

PRESS RELEASE

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EFRD Welcomes Alcohol Strategy But Concerns Remain

The European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD), Europe's leading alcohol and society organisation welcomes the European Commission's '*Communication on an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm*' as it seeks to promote responsible drinking and target risky drinking behaviour.

"There is much to be welcomed in this Strategy, in particular a focus on alcohol misuse rather than alcohol per se and the reassurance that different cultural habits are respected through recognition of Member State subsidiarity" said Alan Butler, EFRD Chairman. "The Commission is to be applauded for rejecting attempts to hijack the Strategy by those who advocated a biased view of the evidence base and for recognising the positive role that industry can play in being part of the solution to alcohol-related harm. Concerns remain though that warning labels and de facto restrictions on commercial communications could surface during the implementation phase. We urge the Commission to exercise caution in compiling the evidence base in support of these policy options and reject such arbitrary measures."

A targeted approach to EU alcohol policy must continue to respect the subsidiarity principle, as drinking cultures differ throughout Europe and can best be addressed at local and Member State level. We stand ready to work with the Commission through its Alcohol & Health Forum, to embrace the public private partnership approach and work with stakeholders in the implementation of this strategy. In doing so we commit to do more, more quickly in partnership with other stakeholders – as already outlined in the European Spirits Organisation's Charter on Responsible Alcohol Consumption adopted in November 2005 – and in addition as EFRD, in the following areas:

- ▶ Being a constructive partner of the Commission in the process of dialogue at EU level, by responding appropriately to the reasonable expectations of stakeholders for improved industry social responsibility
- ▶ Increase support at both EU and local level in harm reduction programmes that target at-risk groups, in particular those underage, drink driving, pregnant women, workplace alcohol and training for those that serve and sell alcohol
- ▶ Addressing the needs of Europe's policymakers by commissioning an independent Annual Review of European drinking patterns



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- ▶ Promote the EFRD Common Standards as the benchmark for all sectors involved in the supply chain for alcohol, as well as reporting bi-annually based on an independent assessment of industry compliance review with these Common Standards
- ▶ Supporting independent assurance on public reporting for any commitment made to the EU by the drinks industry

We invite those stakeholders who hold opposing views to industry to embrace the opportunity to work together to reduce alcohol-related harm.

For more information:

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The European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD) is an alliance of leading European alcoholic beverages producers supporting targeted initiatives to promote responsible drinking. These initiatives focus on attitudinal and awareness programmes, responsible marketing and self-regulation as well as the promotion of a better understanding of the evidence base. EFRD promotes the Partnership approach with interested stakeholders to tackle alcohol related harm.

EFRD Members include: Bacardi-Martin, Brown-Forman, Diageo, Moët-Hennessy, Pernod-Ricard, Rémy-Cointreau and V&S Group.