

I feel unsafe if I'm out  
when you're out of

I've had enough.

# Working Together to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm

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One standard  
drink



RSA

DRINK & DRIVE

DRINK & DRIVE

**STOP  
AND THINK  
DON'T OPEN  
YOUR DRINK**

It is an offence to consume alcohol  
in public places. Failure to comply  
could result in a €2000 fine or arrest.

think



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INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL ENTERPRISE AREA DUBLIN



know the one  
that's one too many

Charter establishing  
the European  
and Health Forum

**ALCOHOL and SOCIETY  
Annual Conference Series, 2008**

**MEAS**

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CORK  
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THURSDAY 10th OCT

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# Working Together to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm

## Foreword

MEAS's fifth conference held in the Royal Irish Academy on 27 February, 2008 returned to the important theme of partnership. Partnership was the theme of the series inaugural conference held in 2003 and subsequent conferences addressed other important themes such as 'Alcohol and Young People', 'Alcohol and the Community', and 'The Social and Cultural Aspects of Alcohol'.

Conclusions reached in earlier MEAS conferences have provided useful pointers on how we should best address harmful drinking in Ireland. Particular attention was drawn to the need to move beyond the traditional responses and to employ, in a spirit of partnership and cooperation, the capacity of all stakeholders.

The Government established a special initiative in 2005 under Sustaining Progress and the initiative's multi-stakeholder working group made 29 recommendations in its report, published in 2006, entitled 'Working Together to reduce the Harms caused by Alcohol Misuse'. The need for collective action has more recently been recognised at the international level, by the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the European Commission.

While partnerships are not easy to bring about there was consensus at the conference that they are necessary, as there is a limit to what legislation can do. In his presentation to the conference Robert Madelin, Director General, Health and Consumer Protection, European Commission, described the operation of the European Alcohol and Health Forum established in 2007 and set out what partnership can deliver in society. Excellent examples of partnerships in Ireland were detailed by a number of the presenters at the conference, as well as the conditions that facilitate partnership.

I believe we have now moved beyond the sterile debate of who should, or should not be included in partnerships to tackle alcohol misuse. The need for an inclusive approach, and the benefits to be derived from such an approach have been well established. The issues are how to create the most effective partnerships and how to build trust amongst stakeholders. In this regard I hope the attached summary of the conference proceedings will be useful to all stakeholders in the alcohol field, and that it will encourage effective partnerships at all the levels required to make a real difference.

I would like to record here my sincere thanks to all the presenters to the conference, to the conference Chair, Mr. Pat Cox, and to Dr. Mark Morgan who has very ably summarised the main themes arising at the conference as well as giving background on the partnership debate. The presentations by the individual speakers have been included (with minor edits) in section 6. Slides supporting the presentations can be viewed on [www.meas.ie](http://www.meas.ie), under MEAS Initiatives.



Chief Executive, MEAS

# Introduction

## Working Together To Reduce Alcohol Related Harm

In this introductory chapter we set out the focus of the 2008 MEAS conference 'Working Together to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm', followed by a description of the aims of the conference and the participants. In the next chapter we look at the background in national and international work that forms the backdrop to the conference and which has been particularly influential in setting the agenda that forms the substance of the conference. This chapter also examines the international debate on the merits of partnership between the drinks industry and relevant partners. The main themes of the conference with extracts from the main inputs are examined in the following chapter, with a particular focus on the conditions that facilitate partnership or make partnership difficult, and with examples from the conference of successful initiatives. The final chapter contains the edited presentations of the various speakers.

### Focus of the Conference

The conference focused on the following questions: Why adopt a partnership approach to reduce the harms caused by alcohol misuse? What initiatives are sponsored by stakeholders through partnership in the Irish and European contexts and what is the status of, and expected outcomes of, these initiatives? Why do some stakeholders attack the partnership approach? Are there inherent risks in adopting this approach and, if so, what are these? What are the limitations of the partnership model? Are there examples of good practice in Ireland that can be extended or expanded? Are there examples of good practice that can be replicated in the Irish context? Can lessons be learned from other sectors?

### The conference aims were set out as follows:

- Promote an awareness of the partnership approach to reduce alcohol related harm
- Bring an international perspective to bear on the issue of alcohol in Ireland – and developments in the Irish and international contexts to tackle the harms caused by alcohol misuse through partnership
- Encourage informed debate on measures and initiatives to reduce alcohol related harm through stakeholder partnerships, and
- Identify key areas for further debate, analysis, policy and initiative development.

### Participants at the Conference

The attendance at the conference was by invitation only and the participants were drawn from Government, non-Government, voluntary and community organisations and all had leadership positions relevant to alcohol. In addition, representatives of those organisations that provide front-line services to the public also participated including the Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces, local authority personnel, healthcare, the hotel and hospitality industry, staff involved in criminal justice, youth work, as well as academics, students, public representatives and people involved in the media.

# Partnerships Involving the Drinks Industry: The Debate

## Background

A basis for partnership and cooperation between the drinks industry and the other relevant partners (Governments and the Public Health professionals) is set out in the document entitled the 'Dublin Principles'<sup>(1)</sup> which followed a meeting involving the International Centre for Alcohol Policies (ICAP) and experts from several countries at the National College of Ireland in 1997. The fundamental premise is that '...to prevent alcohol misuse, Governments, the beverage alcohol industry, scientific researchers and the public health community have a common responsibility to work together'. The principles are outlined under two headings: Alcohol and Society and Alcohol Research.

The six principles relating to Alcohol and Society focus on the context and guiding ideas that should inform cooperation. Fundamental is the idea that the policies following from partnership should be based on the 'fullest understanding of the available scientific evidence' and that the relevant partners should 'take measures to combat irresponsible drinking and inducements to such drinking'. It is also suggested that 'educational programmes should play an important role in providing accurate information about drinking and risks associated with drinking'. The 'Dublin Principles' deal in detail with alcohol research and emphasise the importance of the academic and scientific community being free to work with the drinks industry, as well as other relevant partners.

## The Geneva Partnership on Alcohol

The Geneva Partnership on Alcohol builds on the 'Dublin Principles' and sets out 'an ambitious agenda for partnerships'. In doing so it marks out the areas in which the key stakeholders should have an input. These include access to, and availability of, alcohol and the need to take local conditions into account in setting limits, and the need for the alcohol industry to get involved in self-regulation with regard to advertising and promotion. The document also suggests that where regulation is shown not to be effective, government should intervene with legislation or regulation.

There is an important statement with regard to the responsibilities of stakeholders in relation to information and education and it suggests that Governments should ensure that frameworks are in place to develop and implement such programmes. The document also stresses the importance of responsible serving of alcohol, emphasising the need for 'drinking environments that support moderate consumption...and ensuring that non-alcoholic and, where possible, low alcohol drinking should be available at competitive prices' (p.4).

In the Geneva Partnership on Alcohol document there is a strong proposal that there is a need to continue basic and applied research about the harms and benefits of alcohol. It suggests that each of the stakeholders should support scientific research which contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between alcohol, health and society. (p.5). The document concludes by stating that it is possible for the key stakeholders to work together to prevent alcohol-related harm, while achieving individual objectives and highlighting the common ground that exists among stakeholders.

<sup>(1)</sup> See bibliography on page 33.

## Criticisms of Partnership

A major criticism of partnership as advocated in the 'Dublin Principles' and the Geneva Partnership on Alcohol document came from three academics/alcohol researchers, McCreanor, Caswell & Hill (2000). This article argued that the alcohol industry had long sought to detract attention from, or discredit policies which support effective environmental strategies of prevention. Specifically, it was argued that 'they have manipulated everyday knowledge and debate about alcohol ...through public relations and media activity'. It is argued further that continuing collaboration may result in industry goals becoming embedded in research agendas, findings and recommendations, and ineffective or marginal interventions. Their argument is that partnership with the drinks industry is therefore inappropriate and ineffective.

In turn, their objections have been addressed by Luik (2003), who takes issue with the major premises of the criticism of partnership. Firstly he notes that the critics of partnership claim that 'the industry is driven by the imperative for sales and profits, which is often in fundamental conflict with the public health goal of reducing hazardous drinking and alcohol related harm'. In response to this view, Luik argues any business (including the alcohol industry), whose products or services entail some degree of consumer risk, should be concerned with minimisation of that risk, if only in their own self-interest and, therefore, that it is not necessarily the case that the profit motive of the industries put them in constant opposition to the public health goal of harm reduction. What this implies is that the notion of irreconcilable differences is not simply a given; rather it is a case that needs to be established on the basis of track records.

A related point is whether opposition by the drinks industry is therefore always a reflection of the 'irreconcilable differences,' or whether there are other bases for such arguments. Critics of partnership frequently argue that criticisms that are offered of particular public health measures are highly suspect if they involve the drinks industry. Another view is that criticisms of particular measures should be based on the evidence available.

An example of this disagreement is in relation to proposed bans, or severe limits, on alcohol advertising. Critics of partnership take the view that opposition to these particular initiatives to prevention actually indicates a hostility to ANY public health measures, and therefore disqualifies anyone voicing such criticism (ie. the drinks industry) as a partner. In contrast, another argument is that the efficacy of such bans can seriously be questioned, and the fact that such criticism comes from people in the drinks industry should not rule out the cogency of the arguments made.

A viewpoint related to the criticisms of partnership is that while it may be possible to have partnerships between Government, public health professionals, community groups and several other stakeholders, the drinks industry should be excluded on the basis that 'partnership is part of the theory and practice of those with an interest in public health and the public good in general' (McCreanor et al). The response to this by Luik (2003) is to draw attention to the fact that interests which, at one level, are rivals and competitors can work together in the interests of common goals. In the specific case of alcohol, Luik makes the point that while the industry may well have profit as its core interest, and the public health community may have harm reduction as its core interest, it does not follow that both cannot accept and share each other's viewpoint.

In time, this issue will be resolved by the success or failure of partnership ventures. One relevant input is the dramatic failure of some interventions that attempt to reduce the level of drinking in the population and that involved government only. A striking example comes from the effort to reduce alcohol consumption in Russia in the 1980s. The problem experienced is similar to that which is evident in many Western countries; young people beginning to drink at a younger age and a major increase in heavy or binge drinking. There was even a suggestion that economic failures of that time could, at least, be partially attributed to alcohol abuse.

The campaign to address these problems of the Gorbachev regime sought to reduce the consumption, raise the price, ban alcohol in the workplace and restrict sales in off-premises. The initial sharp decline in alcohol consumption (Stimson et al., 2007) was accompanied by a decline in alcohol related deaths, crime and absenteeism from work. However, the results were short lived due to a major increase in an unofficial black-market trade in alcohol, an increase in smuggling and an increase in illegal production. The initiative lasted a mere two years (Stimson et al., 2007).

### **Moving On: Conditions Facilitating Partnership**

To move the debate on from merely stating entrenched positions, a significant contribution is to identify the conditions under which partnership between agencies and the drinks industry can occur, and furthermore, to point to examples of success in such ventures. We will consider each of these briefly.

Grant (2005) suggests that four principles might govern partnership between public and private interests (including the alcohol industry) in relation to alcohol policy; mutual respect, trust, transparency and shared benefits. The need for mutual respect derives from the fact that several groups have a legitimate interest in alcohol policy development, including governments, research institutions, NGOs, medical and social organisations, as well as the various interests in the drinks industry. With regard to trust, Grant suggests that it is not necessary for people to agree for there to be mutual trust. He notes that as people work together, they learn to trust each other more as a result of this experience and indicates that this is the experience of the International Centre for Alcohol Policies. One implication of this position, however, is that people who are unwilling should not be forced to join a partnership.

The need for transparency comes about because of its importance in developing trust. Such disclosures should include not only vested interests, but an agreement about the success or otherwise of shared ventures. In other words, there is a need for a full and independent verification of the outcomes of partnership.

With regard to shared benefits, Grant suggests that that does not mean identical benefits for everyone, but may require giving up some benefits in order to achieve a greater good. This might mean in the case of the public health community that they might have to accept that moderate alcohol consumption is associated with health benefits, while the alcohol industry might be required to do more to prevent harm associated with consumption.

### **Examples of Partnership**

Here we give three examples from the international literature of successful partnerships, viz, the Manchester City Centre Safe Scheme, an Intervention for High Risk College Students, and



Server Intervention Programmes. Each is characterised by the effort to tackle a specific feature of a problem associated with alcohol and each one has several partners, including state agencies and a stakeholder from the licensed trade.

### **Manchester City Centre Safe Scheme**

The rejuvenation of the city centre of Manchester has led to an increase in the number of drinking venues, which in turn has been accompanied by issues around public safety. In 2002 (as described in the 2005 MEAS conference) the Manchester Police sought to develop a partnership between themselves, the local authority, the alcohol retail and service industry, transportation services and the health professions among others. There were four main objectives: to lessen the number of assaults and injuries involving alcohol; to better manage licensed establishments; to promote the provision of safe drinking, and to reduce the perception of drunkenness, rowdiness and public disorder in Manchester.

Among the key measures were the designation of certain public places in which alcohol containers were confiscated and disposed of, high-profile policing in known crime places, safer public transport which featured personnel to help with getting people on to buses, and awards for responsible practices in the sale of alcohol. The crime figures indicate that since the scheme was introduced, crime including violent crime, has dropped by 13%.

### **Server Intervention Programmes.**

The Alcohol Skills Training Programme (ASTP) was developed at the University of Washington by academics, with government funding. It consists of a brief intervention targeted at heavy drinking college students and incorporates a range of techniques that challenge misperceptions of peer support and alcohol myths, and encourage participants to monitor their own drinking behaviour. The evaluations indicate that ASTP can lower alcohol consumption and risky behaviour among college students (Miller et al, 2001).

Server training involves the staff in bars, and other outlets, with a view to helping them deal with customers who are drunk or behaving badly or with underage people seeking to be served. The server intervention programmes are strongly supported by the major beverage alcohol companies and over half a million people have been trained worldwide. Evaluations of such programmes show that they educate servers not only on the effects of alcohol but, also on their role in intervening in the risk situations of clients (Stimson et al, 2007). The initial programmes were developed in the US, and similar programmes operate in Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, the UK, as well as Ireland.

In Ireland, the Responsible Serving of Alcohol programme (the RSA programme) has been developed jointly by the Health Promotion Unit in the Department of Health and Children and by the Drinks Industry. An important feature of the programme is that it is conducted by Fáilte Ireland, the agency in charge of training for the hospitality industry. A feature of the RSA programme is that it takes the form of interactive workshops involving role playing to facilitate the practising of skills to prevent drunkenness or underage drinking.

There are several other examples in the literature of how partnerships have worked successfully, especially in research. In some cases, these have involved a focus on research as in the case of the Alcoholic Beverage Medical Research Foundation (ABMRF), which is a collaboration between academia and industry. In other instances, partnerships have involved international agencies, as in the case of the WHO in its development of a statement on the marketing and promotion of alcohol to young people and which consulted the alcohol industry, among others.

## Partnership in Ireland: Sustaining Progress Special Initiative

While there is a long tradition of public-private partnership in Ireland, the scale and scope of joint initiatives involving issues around alcohol is a relatively recent development. We have referred above to the Server Intervention Programme, and earlier MEAS conferences provide examples of how various interests have come together to address challenges. Because the proceedings below describe several important partnership initiatives in some detail, we draw attention to one particular initiative (described in detail by Peter Cassells), viz. the special initiative under Sustaining Progress entitled 'Working together to reduce the harms caused by alcohol misuse'.

In 'Sustaining Progress' (the sixth in the series of social partnership agreements), the Government agreed to ten special initiatives which would require a range of resources across sectors and at different levels of Government, with an emphasis on working together and adopting a problem solving approach to finding practical solutions. One of the areas was alcohol misuse and, with this in mind, a Working Group on Alcohol Misuse was established in July 2005 with a view to agreeing a programme of action in relation to underage drinking, binge drinking and drink driving. Part of the terms of reference of the working group was that their report should build on the Reports of the Strategic Task Force on Alcohol (STFA) and not replace them.

Among the working group's recommendations was that community mobilisation projects be launched. It also recommended that Screening and Brief Interventions (SBIs) be initiated as suggested in the second report of the STFA. Specifically the recommendation was that SBIs be established in the health, college and justice systems and that they should be an integral part of the Community mobilisation projects. Another recommendation was around the promotion and development of appropriate recreational facilities, alcohol free events and venues for young people. Other recommendations centred on compliance and enforcement of existing legislation, alcohol misuse in the workplace, a code of practice for the off-trade sector and a number of actions in relation to drink driving, advertising, and labelling. As noted above, the main issues emerging are examined by Peter Cassells in this report.

## Conclusion and Overview

Above we have set out the opposing positions on partnership, the conditions under which collaboration can occur, some examples from the international literature and the overall framework within which partnership operates in Ireland. The conference can be seen in this broad context to answer three main questions: What are the conditions that facilitate or prevent partnership? How successful has partnership been in Ireland today? What is its promise for the future?

# Partnership Challenges and Possibilities

## Main Themes of the Conference

Having examined the debate in the international context, and looked at some examples from overseas, here we set out some of the main themes of the conference with regard to partnership. Rather than revisit the fundamental issue of whether partnership is possible, the papers presented took this possibility as their starting point and tried to advance from there, either by describing conditions that facilitate or inhibit partnership, or point to examples of good practice involving partnership.

Below we look at some of the main themes of the conference in terms of this framework and we illustrate these themes with key quotations from the presentations. The first main theme to emerge is the need to recognise that in Ireland we have a major problem with alcohol and all the relevant partners have a responsibility to address this problem. A second theme is the recognition that partnership is difficult but necessary, particularly because there are limits to what legislation can do. Thirdly, there are some very successful examples from which we can learn. Finally, we have identified some of the conditions that facilitate partnership. Each of these themes are illustrated here.

### **‘We have a major problem with alcohol misuse and everyone has a responsibility to address this problem’**

Fionnuala Sheehan (CEO of MEAS) in introducing the session drew attention to the concerns that were the focus of the conference:

*‘if one was to judge by the response that we have had to today’s conference alone, it is very, very clear that there is a great deal of interest and, I would say, concern ... about the issue of alcohol in society amongst many people in Ireland.’*

The chairperson, Pat Cox (former President of the European Parliament), talked about the general nature of the problem, and the responsibility for addressing it:

*‘.....but underage drinking, binge drinking, drinking and driving certainly will thematically come across most of the speeches today. The role of States and stakeholders, who does what and who should do what; the role of information, education and awareness campaigning; the role of commercial communications and advertising; the trends, who is drinking what and where are they drinking?’*

Minister Pat The Cope Gallagher introduced the scale of the problem of Irish drinking as follows:

*‘Let me express our alcohol consumption in another way: On average everyone over 15 years of age who drinks, consumes 25 units or 12 pints of beer or three bottles of wine or one bottle of spirits each week. The weekly recommended limit for men is 21 units or ten and a half pints of beer, and for a woman, it is 14 units or 7 pints of beer. So the average person is consuming in excess, well in excess of the recommended limit. This has serious implications for public health.’*

The same general point was made by Rosemary Garth (Director of the Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland):

*‘Certainly we have seen the increases in alcohol misuse continuing to grow, and the traditional approaches have not been able to stem that tide.’*

## **‘Partnerships are not easy to bring about but are necessary’ - there are limits to what legislation can do.**

Peter Cassells, Chairman of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance, talked about his experience of getting a partnership between the industry and health professionals. He identified trust as a critical issue.

*‘it was seriously difficult, because there is no doubt that there is a high level of mistrust between the industry and health professionals.....In the case of the health professionals, there is obviously a very strong sense, and indeed it has been articulated publicly, that you can't use a partnership approach to some issues, and that this is one of them. A sense that if the industry is involved in the whole area of education, awareness, tackling the issues, that somehow or other there is a self-interest there at the background ..... And on the side of the industry, they would obviously see the articulators of those views as being, I suppose, "zealots", people who in fact because of the success maybe in the control of tobacco and smoking and that, believe that this is the next big issue (is alcohol control) .....And there is no doubt that there is, as I say, that level of mistrust there.’*

**But there is no other way.... (Peter Cassells)**

*‘But the other important point we discovered is that it is a complex problem, a complex problem in the sense that government alone cannot solve the problem. And that took a fair amount of discussion, to get agreement on, that no matter what way you come at it, that government itself through legislation and its various policies is not the only player in this particular arena.*

*....legislation itself can't deal with issues that are really outside the remit of legislation, and the obvious one being the whole cultural factors that operate particularly as well in an Irish context. ....legislation as well can have unintended consequences. If I give you one; everybody strongly agreed, and as you know the legislation was implemented, that people under 18 shouldn't be allowed into public houses after 9 o'clock at night. Straightforward enough, very precise, right, and everybody has agreed with it. But what the Gardaí will tell you is that the problem then just migrates. The problem has migrated down to, you know, down by the side of the river, out into the various graveyards, into anywhere where people want to move ----- it didn't kill off the fact that they were getting alcohol, it migrated the problem.’*

**Robert Madelin, Director General DG Sanco, European Commission, also underlined the need for partnership in the context of the limits of what legislation can do.**

*‘So, I think it is clear that if there were a political will to ban alcohol, double the price, or whatever, it would happen, but in a democracy, if it is not going to happen that way, you are left with other approaches. Even if there is a political will to legislate, you can only deliver a law out of the statute book into society through co-operative approaches. People have to read, understand and apply the law, and sometimes I find not just in public health but in, for example, food hygiene areas, it is not enough to have a law, you have to have the understanding of stakeholders and co-operation to deliver.*

*So I would say partnership is definitely no panacea, but law is not a panacea either, you need both.’*

He described the operation of the European Alcohol and Health Forum. He made the point that while people may have a common vision, they may not agree on everything....

*'we launched last summer a European Alcohol and Health Forum bringing together anybody who said that they wanted to be a stakeholder in a common campaign across Europe to reduce alcohol-related harm and to promote public health. The structure looks, perhaps again appropriately, like an 18th century building, a bit like a Greek temple. I will take you through the architecture. It is again confirming a bit at European level the experience that Mr. Cassells was expressing; you can't have partnership unless you have a common vision. So our Alcohol and Health Forum rests on the common vision that by working together we can advance at European level more rapidly the reduction of alcohol-related harm. But at the top of a Greek temple, where the Greeks would have put their gods, you have the meaning, and the meaning of this activity is different for every player. So you come into the room with a common goal, but that doesn't mean you agree on everything. If you are an alcohol self-help organisation, your attitudes to these issues and to other people around the table would be different than if you sell world-class distilled spirits. And it is okay to have different meanings, as long as you have the common vision, because what keeps a temple up are the pillars.'*

Robert Madelin went on to set out what Partnership can deliver in society...

*'It seems to me that partnership to achieve things in society is a necessarily humanitarian activity, and I think that there are two benefits that you give. I mean, the first is definitely you are building human capital if, as we are proposing at EU level, as I think is proposed at Irish level, you focus on education, education, including of the under 12s, in life skills. Actually, the issues around responsibility in respect to alcohol are the same as issues around responsibility in respect to healthy diets, physical activity, sexual health, the whole gamut of problems that kids need to grow up knowing about and too often grow up not knowing about. So I think that is the first benefit.*

*The second is social capital. And I think that the Cork experience is very interesting, that you can't fix one problem in society without fixing others. Social capital happens almost without you meaning to do it. If we can get co-operation to fix alcohol problems, we will find that the same sort of co-operation delivers on other problems.'*

Robert Madelin also drew attention to a feature of the interaction between self-regulation and competition, quoting the example from the Second MEAS Code Report upholding of a complaint against TESCO:

*'In the MEAS annual report you have the listing of all the practices that were complained about, whether complaints were either upheld or rejected in the past year, and one of the low-cost promotions by a big supermarket retail chain in Ireland was the subject of a complaint, and the complaint was upheld. So that is self-regulation. And then if you look at the newspapers last week you see the same big supermarket chain calling for public intervention, saying, okay, so if below-cost sales are a problem in a competitive market where my shareholders won't expect me to behave one way if I am then losing a lot of market share, maybe that is an issue where government has to intervene. I quote that example in this setting, because I think it is very relevant to the linkages between the public policy debate about things like price and availability and the self-regulatory debate. These two issues are not separate, they fit together, but I equally quoted to conclude my remarks, with one area where the European Alcohol Strategy does not go.'*

Minister Gallagher made the point that conversely there are serious limitations to an adversarial approach and, even though the interests of different parties may be quite different and even apparently in conflict, there are possibilities for negotiation and a level of agreement:

*'I recognise that an adversarial approach between the key players involved in policy and in programme development is not the most efficient or effective way of moving forward. The interests of the various parties will certainly not be identical, and that is very understandable, but this doesn't mean that while their interests are not identical that agreement cannot be reached in important areas. Each sector has its own strengths, and partnerships should seek to harness those strengths in order to advance a common agenda, a common goal, and a common objective that all of us have, and that is, needless to say, reducing the harm that is caused by alcohol misuse.'*

Minister Gallagher also noted the tradition in Ireland for partnership and the outstanding achievement that this had delivered major success for the country in the economic sphere:

*'.....the benefits of partnership working have been a cornerstone for the economic success that we have experienced'*

Fionnuala Sheehan drew attention to the fact that the partnership approach had not been exploited to the extent that it might have been in Ireland, but there is an opportunity to move forward in the current climate:

*'So here we are, four and a half years on, we are returning to the theme today of working together through partnership, and it seems to me now that progress is being made. It is being made at the European level, it is being made at a national level in Ireland, and I think, very encouragingly, it is being made in some places around the country at a local and at a community level, but I strongly suspect that there is an opportunity for even greater progress to be made through this approach.'*

## **In Ireland there are excellent examples of partnership as in the case of the Road Safety Authority, and in the 'Cork City Cares' project**

Noel Brett, Chief Executive, the Road Safety Authority, explained the context of their work with MEAS:

*'..particularly in terms of working with MEAS, the Mature Enjoyment of Alcohol in Society, we struggled, because in the early days we would have thought this is the drinks industry, we couldn't possibly talk and work with these people, and thanks to the persistence of Fionnuala and others we probably got over that and we understood that maybe there was something in this and some opportunity for the Road Safety Authority. The instinct was to say this is funded by the drinks industry, this couldn't have any relevance to us, and we would be compromised, but gradually over time we explored it and we realised that whilst, you know, there are areas of convergence and there are areas where we could get traction and where we could deliver on our aims'*

Noel Brett then went on to describe the success of the partnership:

*'In terms of specific work with MEAS: last year we had the Christmas and New Year Anti-Drink Drive Campaign jointly with MEAS. The "drinkaware" Campaign, which MEAS were running, we were very pleased, you know, to get involved in that, and obviously, the Designated Driver Campaign which runs frequently throughout the year is something that has huge value in changing cultures and in changing behaviours. And, you know, if somebody said to me two years ago or 15 months ago, there will be a card handed out by the Gardaí at checkpoints, it will be available in pubs, it will be available throughout the place, that tells you what a unit of alcohol is, and it has a place on the back to write the contact details for a taxi, that is funded through the drinks industry by MEAS, and it has the RSA logo on and says at the bottom "Never ever drink and drive," I would have said that won't happen in this country, and it has. And at checkpoints the Gardaí hand this out. In clubs and pubs it is available. And people are getting the message. And that is just a small example of the kind of things that you can get on and achieve if you work in partnership.'*

He then went to describe the reaction of people to the partnership:

*'We got a small number of complaints, and they were from people who had a very purist view, and they were back at the start. They were saying, why is the RSA tarnishing itself in talking to this organisation? Why are you allowing your name to be used? Why are you getting involved? The reason we got involved in this was when mandatory alcohol testing was introduced, we saw a phenomenon in this country that many, many people didn't have a clue what a unit of alcohol was, didn't know what the blood alcohol limit was, and nobody was consistently telling them. Now, that is an issue for us in terms of road safety and alcohol-related harm.'*

Noel Brett gave another example of partnership that is not concerned specifically with alcohol, but is very relevant to safety:

*'I want to just move away from drink driving and talk about other partnerships in road safety. The "Seatbelt Sheriff" is an example of a partnership which has run for a number of years now, funded in full by Renault Ireland. It is aimed at 7 to 9-years-old. It is in its fourth year. It goes to 3,600 primary schools in the country. It has a prize fund for a class, a class day. And it is all around the pester power of a 7 year old telling you that the car is not to start until your seatbelt is on. The feedback from parents is that there is nothing more niggling than a 7 year old telling you that you haven't put your seatbelt on, or Johnny in the back hasn't, and people comply just to shut him up.'*

Liz McAvoy described the 'Cork City Cares' Project:

*'The problem was simple. Public disorder on city centre streets at night. We needed to safely disperse large numbers of people from the city centre late at night.'*

She then went on to say what had to be done, firstly to identify the stakeholders, then the primary objectives of the project, what they did, and how they knew if they were successful:

*'Identify the stakeholders: that was quite simple too, in that lots of people volunteered, because they already had the responsibility and they welcomed the opportunity to discuss and debate it with other people who also had, perhaps, different responsibilities, but*

responsibilities nonetheless. It started with the partnership with An Garda Síochána; the publicans, through the Vintners Federation; Cork City Council; the HSE, through the A&E Department; Heineken; and Cork Marketing Partnership.

*What were its primary objectives? We needed to find some way to combat and minimise the level of alcohol-related harm and anti-social behaviour within the city centre environs. The second objective was to manage the dispersal of large numbers of people. (The third objective) was to promote and encourage enjoyable and responsible use of alcohol.*

*What did they do? So the initiatives in 2007, just very quickly, focused on transport and the Code of Practice. We have worked very hard with key stakeholders in retail, in pubs, in nightclubs on the whole development of Codes of Practice. A lot of it was reinforcing what was the legal obligation of those businesses, and a lot of it was softer measures, that they felt and that we supported and were going to help the night time environment. And we would have about 85%, possibly more at this stage, of pubs, off-licences, nightclubs signed up to the Code of Practice, and by signing up to it they are entering into dialogue with Cork City Cares.*

*How do they know if it was successful? If there is one message from it, it is that the range of activity and the word of mouth of vintners has been such that we have had many calls not just from our Superintendent looking to roll it out across the city to his other stations, but also from a number of other towns.'*

### **'We have a Good Knowledge of the Conditions that Facilitate Partnership'**

Robert Madelin suggested two important conditions for bringing partnership, viz, trust, together with a 'reality check':

*'The crucial thing to building trust is, firstly, to take the risk, so that at the beginning you need conditional trust, a willingness of people to come around a table and say, "Yes, we want to try to work together", but that is not enough, conditional trust can't stay conditional forever, therefore you need monitoring and evaluation.'*

On the same theme, Rosemary Garth took the view that the building of trust is a crucial component of building a partnership:

*'a trust that we will earn, and that is a trust that we will deserve, and through that trust and by continuing to work together, we will start to see a change'.*

Peter Cassells took the view that the background of policy against which partnership happens is crucial, particularly the need for the Government to have a clear idea of what it wants:

*'In my experience in the whole area of partnership, because it is often misunderstood, the best arrangements you can have and the best results out of partnership have always come where you have got a strong Minister, where you know, in fact, that the problem is there and, regardless of what happens, the Minister or the government of the day is going to take action on it. And really what you are there for is, you are being given the opportunity to see if you can, in a problem-solving way, deal with the issue that might give you better results because everybody is working together on it, and more importantly, working together on the implementation of it'*



A summary of the common sense of partnership was made by Liz McAvoy. She identified that sheer logic that cries out for partnership, and the need to take people's objectives on board. She also spells out what might go wrong:

*'I suppose in terms of partnership, I would again reinforce that we work in a small community, where partnership is logical, practical and really it is a no-brainer, it is the only way the project can grow and develop. Partnership for Cork City Cares is about dialogue, it is about the generosity of spirit and a willingness to share information, and it is through engagement, and that is the most difficult part, of really getting people to wholeheartedly engage, not just to pay lip service to it, not just to agree at the table and then walk away and do something completely different. It has to be able to accommodate multiple perspectives and deliver on agreed objectives. For Cork City Cares, and that small local community, it really will cease to work when it becomes bureaucratic, used for self-interest and a showpiece, it is really and truly about a practical thing, of what people can do, what benefit it is to them, and that, I think, is what has kept the focus of the project to date.'*

## **Conclusion on Conference Themes**

A major achievement in the conference has been to re-inforce the need for partnership between the drinks industry and others, particularly in view of the consensus at both national and particularly at EU level that government actions alone cannot address the problems associated with alcohol in the population. Associated with this is the agreement that we are now at a stage where the issue is how, and with whom, partnerships can be effective rather than the sterile debate about whether or not the alcohol industry should be included, or excluded, as a first principle. The examples of the conference in terms of inner city projects and awareness of aspects of drink driving suggest that it may not be difficult to identify areas where there can be successful partnerships. This implies that other areas of endeavour might also be identified with a view to similar forms of collaboration. The conference gave a strong indication as to how trust might be built (something that is central to partnership). The message that came through is that trust is fostered when the outcomes of even a tentative partnership is at least partially satisfactory to all sides. The need for independent evaluation of partnership is critical in this.

## Conference Presentations

### Fionnuala Sheehan: Introduction

You are all very, very welcome to today's conference, "**Working Together to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm.**" This conference is the fifth in our "**Alcohol and Society**" conference series, and I am really pleased to note that the conference series is going from strength to strength. My regret today is, that because of physical constraints we haven't been able to accommodate everyone who has expressed an interest in coming to the conference. But if one was to judge by the response that we have had to today's conference alone, it is very clear that there is a great deal of interest and concern about the issue of alcohol in society amongst many people in Ireland.

Today's conference is about working together to reduce alcohol-related harm. Previous conferences that we have held have addressed topics like alcohol and young people; the social and cultural aspects of alcohol; alcohol in the community; and indeed our first conference, which was held in October 2003, it had of its title "Alcohol Issues - A Partnership Approach."

Back in 2003 MEAS was a newly established organisation. I had worked for the previous nine years in higher education, and in that context I had done some work on the alcohol issue, but the absence of a partnership approach in Ireland to the alcohol issue was a significant missed opportunity, and it seemed to me then that coming together on a partnership basis presented great promise to the issue. So here we are, four and a half years on, returning to the theme of working together through partnership, and it seems to me now that progress is being made. It is being made at the European level, it is being made at a national level in Ireland, and I think, very encouragingly, it is being made in some places around the country at a local and at a community level, but I strongly suspect that there is an opportunity for even greater progress to be made through this approach, and I hope that today's conference will show us that.

I want to briefly introduce our Chair for the day, Mr. Pat Cox. Pat has worked for a period, as I did, in the University of Limerick, where he lectured in economics. He has also worked as a broadcaster in Ireland. Pat has been very active in the political world, both in Ireland and in Europe, having retired recently as Chair of the European Parliament. Currently Pat is giving the benefit of his services and expertise to a number of businesses and not-for-profit organisations. So I feel very privileged, Pat, to have you as our Chair here today.

### Pat Cox: Welcome and Introduction of Minister Pat the Cope Gallagher

There are common themes running through the morning, and I don't intend to make a long introductory speech, but underage drinking, binge drinking, drinking and driving certainly will come across in most of the speeches today. It is my great pleasure to introduce Pat The Cope Gallagher, who doesn't need an introduction to an Irish audience. He has been elected for Donegal South West since 1981. He has been in the past for many years a member of Donegal County Council, a former Chairman of that body. He has been Minister for the Marine and has held the post as Minister of State in many different positions over the years, and is here today as Minister of State for Health Promotion and Food Safety.

## Contribution of Minister Pat The Cope Gallagher

I am delighted to be here this morning, because I have a particular interest in the effects of drink on our many people, both young and old. But I am also pleased to be here because there is a perspective from various people, including Peter Cassells, the European perspective from Robert Madelin, and Noel Brett, with whom I worked while I was in the Department of Transport, and of course a person representing the views of the industry that we work very closely with, Rosemary Garth, and Liz McAvoy from Cork City Cares.

I want to thank Fionnuala, because this is about partnership, it is about all of us working together in the best interests, particularly of our young people, and the title, "**Working Together to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm**," is a topic which is very important at the moment, and this being your fifth in a series of annual conferences, hosted by MEAS concerning the major issue of alcohol in our society. This conference provides us with an opportunity to hear from the respected experts whom I referred to, operating both in the Irish and in the European context, about developments in alcohol strategy and the implementation of initiatives designed to tackle alcohol misuse through the partnership model, and it is a great opportunity for me to represent our Department and to represent the Government, because I have a very special interest in this area, and I was delighted when I was appointed to the Department with responsibility for health promotion.

The extent of our consumption of alcohol in Ireland is well documented in various research and the various surveys that have been carried out, but I think it is an opportunity for me to remind you of some of the key features. I want to refer to the report by the Health Research Board which was published late last year, and it gave an insight to the health effects of our alcohol consumption. It stated that:

- Alcohol-related hospital admissions increased by 88% between 1995 and 2004, going from 9,250 to some 17,370.
- Hospital admissions for alcohol-related liver disease increased by 147% in the same period.
- Death from alcohol-related diseases has increased from 3.8 per 100,000 adult population in 1995 to almost double, 7.1 in 2004.
- And overall women account for a quarter of alcohol-related admissions to hospitals, but in those under 17, the figure is almost 50%.

What impact has this on our society? I just want to take a minute or two to refer to that as I see it.

Alcohol consumption is an integral part of Irish life, and some might say it is a consequence of the growth in the economy and the greater consumer spend. But alcohol can lead to problems for individuals, for the wider community, for the family, when it is misused. And alcohol harm is visible throughout all of Ireland, whether it be in West Donegal or South Kerry or here in the city, it is a serious problem for all of us. It is to be seen on the streets, it is to be seen in the courts, it is to be seen in the A&Es in our hospitals, and in our workplaces, and our schools, and in our homes. And despite the tendency now to 'blame' underage drinkers, the vast majority of alcohol harm occurs amongst the adult population. It manifests itself, for example, in street violence, in accidents, in hospital admissions, and drunk driving, in alcohol poisoning, suicides, and alcohol dependency and cancers. Some of these problems, especially the acute problems, arise where the light or moderate drinker drinks to excess on a single drinking occasion, while others result from regular heavy drinking over a longer period of time.

We need to take responsibility not just individually, but if we can do that collectively, I believe that we can make progress. We all need to examine our social acceptance of alcohol and the signal that that is sending out, particularly to our young people. So we have to ask ourselves if adults provide an appropriate example to younger people in relation to alcohol. It also needs to become socially unacceptable for people to be excessively drunk on our streets. This change can only occur when we stop excusing such behaviour. It is a change that can be achieved, it might be ambitious, but, I believe, it is realistic, and that it will only occur through multi-sectoral action.

In order to tackle the problems of alcohol misuse in our society, I support the contention that effective strategies and interventions need to take a twin-track approach. I believe that alcohol policies and interventions targeted at vulnerable populations can prevent alcohol-related harm. And I also believe that policies targeted at the population at large can have a protective effect on vulnerable populations and reduce the overall level of alcohol problems. This is the policy approach which we are taking in the Department of Health and Children, and I firmly believe that certain additional measures are required, particularly regarding price and the ease of availability of alcohol. In this context I look forward to the report of the Government Alcohol Advisory Group, established by my colleague, Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Justice, which will be reporting within a matter of months, and we, in the Department, have representation on that group, and we are working closely with them.

There is a role for a multiplicity of stakeholders in tackling alcohol-related harm in our society. In July of 2005, a Working Group on Alcohol was established to help mobilise all of the stakeholders through the Social Partnership process to achieve a targeted and measurable reduction in alcohol misuse. That group operated in the context of the Special Initiative on Alcohol and Drug Misuse under the programme Sustaining Progress. The Working Group was comprised of social partners, the relevant Government Departments, the Gardaí, the National Drugs Strategy Team and the Health Services Executive, and it examined the issues of underage drinking, drink driving and high risk drinking. And the report, you will be aware, was published in 2006.

I just want to very quickly refer to the recommendations and the set of actions on issues such as community mobilisation, workplace alcohol policies, labelling, education and awareness. An Implementation Group was established in November 2006 to monitor and to report to us on progress on the implementation of the recommendations. That group is expected to report in the very near future, and Peter Cassells, Chair of the Group will be addressing you later.

In relation to alcohol policy, the Sustaining Progress initiative which I have mentioned, has allowed a broad range of stakeholders to work together in partnership towards a common goal, and that common goal should be to reduce the harm that is caused by alcohol misuse, and I believe that there are further benefits to be achieved from such a process. Perhaps a further remit for such a group around a small number of key initiatives or areas might present a possibility of further progress being made, and could work in parallel or provide a forum, for discussion on other regulatory or legislative remedies which may be introduced by Government.

I recognise that an adversarial approach between the key players involved in policy and in programme development is not the most efficient or effective way of moving forward. The interests of the various parties will certainly not be identical, and that is very understandable, but this doesn't mean that while their interests are not identical that agreement

cannot be reached in important areas. Each sector has its own strengths, and partnerships should seek to harness those strengths in order to advance a common agenda, a common goal, and a common objective that all of us have, and that is to reduce the harm that is caused by alcohol misuse. Acceptance that no one stakeholder can bring about change on their own, and that no one action is sufficient, is a good starting point.

So it brings me to MEAS, a group that I have tremendous respect for. I wish to thank them for what they are doing, and wish to assure them that I, and the Department of Health, want to work with them in partnership to move forward to achieve those goals. You have been to the forefront in recent years, and doing one important thing; that is raising awareness through advertising and through your media campaigns. The visibility, and indeed, the penetration of the MEAS campaigns has caused further debate and heightened awareness of this serious problem. I had the opportunity after my appointment of meeting with Fionnuala Sheehan, the Chief Executive Officer, and I have no doubt about her commitment as to what she and her colleagues in MEAS are trying to do. Of course, we all may have different approaches to the problem, but I believe that there are areas where there can be and should be co-operation. And I know that the HSE and MEAS have met to identify common ground in their respective goals in raising awareness and disseminating materials. I believe that such co-operation should be based on the factors that unite rather than divide both organisations. I know that this conference will contribute further to the serious debate around alcohol misuse and Irish society.

I have used the word "misuse" many times, the word "partnership" many times, the words "working together," but, of course, it is all about that: misuse, partnership, working together with one objective.

### **Pat Cox: Introduction of Peter Cassells**

Peter Cassells is today Executive Director of a consultancy which bears his illustrious name and which engages in mediation and facilitation work. He is Chairman of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance since 2001. He is most widely known to us as a public figure through his 15 years as the General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and as the person who worked on five consecutive Partnership Programmes. He chaired the Working Group on Alcohol Problems, which reported in February of 2006, and he now chairs the Implementation Group. He also chairs the Alcohol Marketing Communications Monitoring Group, which was established by the Department of Health in 2005 focusing on voluntary Codes of Practice on alcohol advertising.

### **Contribution of Peter Cassells**

The main groups who are involved in order to try and develop that partnership approach were the relevant Government Departments including Justice, Health, the Department of Transport, and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Then there were the various state agencies, including the HSE, the Gardaí, and the Sports Council. And then from the industry itself, there were the community groups and the unions who represent the people who work in the industry, but also more importantly, people representing those who are in the business of selling alcohol.

I will talk to you in the context of that group trying to work in a partnership way, about what actually worked, and maybe more importantly, what didn't work, and what we need to address in order to get this approach to working together on the harm that is caused by alcohol, which is the theme of the conference. In that context I will try and address three broad areas: (i) Why we should seek to mobilise people at national and local level in this area, (ii) the requirements

for a strong combined response in that context and (iii) what worked and what didn't work.

The first thing that struck me, and this is now for somebody who has probably dealt with some of the most intractable industrial disputes in Ireland and has been involved in the negotiations of various National Programmes, was the level of mistrust and the difficulties there were in getting the various groupings to work together. In the case of the health professionals, there is obviously a very strong sense, and indeed it has been articulated publicly, that you can't use a partnership approach to some issues, and that this is one of them. There is a sense that if the industry is involved in the whole areas of education, awareness, tackling the issues, that somehow or other there is a self-interest there at the background. And on the side of the industry, they would obviously see the articulation of those views as being, I suppose, by "zealots", people who because of the success in the control of tobacco and smoking, believe that this is the next big issue that the health sector is going after is control of alcohol.

I will also talk about the fact that a range of Government Departments and Government Agencies are involved, and where you have got a range of different bodies, even if one body has a lead role on the issue, trying to deal with it, it is very difficult to get that combined approach and response that you want to the issues.

The last area, which Liz McAvoy will discuss with you later on, is the fact that in Ireland, a community response, local community mobilisation on these issues is underdeveloped and under-resourced.

In terms of the issue we were trying to deal with, the overall aim of the National Alcohol Policy, as articulated by both Government and the Strategic Task Force on Alcohol, was to reduce the level of alcohol problems, while promoting moderation amongst those who wish to drink. And I think it is important in terms of how we approach the issue, that we see it in that particular way. So, for our working group on a partnership approach to these issues we concentrated, therefore, on the question of high risk drinking which, because that is the brief we were given to deal with. We dealt with issues such as binge drinking is not confined to young people; the question of underage drinking, which people had seen as a significant problem; and the question of drink driving. And the one thing, even though we were being asked to look at those three issues directly, that we did come to a conclusion on, is that high risk drinking, it is a serious problem. But the other important point we discovered is that it is a complex problem, a complex problem in the sense that Government alone cannot solve the problem. Legislation itself is crucially important, but it is not enough. It is important in the sense that legislation, obviously, brings clarity, it is precise. Two obvious areas are the age at which people can buy alcohol; drink driving is also clear in terms of what level of alcohol is involved in being over the limit for driving.

Now, one of the difficulties in getting a strong combined response is different perceptions on the issues between the Government Departments, the health professionals, and the industry itself. There is also a sense that different values and principles come into the debate at times between the various groupings. My response to it, I will deal with this in a moment, in terms of what are the requirements for a strong combined response, is that with all issues, what you really need to do is to try and adopt a problem-solving approach to it, and that differences don't then become a barrier to action or to freeze us in a way that no action can be taken. We have to accept, first of all, that it works best where you have a full enforcement of whatever laws are there, and that should be combined then with education and community responses.

In my experience, the best arrangements you can have and the best results come where you have got a strong Minister, where you know, the Minister or the Government of the day is going

to take action on it. We also need a more joined-up approach by different Government Departments and Agencies. Now, everybody says that no matter what area of Government policy or problem that society is facing, that there must be a more joined-up approach and why can't we have it. But we do need to get down to the fact that unless we have a more joined-up approach, then it is going to be very difficult to make the impact we want to make in this particular area.

We need to focus on the public good through a problem-solving approach to seek for best solutions to these particular issues, rather than sectional interests. And that does require, and one of the reasons why I welcomed this conference today, and was very happy when Fionnuala asked me to become involved, that we do need much more trust, and trust is something you can't give somebody. Trust is earned. And that is the only way, by people working together on these issues and earning each other's trust.

The other one is on good communications, as well as the sharing of information. This is a sharing of information, and it is a two-way process between both the industry, Government and Government policy, but also as well, between local communities and other groupings, because local knowledge is often crucially important.

The last area I want to deal with, again just fairly quickly, is the areas in which the Working Group itself proposed actions, and in a sense what again worked or didn't work or what is still out there. One of the key areas we mentioned was the development of local community responses. Groups were asked to apply for funding for community responses to these issues, and after a process organised by the relevant Government Department, about 19 groupings have got grants of just over a million euro to try and work through on these community responses in the coming year. The grants move between some groups getting about €10,000, to others getting almost €200,000 for their particular initiatives. But two things that struck me about it: one was the fact that it is groupings who are already very active by way of community responses in particular areas who manage to work their way through the process to get funding in these particular areas. The second thing then is the scale of what is involved with the community responses, both the level of money I mentioned to you, which is minuscule, and the need, again, for much bigger projects.

Another important area is alternative facilities. People mentioned youth cafés, alcohol-free events, the initiatives that are being taken by the GAA and others, but again it seems to me to be on a very small scale compared to what is required.

The other two areas I will just mention finally, because I am not going to go through this list in detail, is the controversy that has arisen of below-cost selling, because that is one of the areas that the group was trying to deal with. We did point out with the abolition of the Groceries Order, and the fact that alcohol was in there and going to be part of the abolition of that Groceries Order, that it was going to give rise to problems, and we have seen it already in terms of the supermarkets and other outlets using the developments in this area for promotions and for loss leaders. As a result, as you know, the Minister for Justice has set up an Alcohol Advisory Group arising from that to deal with it.

The last one I just want to mention is alcohol advertising, because Pat mentioned the fact that I chaired the Monitoring Group on the Codes of Practice on Alcohol Advertising. And again, that is based, as you know, in terms of outdoor television, radio and cinema and audience profiling. And our reports have shown that there has been a fairly high level of compliance with the advertising codes. All of the ads now have to go through a copy clearing process, and also as well, the industry and the Department are now working to try and strengthen the codes.

I am personally quite convinced that if we do follow the requirements of what is required for operating and working together on these issues, that it is possible for us to deal with this serious problem in the whole alcohol area over the next number of years.

### **Pat Cox: Introduction of Robert Madelin**

It is my great pleasure now to introduce Robert Madelin, who is the Director-General for Health in the Directorate-General for Health Policy and Health Protection since January of 2004. He is a graduate of Magdalen College in Oxford, and of the École Nationale d'Administration in Paris. He will take us through some comparative material, locating Europe in the world and Ireland in Europe, and exploring the issues of the borders and the boundaries between effective partnership and the need for law.

### **Contribution of Robert Madelin**

I was looking, before the conference started, at some of the fine books in this library, and I came across the proceedings of the Academie de Dijon from 1782. So when this academy was established in the age of enlightenment, among the first things that the librarian here did, was to gather knowledge from similar, wise institutions around Europe, and in a way I am very pleased to be speaking here today at this conference, because I think we are doing the same thing today. That is what the European Union can create for us around a problem like alcohol harm, it can create a space where those of us who are working on this issue can share our knowledge; share, perhaps, a sense of commitment, get some encouragement when times are difficult.

If you look at population wide averages in Europe, people would say: Well, the trend is in the right direction, this is not the trend in this country. But what you also need to look at is that although consumption is decreasing, it's decreasing more slowly these days, and the harm that we see around these averages is also converging. So there is no longer, in my view, a north/south, east/west cultural divide. Underage drinking, binge drinking, drink driving in different mixtures are killing people across the half billion citizens of the European Union.

Alcohol is one of the top killers in the developed countries, and these trends, if you could split it down to Europe, which we can't, these are the WHO figures, you probably see alcohol slightly higher up the graph even still. What that means is, that there is a huge cost, 125 billion euros for Europe as a whole, and it breaks down, it is a cocktail: Two parts health problems and premature death; one part economic costs and absenteeism and unemployment; one part crime and social disorder. These costs can be reduced, but they are rising. And so two years ago we came out with a five-point plan, which is not very different than the plans that you have seen already in Mr. Cassells' presentation. We need to look at youth, we need to look at the workplace, we need to deal with the road traffic problems, we need to educate, and we need to do more gathering of evidence and research. And the good news is that the European citizens are behind such a project. Here I have put up the figures both of the average opinion pole responses across the EU, and the Irish figures, and you can see that in general Ireland is either on the trend or above it in terms of the degree of support for a relatively active policy.

The structure of the building for our initiative looks a bit like a Greek temple. I will take you through the architecture. So our Alcohol and Health Forum rests on the common vision that by working together we can advance at European level more rapidly the reduction of alcohol-related harm. But at the top of a Greek temple, where the Greeks would have put their gods, you have the meaning, and the meaning of this activity is different for every player. If you are an alcohol self-help organisation, your attitudes to these issues and to other people around the table would be different than if you sell world-class distilled spirits. And it is okay to have different



meanings, as long as you have the common vision, because what keeps a temple up are the pillars.

So, what you are doing in terms of action commitments have to be relevant to the goal. First, you can't do something without an evidence-base to suggest that it is helpful. Secondly, I would say, probably comes more naturally at national level; your activities have to have roots, you can't just come to Brussels and say, "We think we are going to do this," you have to be able to reach back into communities at national, regional and local level to deliver. And you need coherence. So you can't say one thing in the forum and do something else somewhere else, otherwise we will catch you....because we have monitoring and evaluation.

At the beginning people are saying, "Oh, monitoring and evaluation, I will be subject to a beauty contest or I will be finger-pointed by my colleagues if I don't deliver." In practice because nobody delivers 100 percent, this process is not uncomfortable or unacceptable, as long as there is mutual respect that people have made a genuine effort to deliver, and where they failed to deliver, they are actually committed to doing better next year. So it is very much a continuous cycle of improvement.

Eligibility: now, this is an issue which I think is a problem. At European level we need to have a European interlocutor, and that is partly for reasons of economy of scale. We can't deal with 25 different types of organisation and 27 Member States, that is too many to fit in the room, but it is also for questions of legitimacy, so I need to have trusted organisations at EU level who can say these guys are okay. The difficulty can arise if there are very effective organisations at national level that just don't quite fit into the normal way of doing business. So at European level we have brewers, distillers and wine producers in separate pillars. Here in Ireland you have a more joined-up approach. We have to find a way of making it possible for the Irish grouped federation also to work in this area.

So let me just summarise where the commitments are so far. I think it is fairly interesting to see that we are looking at commitments which match the main areas of activity. So, information and education is one. Responsible commercial communication and sales is another. What we have to change is the question, how can we get people to accept that drinking as much as they do is too much? How can we make it not cool to be drunk? How can we make it not a laughing matter among adults, as well as among youth?

At EU level that means half... of the commitments will over time to be rolled out in all of the countries, but some of them, and here you can see the spread, are much more vertical commitments in one country, and what you see that it is, in terms of countries, the familiar suspects, and the newer Member States are not there, and I think that is a big worry for us at the European Union at the current moment, that the EU-wide project will over time reach every Member State, but the bottom up national initiatives are still not as strong in some of the 12 most recent members as they are in the 15 previous members.

We also have an open forum, that means the April session, which any of you would be welcome to apply and come and join. And we have some task forces looking at the two issues which I think are the most difficult and potentially also the most divisive; one on advertising and one on the youth angle. In other words, the co-operative approach has not become suddenly the Brussels' panacea; the co-operative approach is a big part of the solution, but national Government action is still needed.

So, the temple I showed you is only part of the picture, we also have these National Committee structures to co-ordinate what Health and other ministries are doing at national level. I also work with my colleagues across the Commission to try to ensure that the different policy areas are given support, and by and large they are.

So what I would like to say here is that changing the attitude is the key. So not just to change behaviour of the partners. So some of the commitments are, we in the alcohol industry will behave differently, not just to change behaviour of drinkers, but to change attitudes, because if social attitudes change, behaviour will largely follow, and if social attitudes do not change, no amount of targeted behavioural stuff will work. We believe in Brussels, and I personally believe from my experience in non-alcohol public health fields as well, that the partnership approach can be very fast to market and pretty effective. It depends on conditional trust, it depends on monitoring, it depends on patience, it depends on people.

This will be my last point: There is an interesting interaction between the self-regulatory approach and the debate about public intervention. In the MEAS annual report you have the listing of all the practices that were complained about, whether complaints were either upheld or rejected in the past year, and one of the low-cost promotions by a big supermarket retail chain in Ireland was the subject of a complaint, and the complaint was upheld. So that is self-regulation. And then if you look at the newspapers last week you see the same big supermarket chain calling for public intervention, saying, that if below-cost sales are a problem in a competitive market, maybe that is an issue where Government has to intervene. I quote that example in this setting, because I think it is very relevant to the linkages between the public policy debate about things like price and availability and the self-regulatory debate.

So, price issues and tax issues are definitely going to have to be done by Member States, maybe Member States can talk together about them. The Commission is always happy to see such discussions taking place in our National Committee of Member State experts, but there are bits of this where Europe cannot reach.

So I would like to leave it there, and to thank the organisers for this opportunity to share in what I think is the good tradition of having a European space for knowledge sharing, and in a place like this, as a historian personally, I think it is great that we are doing today what people have been doing for 226 years.

## **Pat Cox: Introduction of Noel Brett**

Noel Brett is the Chief Executive of the Road Safety Authority. A native of Mayo, Noel studied in UCD, and subsequently in the University of Kent, and began his professional career with the County Council there, and later was Chief Executive of the Mayo General Hospital, before taking up his present position.

### **Contribution of Noel Brett**

The aim of the Road Safety Authority is to save lives and prevent injuries by reducing the number and severity of collisions on Irish roads. The Road Safety Authority is not a prohibitionist organisation and is not, per se, anti-alcohol. Our issue with alcohol is its use by people who then go on to use the road. Other people would say that the Road Safety Authority talks about nothing else but hounding people who are drinking and hassling people who are drinking. The reality is that the business of the Road Safety Authority is just that, and that means tackling a range of issues, like assembling a very complex jigsaw. We are dealing with alcohol on our roads.

We are established in the Road Safety Authority Act 2006. We are a public sector authority and report to the Minister for Transport. The most important function we have is to prepare the Road Safety Strategy and oversee its implementation, and to report annually to the Oireachtas on its implementation. And the RSA relies critically on the actions of others; other Departments, other Agencies, individuals, the media, individual road users.

The RSA does not have a monopoly on these issues, we are utterly dependant on our partners. There are 126 specific actions across 14 different agencies with a time-line against each one and named office holders responsible for delivery. So it is a complex partnership document. In terms of road safety and partnership, we operate in, or we get into road safety with the four Es: education, engineering, enforcement and evaluation. And in terms of the strategy, under the "education" banner we are talking about publicity, awareness, training and formal education, be it driver education, or tuition.

Under the "engineering" heading we are talking about what I might call infrastructure or road engineering and mechanical or vehicle engineers. On "enforcement" we are talking about very specific deterrents, whether it is about enforcement of speeding, whether it is about specific actions on drink driving enforcement. 30,000 people in this country are now being breathalysed each month since the introduction of mandatory alcohol testing. Unfortunately, still 400 people a week are getting arrested on suspicion of drink driving, despite all of the awareness, despite the fact that if you do it you will get caught. There are still 27,900 people who have been arrested on suspicion of drink driving in the last 14 months. So we have an issue, and that is about specific deterrents. There are also general deterrents, and again, we are critically, in a partnership with An Garda Síochána and the public as road users in this space.

I suppose it is also important to realise where we are at in Ireland. In the 1970s we had 700,000 registered vehicles, we had a population of two and a half million, and a lot of our young people had emigrated. We were killing 52 people a month. We now have a population of four and a half million, two and a half million registered vehicles, and thankfully we have gone below 27 deaths a month. But we need to get down and down and down, and be up there with the best practice countries in Europe, and that can be done and it will be done.

The last piece is the evaluation: there is no point in having a Road Safety Strategy or having education interventions, engineering or enforcement interventions if you don't go back and check if they are effective, are they cost effective, do they deliver road safety dividends, do they do what we set out to do.

There is a range of people that we work with from commercial organisations, NGOs, and in the case of working with MEAS, we struggled, because in the early days we would have thought this is the drinks industry and we couldn't possibly talk and work with these people. Thanks to the persistence of Fionnuala and others we got over that and realized there was some opportunity for the Road Safety Authority. The instinct was to say this is funded by the drinks industry, this couldn't have any relevance to us, and we would be compromised, but gradually over time we explored it and we realised that there are areas of convergence.

In the Road Safety Authority we would be approached by people regularly wanting to do partnership work, wanting to use our brand or whatever, and we have turned down several approaches because they weren't ethical for us as an organisation. In terms of specific work with MEAS: last year we had the Christmas and New Year Anti-Drink Drive Campaign jointly with MEAS. The "Drinkaware" Campaign, which MEAS were running, we were very

pleased to get involved in that, and obviously, the Designated Driver Campaign which runs frequently throughout the year is something that has huge value in changing cultures and in changing behaviours. And, you know, if somebody said to me two years ago or 15 months ago, there will be a card handed out by the Gardai at checkpoints, it will be available in pubs, it will be available throughout the place, that tells you what a unit of alcohol is, and it has a place on the back to write the contact details for a taxi, that is funded through the drinks industry by MEAS, and it has the RSA logo on it and says at the bottom "Never ever drink and drive," I would have said that won't happen in this country, and it has. And at checkpoints the Gardai hand this out. In clubs and pubs it is available. And people are getting the message. And that is just a small example of the kind of things that you can get on and achieve if you work in partnership.

The partnership has to be mutually beneficial, it has to be respectful, and it has to be based on trust, and as Peter said earlier, the trust has to be earned, and you know, you make small steps and you gradually build on that trust, and also realising that there are things that you will disagree on. We don't always share the same ground, where we do we do we capitalise on it and do what we can to remember that what we are here for, there is an end vision, there is an end goal.

We needed to get a message to people, and we had a situation where people were quaking in their boots that had nothing to worry about, and we had people who should be seriously worried about their behaviour and their risk believing that it was no issue for them. We had stereotypical farmers worrying the next morning because they had three pints the night before, wondering could they drive to the shops or the post office or whatever. Those people had absolutely, absolutely nothing to worry about. They had more than metabolised the alcohol by the time they were on the road, it wasn't an issue. You had other people who were out clubbing until 3.00 or 4.00 in the morning, a couple of hours in bed, and up on the road again at the very time when our most vulnerable road users were out there. The reality is, if you have alcohol in your system, the time on the clock doesn't matter. If you are on the road you are at risk, even if you are a pedestrian, a cyclist or whatever.

So to the critics I don't apologise, I feel these adverts illustrate a point that needed to be made out there. They have been well received, this is just to show you what a partnership can mean. It is a small intervention, it is not a risky partnership for us, it achieved what we set out to do. So just very, very quickly if I can just play them.

*"We have all got one, our favourite cure; a cold shower, a breakfast roll, coffee, more coffee. The reality is, your body gets rid of roughly one standard drink per hour, and that is half a pint or one small glass of wine or one pub measure of spirits per hour. So if you went drinking last night, you might be over the limit to drive this morning, and no cure can fix that. Like the RSA says, 'Never ever drink and drive.' Get the know-how to know when at drinkaware.ie."*

*"We have all got one, our sure fire stomach liner; a pint of milk, a big feed, a banana or two. The truth is, your body get rids of roughly one standard drink per hour, that is half a pint or one small glass of wine or one pub measure of spirits per hour. So if you are drinking tonight, you might be over the limit to drive tomorrow morning and no soakage can prevent that. Like the RSA says, 'Never ever drink and drive.' Get the know-how to know when at drinkaware.ie."*

In terms of the partnerships: I talked about evaluation earlier on. It is critical that we go back and evaluate the effectiveness of every single intervention, and it is important in good

relationships and good partnerships that we also go back and look and see if the partnership is working, is it doing what it set out to do, and does it remain ethical, and right. We will continually monitor, audit and report on the effectiveness and cost in cost benefit terms of all of those actions, including the MEAS strategy, but other strategies and other relationships that we, as an organisation, get into.

I think it is important that we move beyond that and we try and find, as other speakers talk about, the common ground; where are the issues, where can we work and where can we not work, and be honest and upfront about that, and be clear where we can and we can't, and capitalise on the areas that we can work jointly on.

We need partnership with the drinks industry, with the people who run pubs and clubs to get us in there, to allow us to get stuff on the back of toilet doors, at urinals, on hand-driers, to get onto beer mats and all of those things, because we have to get messages there. And we have particular summer themes around drinking and driving. So we have hard-hitting true life adverts, we have a suite of adverts and campaigns which are what I might call "Show Me, Tell Me."

I want to just move away from drink driving and talk about other partnerships in road safety. The "Seatbelt Sheriff" is an example of a partnership which has run for a number of years now, funded in full by Renault Ireland. It is aimed at 7 to 9-years-olds. There is another character added this year, a horse called "Hi-Glo Silver," which is all around visibility, which is trying to get kids to pester their mum's and dad's, their grannies and their grandads, and their uncles and their aunts to put on a simple € high visibility vest when they are out on the road. These are examples of interventions in the seatbelt wearing and pedestrian safety area that are done with a company.

I want to leave you with this quotation from John F. Kennedy: "A partnership, by definition, serves both partners, without domination or unfair advantage." When you are working in the arena of drink driving or alcohol, I think that is a useful guide for us; it must work for all partners, no dominance. And that is probably the elephant in the room, people's fear of being dominated by the drinks industry or by various groups.

### **Pat Cox: Introduction of Rosemary Garth**

Rosemary is Director of the Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland, which is newly established. She is a graduate of Trinity College and Post-Graduate in European Politics and Law from the University of Limerick. She was Director of Food and Drinks Industry Ireland from 2003.

### **Contribution of Rosemary Garth**

I want to explain to those of you who may not be aware of the reasons why the industry takes this issue so seriously and why we have a strategic, and indeed, vested interest in tackling alcohol misuse. We are committed to working with stakeholders, we want to see this issue addressed in a long-term effective and meaningful way, and while there will always be cynics about the *bona fides* of the drinks industry in this area, I would ask each of you to judge us not on what we say, but on what we do. Certainly we have seen the increases in alcohol misuse continuing to grow, and the traditional approaches have not been able to stem that tide.

The Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland or ABFI, it will be new to many of you, it was set up just in October of last year, and before that we had an organisation called Drinks

Manufacturers of Ireland, which brought together some of the key players in the industry to work together, in particular on this issue of alcohol misuse. It is an umbrella organisation with the entire alcoholic drinks manufacturers and suppliers in Ireland. It is part of IBEC, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation. ABFI is a fully inclusive pan-industry organisation, and not only does it represent large companies, some of whose logos you will see on that slide, but it also represents a number of smaller companies and we also involve the category or sectoral associations for beer, wine, spirits and cider, something that is quite unique in Ireland. And the aim of ABFI is to promote and support an environment that is responsible and sustainable for the alcohol sector in Ireland. And it was established to speak with one voice on agreed industry issues and to be a part of and positive partner with other stakeholders and is the first of its kind in Europe.

There is broad consensus that action is required to reduce drink driving, underage drinking and so-called binge drinking, all areas which have been discussed earlier today. The unprecedented growth generated by the Celtic Tiger has led to a society that benefits from high disposable income and low unemployment. The same period also saw a demographic bubble of 18 to 25 year olds, a section of the population that tends to socialise a lot more. The other big change is the emergence of a two-parent working family, where juggling jobs, long commutes and family pressures have created a cash rich but time poor generation. The consequential lifestyle shift in consumption away from drinking in pubs towards drinking in home has had a significant change about how alcohol is sold.

All of these factors are issues in the parallel increase in alcohol consumption which you are all aware of in Ireland, where we went from being average consumers of alcohol to topping the EU league, as the Minister said earlier this morning. However, perhaps a bigger change has been the way we are drinking, the pattern of consumption in Ireland, where getting drunk has become the definition of a good night out for some sectors of our population. What is of bigger concern is that our patterns of consumption are not changing and we continue to see high levels of alcohol misuse. The industry does share these concerns and has a strategic and vested interest in shifting attitudes away from episodic binge drinking towards more responsible and moderate consumption. That is why we, as an industry, continue to invest considerable time and resources in tackling alcohol-related harm. We do that because it is the right thing to do.

We do it because as stakeholders in society we fully recognise the imperative to reduce the misuse of alcohol and its consequent harms, and we see our industry as a frontline partner in doing so. Any level of alcohol-related harm poses a major challenge to this industry, who is concerned about its future sustainability and the regulatory environment in which we operate. Last, but not least, long-term moderate consumers of alcohol are far more preferable to us, and indeed, all stakeholders, rather than short-term misusers of our product.

As I mentioned earlier, while there is general consensus on the need to tackle, in particular, underage drinking, drink driving and so-called binge drinking, there is great disagreement about how this should be achieved. It is my view that we need to move away from this confrontational approach towards, as I said earlier, a partnership approach. But just in brief, the main way you can categorise this disagreement is about whether we should follow a population-based approach which focuses on total consumption or a targeted intervention model. The Public Health lobby often favours this total population-based approach model, also known as a Nordic model. That was based on a theory that if you reduce total consumption of alcohol, you also, therefore, reduce the levels of alcohol misuse. This model is used to a greater or lesser extent in some of the Scandinavian countries, most notably Sweden, in that it has three main tenets: increasing price through taxation; reducing demand by restricting advertising and marketing; and reducing the availability of product as well. However, this approach, as adopted in many Nordic countries, as I mentioned, is coming under increasing scrutiny, because while it may

reduce consumption in those countries, it has done little to address alcohol misuse in areas such as binge drinking. The drinks industry in Ireland, and indeed, a lot of other commentators, are of the view that this approach is severely limited. It focuses on total consumption, as I mentioned, rather than patterns of consumption. We already have the highest levels of taxation with regard to alcohol in Europe, and this has done nothing, neither to address our growing consumption, or indeed, our levels of misuse. Some of you may be aware that there is some research published recently in the Journal Addiction which has shown that contrary to popular belief, that when excise duty was decreased in some of the Nordic countries, alcohol consumption did not rise and, in fact, in some cases it actually fell.

In ABFI we seek to reach an engagement with our stakeholders. We recognise that different people have different motivators, have different expectations of how they expect the industry to work, but we are interested in working with everybody who brings something positive to the table. For the drinks industry acting responsibly is about promoting their products in a responsible way, promoting sensible drinking and engaging in meaningful actions where we can bring something to the table ourselves and where we are judged on the basis of our output.

The industry fully supports partnership approaches, and we are committed to working with Government and other stakeholders to deliver practical and relevant policies. We feel that the best way forward is to deliver a multi-stakeholder and multi-action response, and that is the only way to tackle issues as complex as alcohol misuse. As a society, if we can change attitudes to alcohol we will go a long way towards addressing alcohol misuse, and the industry is a very valuable partner in achieving this aim.

The focus is on what can be achieved, rather than what can not, a frequent mistake in the past. It means that our brief can target particular problem areas, as I mentioned, and because often reputations are at stake, outcomes can be implemented more effectively. Through Social Partnership, Ireland is one of the few countries which has a proper framework in order to have such partnerships. This fact, as you are all aware now certainly, was brought to the fore under the Social Partnership Model under Peter Cassells, to agree and implement a strategic targeted plan that would reduce alcohol misuse in Ireland.

There are a range of 29 different recommendations, many of which had specific commitments for the drinks industry. As an industry, when we got the opportunity to go to sit at the table, we saw this as an enormous opportunity to have our voice heard, but we realised that by sitting at the table also carried a responsibility, we needed to bring something to the table. This became an opportunity for us as an industry to be pro-active, to not defend our position, to actually come forward with something new and something innovative, and that is something that we have tried to achieve. Perhaps the biggest victory though this type of structure was not in just the 29 point action plan, but it was in the ability to, for the first time, bring these stakeholders around a table, many of whom had very different approaches. Perhaps one of the things that we were able to deliver through this structure was a commitment to a €20 million awareness campaign to promote responsible drinking. That is being currently executed through MEAS. A lot of you would have seen the very good work and the very visible activity that is taking place in the media around the "Drinkaware" Campaign.

I mention the issue of labelling. As an industry we believe that we need to empower consumers to make informed decisions, and the label is perhaps one tool to do this, although it is limited. One of the areas that we have worked with the Department of Health on is the provision of information about how much alcohol is in a product. You heard earlier, about the work that MEAS has done with the Road Safety Authority about providing information about units. The work we have done through Sustained Progress and Social Partnership, as important as it

is, it certainly isn't the only area that we are active in. The industry, in 2003, set up Central Copy Clearance Ireland, an initiative whereby all alcohol advertising content is pre-vetted to meet and exceed standards set down by the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland. This initiative has been so successful that it has resulted in the virtual elimination of all complaints about alcohol advertising content in Ireland. In addition, the industry and the media industry has worked very closely with the Department of Health in 2005 to agree a suite of codes which would minimise the exposure of children to alcohol advertising. Those codes are now in place right across the industry, and the Government set up a monitoring body last year to oversee compliance, which, Peter Cassells is chairing. The benefit of having a code structure, as opposed to legislation, is that it is flexible and it can be updated to a very fast changing media environment, and that is why we are currently in very detailed conversations with the Department of Health.

Let me reiterate my key points for you:- Partnership works and is working. It cannot solve all our problems, but it could certainly go a long way towards shifting attitudes to alcohol misuse in this country. By bringing together all stakeholders, we will begin to see a change. The drinks industry, for our part, is fully committed to tackling this issue with our stakeholders.

### **Pat Cox: Introduction of Liz McAvoy**

Liz McAvoy is Programme Manager with the Cork Marketing Partnership, and of one of its programmes 'Cork City Cares', which is an initiative of the Partnership, and it is about that particular initiative that she will speak today. The partnership, in this case, involves Cork City Council, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, the city vintners, and Heineken, which is, of course, one of the producers in Cork city.

### **Contribution of Liz McAvoy**

Basically, Cork City Cares is a project that is really very practical and very logical and very focused in what is a small community area and is slightly different to what we automatically think of in terms of community, it being residential. It is based on the island of Cork city centre. Our initiative is in response to a series of public disorder issues in the city centre, and it was a very practical response. It has been influenced by the experience of Manchester City Safe, a project developed by Manchester Metropolitan Police as presented at one of the MEAS conferences; it invited those who might share some responsibility for nighttime issues to enter into dialogue, to explore and contribute to the development of a better night time environment.

It started out without really any design to be a partnership, it was a conversation, but it was a cooperative relationship between groups who agreed to share responsibility, and out of that came actions. I think we must have spent about three or four initial meetings where we played the blame game and the issues became not solutions-orientated, but rather who should be doing something about this. But having gotten over that, it actually became very practical: the problem was simple; public disorder on city centre streets at night. We needed to safely disperse large numbers of people from the city centre late at night.

Identify the stakeholders: That was quite simple too, in that lots of people volunteered, because they already had the responsibility and they welcomed the opportunity to discuss and debate it with other people who also had, perhaps, different responsibilities, but responsibilities nonetheless. It started with the partnership with An Garda Síochána; the publicans, through the Vintners Federation; Cork City Council; the HSE, through the A&E Department; Heineken; and Cork Marketing Partnership. And really the focus was from very practical people, how are we going to engage in meaningful interaction, how are we really going to discuss and debate all of



those issues that have already been outlined, how are we going to establish trust. And then, how are we going to deliver on initiatives that were focused and would address in practical ways aspects of the problem. It was almost like taking it out of a textbook.

What were its primary objectives? We needed to find some way to combat and minimise the level of alcohol-related harm and anti-social behaviour within the city centre environs. We needed to be pro-active. And one of the initial actions was that the Gardaí, through Anglesea Street, devised and developed a new city centre policing model, a very practical policing model that looked at what the issues were at night and adapted and changed how they operated and functioned on those weekend nights, which were the high risk times.

There was already a project in operation through the HSE Health Promotions Unit called Club Cork, which looked at a very localised training programme for bar staff, for owners, for managers, for doormen and for staff. It was a whole new learning curve for publicans in the city centre. It was focusing on 'you are responsible for how you serve' and it gave very practical tools to publicans and owners, as to how to train their staff to minimise the hassle both within the venue and the difficulties that arise outside on the street once those pubs and clubs empty at half past two in the morning.

The second objective was to manage the dispersal of large numbers of people. Buses stopped at a quarter past eleven. We undertook a large market research project with McCann Erickson, and we had a number of focus groups, and those focus groups engaged in various aspects of the nighttime environment, but top of the list in terms of deficits was transport; the availability of transport and the cost of transport late at night. It is a huge problem. I am not sure that we are going to necessarily overcome it, but we are working to find ways to try and address it, and I will come to those under the 2008 Programme.

To promote and encourage enjoyable and responsible use of alcohol: this is the whole area that we are hoping, since our early days of starting the project -- we have recently been in discussion with the Health Promotion Unit in Cork city, and it is an area that really hasn't been developed in the way that we would have hoped it would have been, it just hasn't caught up with some of the other initiatives. And we are hoping, following our discussions, that we will be able to build and devise programmes that the partners of Cork City Cares can actively engage in and promote.

The fourth point is to promote and market the city centre economy in Cork city centre, that nighttime economy. I suppose for this what I should do is just give you a very brief outline on Cork Marketing Partnership. Cork Marketing Partnership is a project that pulls together eight partners from city and county with very diverse interests, but with one common theme: it is important to them how the city is profiled and positioned and, ultimately, marketed. And really it is looking at the importance of entertainment and it is looking at the importance of the nighttime economy in the economy of a region and how it profiles your city. And it is just so hard to undo negative PR, it is so hard to overcome bad press. It is of vital importance that we be pro-active and find ways to properly position our city and to properly manage our city.

So the initiatives in 2007 focused on transport and the Code of Practice. We have worked very hard with key stakeholders in retail, in pubs, in nightclubs on the whole development of Codes of Practice. A lot of it was reinforcing what was the legal obligation of those businesses, and a lot of it was softer measures, that they felt and that we supported that were going to help the nighttime environment. And we would have about 85%, possibly more at this stage, of pubs, off-licences, nightclubs signed up to the Code of Practice, and by signing up to it they are entering into dialogue with Cork City Cares. They would focus on lots of the regulations that

are their legal obligations, but also simple things, like the enhancement of the street environment by leaving lights on outside the premises, by enhancing your lighting onto the pavements to make pavements in the city centre that bit more visible, that bit more safe. As part of authority figures on the streets, looking at the end of the night at door staff being deployed to pavements. Not to police the streets, I hasten to add, but to almost be eyes and ears, to watch out for the safety and comfort of people, to answer those questions of the tourist who, can't figure out which bridge to cross to get back to their hotel. That it creates that sense, that perception of safety.

So I am delighted that 85% of businesses in Cork have signed up to this. The other aspect of it is that it creates a very good dialogue between the Gardaí and the publicans. And I recently had a conversation with our Superintendent, who was really urging why can't we spread this across the city, it really enhances our ability to communicate with vintners. Not only that, but it is the most effective mechanism to practically engage their activity of self-policing.

What are we focused on in 2008? We want to continue to work with the licensed trade to promote safe drinking. We want to promote initiatives that assist and enhance the management of the nighttime environment. We want to identify initiatives that will influence positive behaviour and build personal and civic pride. We want to continue and enhance the monitoring of both initiatives and the nighttime environment, and we want to identify and secure the resources that will realise the full potential of Cork City Cares.

Resources dictate each of these actions and initiatives. We don't have a dedicated office for Cork City Cares, it is very much one of a multiple of activities that operate from our office. The project is successful. It has people very willing to engage in dialogue, very willing to compromise, very willing to work on mutual areas of concern and activity. We have devoted considerable time and effort to sourcing funds, and we look forward to securing some more of those funds.

In terms of partnership, it would certainly demonstrate that there is a huge willingness out there. That whilst we all go off to our individual areas and work away terribly busily and we all have concerns, that really we are willing to engage in discussion on those concerns, and people are willing to work together. As has been said, it is down to trust. And there are lots of things that people don't agree on, there is lots of debate, there are lots of things that people are uncomfortable with, and I suppose our way of doing it has been to look at: 'Well, does it benefit Cork City Cares? Do we actually address the objectives that we have set out? And if those do address those objectives that have been set out, then let's try, and continue to monitor it'.

I suppose in terms of partnership, I would again reinforce that we work in a small community, where partnership is logical, practical and really it is a no-brainer, it is the only way the project can grow and develop. Partnership for Cork City Cares is about dialogue, it is about the generosity of spirit and a willingness to share information, and it is about engagement, and that is the most difficult part, of really getting people to wholeheartedly engage, not just to pay lip service to it, not just to agree at the table and then walk away and do something completely different.

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## Conference Presenters:

### Biographical Information

#### **Mr. Pat Cox**

*Former President of the European Parliament*

Pat Cox is the recently retired President of the European Parliament. He was an active campaigner for the successful enlargement of the European Union and was the European Parliament senior representative on the Intergovernmental Conference on the Constitutional Treaty of the EU.

Having worked as an economist and broadcaster, Pat Cox was first elected to the European Parliament in 1989, leading the Liberal Democrat group there from 1998 to 2002.

Earlier he was the founding Secretary General of the Progressive Democrats in Ireland and a Member of Dáil Éireann in the early nineties.

Born in Ireland in 1952, Cox graduated from Trinity College in Dublin in 1974.

Pat Cox is Managing Partner of the Strategic Consulting firm, CAPA Ltd., advisor to Microsoft EMEA, member of Pfizer Europe Advisory Council, member of the Conseil de Surveillance of Michelin, Director of Tiger Developments Europe, and member of APCO Worldwide International Advisory Council.

In a pro bono capacity, Pat is President of the European Movement International, Brussels, member of the Board of Trustees of the Crisis Group, Brussels, member of the Board of Trustees and Friends of Europe, Brussels, Commissioner General Europolia, Brussels, 2006/08, member of the Board, UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business, member of the President's Advisory Board, University College Cork, and patron of the Blue Box Creative Learning Centre, Limerick.

#### **Pat The Cope Gallagher T.D.**

*Minister of State for Health Promotion and Food Safety, Department of Health and Children*

Pat The Cope Gallagher is Minister for Health Promotion and Food Safety at the Department of Health and Children.

A Dáil Deputy for Donegal South West, he was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 1981, and in each subsequent election until 1997 when Pat the Cope became a Member of the European Parliament.

He returned to domestic politics in 2002 and was elected to the Dáil in the general election of that year. Between that date and 2007 he served as Minister of State at the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government (2002-2004); Marine Minister at the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources (2004-2006), and Minister of State for Transport (2006 – 2007).

A native of Burtonport, he was educated at Dungloe High School, St. Enda's College, Galway, and University College Galway (B.Comm. Hons.).

Minister Gallagher has also served as a member of Donegal County Council (1979-1991), and was Council Chairman (1985/1986). He was a member of the Co. Donegal VEC (1985-1999), and was Minister of State for Marine and the Gaeltacht (1987-1994).

**Mr. Peter Cassells**

*Chairman, National Centre for Partnership and Performance and Chairman of Sustaining Progress Special Initiative on Alcohol Misuse*

Peter Cassells is Executive Director of Peter Cassells Consultants Ltd, which specializes in mediation and the facilitating of change. He is also chairman of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. The Centre was established in 2001 to promote and facilitate workplace innovation.

As General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for fifteen years, he helped to develop and negotiate five National Partnership Programmes.

Peter Cassells chaired the Working Group on Alcohol Misuse, established by the Government and social partners in July 2005 under the national programme Sustaining Progress. The Working Group was asked to examine underage drinking, harmful (binge) drinking and drink driving and to help mobilize the relevant stakeholders through social partnership to achieve a targeted and measurable reduction in alcohol abuse. The Working Group issued its report Working Together to Reduce the Harms Caused by Alcohol Problems in February 2006. Mr. Cassells chairs the Implementation Group established to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Report.

Peter Cassells also chairs the Alcohol Marketing Communications Monitoring Group, established by the Minister for Health and Children in December 2005, to oversee the implementation of and adherence to Voluntary Codes of Practice to limit the exposure of young people to alcohol advertising. These Codes were agreed between the Department of Health and Children and representatives of the advertising, drinks and media communications industries.

**Mr. Robert Madelin**

*Director General DG Sanco, European Commission Directorate - General Health and Consumer Protection*

Robert Madelin became Director-General for Health and Consumer Protection within the European Commission in January 2004. He has overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the work of the Directorate-General in its three main areas: Public health, food safety and consumer protection.

He joined the Commission from the British Civil Service in 1993, and previously served as a Director in the Directorate-General for Trade. Prior to this, he was Deputy Head of Cabinet to Sir Leon (now Lord) Brittan, European Commission Vice-President.

Robert was educated in England at the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe and at Magdalen College, Oxford. He has also studied at the École Nationale d'Administration in Paris.

**Mr. Noel Brett**

*Chief Executive, Road Safety Authority*

Noel Brett is a native of Castlebar, Co. Mayo and is a graduate of University College, Dublin and the University of Kent.

During his career, Noel has worked in the United Kingdom for Kent County Council and the London Borough of Newham.

He joined the Western Health Board in 1999 as General Manager at Mayo General Hospital and moved to the post of Assistant Chief Executive Officer with the Western Health Board in 2001. Noel is CEO of the Road Safety Authority, which was established on 1 September 2006.

Noel is married with three children and lives in Castlebar, County Mayo.

### **Ms. Rosemary Garth**

*Director, Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland*

Rosemary Garth is Director of the newly established Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland.

She holds an Honours Degree in Economics and Business from Trinity College Dublin and a Masters Degree in European Politics and Law from the University of Limerick.

She began her career working for the Directorate General for Economics and Taxation in the European Commission in Brussels before taking up the role of European Analyst for Food and Drink Industry Ireland (FDII) in IBEC's Brussels office. After spending five years at EU level, Rosemary returned to Dublin as Assistant Director of FDII with a particular focus on consumer foods. She was promoted to Director of FDII in 2003, a post she held for two years before setting up Drinks Manufacturers of Ireland (DMI).

She was appointed to her current role in October 2007.

### **Ms. Liz McAvoy**

*Programme Manager, Cork City Cares*

Liz McAvoy is Programme Manager at Cork Marketing Partnership, an initiative that brings together Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Cork Chamber, Irish Hotels Federation – Cork, Cork Business Association, Port of Cork, Cork Airport Authority and Fáilte Ireland South West Region. Cork Marketing Partnership was established in 2007 to undertake Cork promotional initiatives, develop and promote business tourism and assist in promoting economic development in the Cork region.

Cork City Cares is a Cork Marketing Partnership initiative, a project developed in partnership with Cork City Council, An Garda Síochána, Health Services Executive, City Vintners, and Heineken. Cork City Cares is a project designed to explore channels to deliver a vibrant city centre night-time economy across all age groups. The project partners are working together to support the effective management of the large numbers of people in the city centre late at night/early morning and to combat alcohol-related harm and anti-social behaviour. Prior to joining Cork Marketing Partnership, Liz was City Centre Co-ordinator with Cork City Challenge, the organisation that founded Cork City Cares. Liz also worked in arts management in Ireland, at Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, the University of Limerick, Galway Arts Centre and the Arts Council Northern Ireland. Liz holds a degree in Fine Art, CCAD, is a postgraduate of the Arts Administration programme, UCD, and of the UCC Management Programme.

# MEAS's ALCOHOL AND SOCIETY Annual Conference

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### **Chairperson's Welcome and Introduction**

*Mr Pat Cox, former President, European Parliament*

### **Opening Address**

*Mr Pat The Cope Gallagher, T.D., Minister for Health Promotion and Food Safety, Department of Health and Children*

### **Sustaining Progress Special Initiative on Alcohol**

*Mr Peter Cassells, Chairman, National Centre for Partnership and Performance and Chairman of Sustaining Progress Special Initiative on Alcohol Misuse*

### **European Union Alcohol Strategy and the EU Alcohol and Health Forum**

*Mr Robert Madelin, Director General DG Sanco, European Commission Directorate - General Health and Consumer Protection*

### **Irish Road Safety Partnerships**

*Mr Noel Brett, Chief Executive, Road Safety Authority*

### **An Industry Perspective on Partnership in Ireland**

*Ms Rosemary Garth, Director, Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland*

### **Community Partnerships - A Local Perspective**

*Ms Liz McAvoy, Programme Manager, Cork City Cares*

