



**FLASH REPORT FROM THE CHAIR
EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM
PLENARY MEETING OF 26 APRIL 2012**

The 10th Plenary meeting of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF) took place on 26 April 2012 in Brussels. The topic of the forum was responsible marketing.

IN FOCUS: RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

The session focussed on responsible marketing started with a brief overview of ongoing activities and commitments to action under the Forum. Results from three studies financed from the EU Health Programme were then presented.

The HAPI consortium presented the outcomes of a study on *trends and drivers of young people's drinking habits and beverage preferences*. The main preliminary conclusions are that alcoholic products do appeal to minors, and their marketing is appealing to minors. How the products are prepared, packaged and marketed, and their potential impact on minors does not depend to any significant degree on the product category, that is, whether the products are a ready-to-drink mixtures, high strength premixes, beers, wines, spirits or a ciders.

RAND Europe presented preliminary results from a study on young people's exposure to alcohol advertising in audiovisual and online media. The study looked at *audience data and advertising occurrence in top 10 TV channels in three EU countries*. Analysis based on UK data suggests higher exposure of 10-15 yearolds to television alcohol advertising compared with adults aged over 24 years. Due to lack of access to more refined audience demographics, it was not possible to split the age group 16-24 years to take into account the 18-year minimum age applied to selling and serving alcohol.

The **European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing** presented results of the recently completed AMMIE project. Research looking at five EU countries indicates that in some cases large absolute numbers of 13-17 year-olds are reached by alcohol commercials placed in television programming whose audience composition meets the standard of minimum 70% adult viewership, endorsed by part of alcoholic beverage producers.

Members called for easier access to data on advertising placement and audience demographics. Data is available from commercial sources but at high cost which seriously limits the scope for research. Once Forum members have studied the published reports, they may come back with more detailed observations.

The second part of the session focussed on activities relating to self regulation of commercial communications.

The **World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)** presented the *Responsible Marketing Pact*, a commitment to action under the Alcohol and Health Forum. The Pact involves eight leading alcohol producers as signatories and, as associate partners, the trade organisations of the spirits, wine and beer sectors as well as advertisers and sponsorship associations. The aim is to develop common standards for audience composition (no alcohol advertising unless the share of adults is at least 70%), for marketing through social media and regarding content that appeals specifically to minors, to be applied across the wine, beer and spirits sectors and across the EU. The Responsible Marketing Pact is a panindustry response to Commissioner Dalli's call for further action in responsible advertising, particularly as regards new media and the exposure of underage. Key points

raised in the discussion, included the audience composition standard (70/30), appeal to young people, and how to further promote complaints' mechanisms. WFA will consult Forum members around the standards to be applied on the issue of appeal to young people. The Commission will follow closely the development of this commitment and its implementation and will engage in further discussions in this respect.

Examples of work to strengthen selfregulation already carried out across the alcohol sector (beer, wine and spirits) as well as plans for further work were also presented.

The **Brewers of Europe** described how the brewing sector is progressing *beyond the implementation of the seven operational standards for commercial communication* towards a broader approach. The Beer Pledge, a commitment under the Alcohol and Health Forum, will enhance responsible marketing through partnerships with digital and social media providers. The Pledge also involves consumer information and partnerships to tackle the misuse of alcohol.

Progress in the promotion of the Wine Communication Standards (WCS) introduced through the *Wine in Moderation Programme* was presented by the **European Committee for Wine Enterprises** (CEEV) and Susana Garcia from the Spanish Wine Federation.

Further work aims at expanding the endorsement of the WCS by wine producers and among partners in the wider wine value chain.

The **European Spirits Organisation** (CEPS) and the **European Forum for Responsible Drinking** (EFRD) presented the spirits sector's approach for further development of responsible marketing. The objective of the CEPS Roadmap 2015 is to rationalise national and company standards into a *single reference document with special emphasis on*

digital and social media. The Roadmap also involves a commitment to deliver responsible drinking messages in all marketing communications. The practical application to social media was also discussed.

The Forum discussed with the guest European Policy Manger of **FACEBOOK** on how to implement *restrictions to under age youth exposure to alcohol marketing*. Facebook set out how age restrictions are implemented for advertising delivered through Facebook.

Eurocare, highlighted the need to ensure consumer awareness of the complaints mechanisms and invited alcohol advertisers to aim for a youth audience threshold below 30% in order to achieve a true protective effect.

Regulating social media advertising will remain on the agenda for Forum action. Issues raised in this context include age control, user generated content and user proliferation of advertising, and monitoring. Raising awareness about complains mechanism should be further pursued by SROs, but civil society has also an important role to play in this regard through advocacy.

EU STRATEGY EVALUATION

The state of play regarding the external evaluation of the strategy was presented by the contractor (**COWI Consortium**). Next steps consist of in-depth interviews which will feed into a final report in the autumn.

NEW MEMBER IN THE FORUM

The European Medical Students' Association (EMSA) was admitted as new member, which brings the Forum membership to 68.

The **next plenary meeting** of the European Alcohol and Health Forum will be held on **22 November 2012**, followed by the Open Forum on **23 November 2012**.