

Alcohol advertising

Background

Alcohol advertising is one of the most regulated forms of marketing. While in some countries almost all forms of alcohol advertising are banned, other countries developed detailed and strict self-regulatory advertising codes specifically for alcohol advertising.

Rules for alcohol marketing communications are stringent especially relating to minors. There are also considerable restrictions in the use of media for alcohol advertising in most European countries. 25 EU member states already have in place stricter rules than those at the EU level.

Health policies remain the exclusive competence of Member States. However, the EU has an [Alcohol Strategy](#) in place, which seeks to co-ordinate actions to reduce alcohol related harm in the EU.

At the same time, the [AVMS Directive](#) lays down qualitative criteria and quantitative advertising rules on television across Europe. The Commission proposed a new Directive which contains slightly different alcohol advertising rules.

The [EU Alcohol and Health](#) Forum is a platform where bodies active at European level can debate and act to tackle alcohol related harm. To become members of the European Alcohol and Health Forum, organisations must meet certain requirements and make at least one specific commitment for action. The Forum is one of the main platforms for discussion regarding alcohol policy at European level. Political issues and arguments addressed in the Forum are likely to influence the EU Alcohol Strategy.

EACA is a member of the Alcohol and Health Forum and Dominic Lyle is a member of the Alcohol Forum Governance Working Group, which has the role of analysing the future direction of the Forum. Public health NGOs have resigned the Forum in summer 2015 after the Commission announced that it would not adopt a new Alcohol Strategy.

EACA position

EU Alcohol and Health Forum

- The Commissioner for Health announced in May 2015 that the Commission does not intend to issue a new Alcohol Strategy. Public health NGOs reacted by abandoning the Forum and since then the Forum has not been active. EACA has been advocating for revival of the Forum as the only multistakeholder platform bringing stakeholders together.

Audiovisual Media Services Directive

- The current Directive indicates that alcohol advertising must not be specifically targeted at minors. The new proposal keeps the old wording and now specifically encourages alcohol advertising self-regulation which should reduce the exposure of children to such advertising. EACA advocates for responsible advertising targeted at adults and for clear reference to self-regulation as it is the case, in both, the existing Directive and the new proposal.

Self-regulation for alcohol advertising

- Self-regulation for alcohol advertising is well developed. Refer to EASA and the Responsible Marketing Pact for best practices. EACA advocates agencies' role and responsible behaviour with regards to alcohol advertising and self-regulation.

Responsible marketing pact:

- [World Federation of Advertisers – Responsible Marketing Pact](#): leading producers from the beer, wine and spirits sectors have launched a comprehensive initiative to strengthen independent advertising self-regulatory schemes for alcohol beverage marketing by establishing a set of common, rigorous standards for their marketing communications throughout the European Union.
- Under the Responsible Marketing Pact, AB InBev, Bacardi, Brown-Forman, Carlsberg, Diageo, Heineken, Pernod Ricard and SAB Miller, which together represent a majority of European alcohol advertising spend, will work with the EU and national associations to agree and implement common standards for responsible advertising and marketing aimed at reducing visibility and minimising the appeal of alcohol marketing communications to minors. The initiative will be subject to external scrutiny through independent monitoring and public reporting.

Other self-regulatory initiatives

- SpiritsEUROPE's "[Guidelines for the development of responsible marketing communication](#)" (last updated in December 2012). The Guidelines include rules and guidance for digital and social media advertising which have been approved together with DISCUS, the US spirits producers' association. spiritsEUROPE has developed an online training tool for marketing professionals –www.marketresponsibly.eu and is regularly organising training sessions in EU capitals together with EASA members.
- The "Responsible Communications Guidelines for the Brewing industry" were published in 2003 by The Brewers of Europe.