



Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis
Commissioner, Health and Food Safety
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
BE - 1049 Brussels

Dear Commissioner,

On behalf of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), I am writing to express our concern and disappointment for the lack of an effective or ambitious EU policy on alcohol and for the recent collective resignations of public health organisations from the EU Alcohol and Health Forum.

Alcohol ranks as one of the leading causes of death and disability, killing more people worldwide than HIV/AIDS, violence and tuberculosis combined. Between 1990 and 2010, harmful drinking rose from eighth to fifth leading cause of death and disability worldwide. Europe is the heaviest drinking region in the world.

The European Parliament in its Resolution of 29 April 2015 demands a comprehensive and focused EU Alcohol Strategy.¹ This desire is also echoed by Member States, please see:

1. Call by the EU Health Council *"to present a new framework for the EU's alcohol policy"* (19 June 2015).
2. Discussion on the need for a new policy framework for reducing alcohol-related harm (Informal Meeting of the Ministers for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs on 21 April 2015).
3. Call for an alcohol strategy: *"Member States call on the European Commission for a new and comprehensive strategy to tackle harmful use of alcohol and alcohol related harm"* (Committee of National Alcohol Policy Action (CNAPA) scoping paper December 2014).
4. Letters sent by Health Ministers to the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety.

¹ European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on Alcohol Strategy

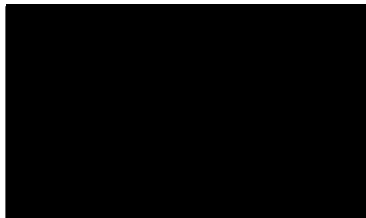
5. The forthcoming draft Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy on the reduction of alcohol-related harm.

Harmful consumption of alcohol is a barrier to a healthy and productive society. The causes and effects of alcohol use are multi-sectoral, therefore the alcohol challenge can only be addressed within a framework of coordinated actions, which must also address the link between alcohol and poverty, inequality, mental health, violence and anti-social behaviour and the impacts on children and families.

I trust that, in the light of the above, the Commission will carefully evaluate whether to continue hosting the European Alcohol and Health Forum now that the public health and civil society stakeholders have left. I would, therefore call for the Forum to be suspended until concrete policy action on alcohol is proposed.

Consequently I urge you to clarify, the timeline and nature of any kind of action that the Commission intends to take on alcohol and to support national governments in addressing alcohol-related harm.

Yours sincerely,

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