* membership of the Select Committee in accordance with Standing Order 90(1), the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (or a Minister or Minister of State nominated in his or her stead) shall be entitled to vote.
- (2) (a) The Select Committee shall be joined with a Select Committee to be appointed by Seanad Éireann to form the Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to consider -
  - (i) such public affairs administered by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as it may select, including, in respect of Government policy, bodies under the aegis of those Departments;
  - (ii) such matters of policy for which the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs are officially responsible as it may select;
  - (iii) such related policy issues as it may select concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by Members of the Government or by the Oireachtas;
  - (iv) such Statutory Instruments made by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas as it may select;
  - (v) such proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues as may be referred to it from time to time, in accordance with Standing Order 81(4);

- (vi) the strategy statement laid before each House of the Oireachtas by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs pursuant to section 5(2) of the Public Service Management Act, 1997, and the Joint Committee shall be so authorised for the purposes of section 10 of that Act;
- (vii) such annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of bodies specified in paragraphs 2(a)(i) and (iii), and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of these bodies, as it may select;

Provided that the Joint Committee shall not, at any time, consider any matter relating to such a body which is, which has been, or which is, at that time, proposed to be considered by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to the Orders of Reference of that Committee and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993;

Provided further that the Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session, or publishing confidential information regarding, any such matter if so requested either by the body or by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; and

- (viii) such other matters as may be jointly referred to it from time to time by both Houses of the Oireachtas,

and shall report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

- (b) The quorum of the Joint Committee shall be five, of whom at least one shall be a member of Dáil Éireann and one a member of Seanad Éireann.
- (c) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 81(1) to (9) inclusive.
- (3) The Chairman of the Joint Committee, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be Chairman of the Select Committee.”

**Seanad Éireann on 17 October 2002 (\*23 October 2002) ordered:**

- (1) (a) That a Select Committee consisting of 6 members\* of Seanad Éireann shall be appointed to be joined with a Select Committee of Dáil Éireann to form the Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to consider-
  - (i) such public affairs administered by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as it may select, including, in respect of Government policy, bodies under the aegis of those Departments;
  - (ii) such matters of policy for which the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs are officially responsible as it may select;
  - (iii) such related policy issues as it may select concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by Members of the Government or by the Oireachtas;

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\* by the substitution of ‘6 members’ for ‘4 members’.



- (iv) such Statutory Instruments made by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and laid before Houses of the Oireachtas as it may select;
- (v) such proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues as may be referred to it from time to time, in accordance with Standing Order 65(4);
- (vi) the strategy statement laid before each House of the Oireachtas by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs pursuant to section 5(2) of the Public Service Management Act, 1997, and the Joint Committee shall be so authorised for the purposes of section 10 of that Act;
- (vi) such annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas, of bodies specified in paragraphs 1(a)(i) and (iii), and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of these bodies, as it may select;

Provided that the Joint Committee shall not, at any time, consider any matter relating to such a body which is, which has been, or which is, at that time, proposed to be considered by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to the Orders of Reference of that Committee and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993;

Provided further that the Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session, or publishing confidential information regarding, any such matter if so requested either by the body concerned or by the

Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism or the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs;

and

(viii) such other matters as may be jointly referred to it from time to time by both Houses of the Oireachtas,

and shall report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.

- (b) The quorum of the Joint Committee shall be five, of whom at least one shall be a member of Dáil Éireann and one a member of Seanad Éireann.
  - (c) The Joint Committee shall have the powers defined in Standing Order 65(1) to (9) inclusive.
- (2) The Chairman of the Joint Committee shall be a member of Dáil Éireann.