



FLASH REPORT

16TH PLENARY MEETING - EUROPEAN ALCOHOL AND HEALTH FORUM

18 MAY 2015

The 16th plenary meeting of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (EAHF) took place on 18th May 2015 in Brussels. It was chaired by John F. Ryan, Acting Director for Public Health, Directorate General Health and Food safety and co-chaired by Philippe Roux, Head of Unit, Health Determinants Unit.

The meeting mainly focused on the Forum's new governance mechanism, membership obligations and on the preliminary results of the 2015 commitments report. The topic of the thematic discussion was "underage drinking".

Highlights by Commission Services

The Chair informed of the Informal Ministers of Health meeting and the last CNAPA meeting. He addressed the participants about the European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 on alcohol harm as well as the OECD report "Tackling Harmful Alcohol Use" of 12 May 2015.

Meeting with Commissioner Andriukaitis

The Health Commissioner emphasized the need for broader action to reduce premature deaths in the EU and to include harmful alcohol consumption into a wider strategic approach to tackle chronic diseases as one of their leading risk factors. He stressed the Commission's intention to continue supporting Member States based on the objectives and tools of the 2006 EU

strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm. The EAHF remains a key player in this approach.

Report on the work of the Governance Working Group

The mandate of the Governance Working Group and the 2015-2017 Forum's meetings work plan were unanimously adopted. The two documents which pave the way for renewed action of the EAHF are published on the SANTE website (http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/latest_updates/index_en.htm).

Preliminary results of the 2015 assessment of monitoring and evaluation of Forum commitments and Status report on commitments and monitoring reports

Based on the 2015 preliminary results of the assessment of Forum commitments, several conclusions and recommendations were suggested; e.g. the need to further develop the user guide for EAHF members to improve the quality of the commitments and reports and inclusion of health inequalities in evaluation of commitments. The Governance Working Group will further discuss these issues. The draft 2015 Annual Report will be shared with Forum members for comments.

The status report provided by Commission highlighted the slightly improving trend in the number of active commitments and availability of monitoring reports (74% vs 61% of members with active commitment in November 2014). The Chair encouraged

all Forum members to submit new commitments before the expiry date of their last active commitment (to ensure the continuity of having at least one active commitment per member) and to send regular - yearly - monitoring reports. Seven members without an active commitment out of the current 66 EAHF members will be invited to send a new commitment by 1 September 2015 to avoid a suspension of their membership. The issue of co-owning a commitment will be discussed in details at the next plenary meeting.

Thematic discussion: Underage Drinking

In line with the agreed 2015-2017 EAHF meeting work plan, the discussion on underage drinking covered the following issues:

- A state of play on age limits was given by the Institute on Alcohol Studies and the Portuguese CNAPA member presented the national rules, their implementation and enforcement in this field.
- ICF International gave an overview of commitments related to underage drinking with a critical analysis.
- Consumer and health organisations presented their relevant commitments concerning alcohol consumption among young people, trainings for health

professionals about alcohol's effects on the adolescent brain and promotions for health information labels on products. Production and sales organisations presented two examples of community based actions in two different European countries. The presentations indicate the need for a targeted, holistic approach in relevant partnerships to achieve positive results. EAHF members agreed that the multi-stakeholder approach is very important when tackling under-age drinking. The topic is one of the six priorities of the 2006 EU strategy and the Action Plan on Youth Drinking and on Heavy Episodic Drinking endorsed by the Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action. Therefore, the Forum is encouraged to scale up its work in this field.

Recent developments on commitments

Ansheuser Bush Inbev briefly presented their report related to their three-year commitments expired in December 2014. Forum members were also informed of the upcoming Alcohol Policy Youth Conference in Lithuania.

Next meeting

The next EAHF plenary meeting is planned for 5 November 2015 in Brussels.